

Buddhist Social Work: A Case Study of the Samrong General Hospital

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Prelude:

Human Resource Development (HRD) is a crucial element in contemporary organizations and determines their future to a significant extent, especially in the healthcare business, which has been changing and developing according to emerging trends such as the problems of insufficiency and the inequitable distribution of healthcare professionals, as well as certain morality and ethical issues. While the public perception is that healthcare professionals who are working to heal patients and save lives must have kind and generous minds, this is not always the case and, in HRD, it remains necessary to develop the minds, attitudes and perceptions of healthcare professionals to be ready to serve others. Many Thai people are very familiar with Buddhism because most ceremonies and ways of life are related to Buddhist cultural practices. Buddhist teachings are implanted into their minds as well as the understanding that their ancestors followed the same methods and principles. Some believe that the nature of belief is changing along with changes in contemporary society, which privileges material goods above spiritual ones. In response, it is necessary to reinvigorate Dhamma teaching so that it speaks more clearly to present generations. This research is, therefore, based on certain Buddhist ethical principles, such as the five precepts (*Pañcasīla*), the basis of success (*Iddhipada 4*), the sublime states of mind (*Brahmavihāra 4*), and meditation. These have been implemented in a Samut Prakan province hospital since its inception. Hospital founders concentrated on creating ethical and potential human resources rather than creating task-specific activities. This is a qualitative research study featuring management level and operational level employees in in-depth face-to-face interviews together with a focus group with relevant participants exploring the Buddhist social work scheme in this hospital. Findings and recommendations from the research are presented.

1. Introduction

Once newly graduated students change the academic life for the working world, most of them look for satisfying jobs. Important factors include being well-known and secure companies offering reasonable salary. However, they are rarely able to obtain what they want because most companies wish to minimize their costs and maximize their profits. Some organizations, especially in Asian countries, require employees to be responsible for multi-tasking. For instance, one person could occupy more than two positions with diverse duties. Previously, especially in Japan, high levels of loyalty to firms were engineered. It was common for people to work for one company from graduation to retirement. Moreover, they might serve that company through three generations. However, many of these attitudes, values and lifestyle have changed. New generations do not care to work for a single large company for their whole career. Owing to economic and social development, they have better opportunities to vary their working

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lives, start their own businesses or create their own working environment. This has changed recruitment patterns. Some companies have responded by promoting the idea of lifelong employment to attract new graduates. The Samrong General Hospital, for example, brings Buddhist principles to the workplace and promotes socialization in Buddhist concepts for staff members. The founders and top executive management perform as if they were parents of their staff members and create a “paternalist” environment. They feel happy to work there under Buddhist doctrines that they practice in their real daily lives both for personal and working reasons.

2. Literature Review

There are many subdivisions within Buddhism, but most can be classified into three major branches: Theravāda ("Way of the Elders"), Mahayana ("Greater Vehicle") and Vajrayana ("Diamond Vehicle"). Theravāda is the older version of Buddhism which believes in nibbāna, that everyone can attain it by purifying the mind and abandoning all worldly pleasures. This school follows the basic principles of the Pāli canon and, by this standard, may be identified with primitive Buddhism. Large numbers of people in India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Cambodia are Theravāda Buddhists. Mahayana has been subdivided into several diverse schools, such as Zen, Pure Land and Nichiren, with the purpose of reinterpreting the Buddha's esoteric doctrines to gain universal acceptance. The People's Republic of China, Japan, Korea and Vietnam are within the Mahayana sect and exhibit a more liberal interpretation of the Buddha's teaching. Vajrayana Buddhism tradition is an esoteric sect that is predominant in Tibet, Mongolia and Nepal and promotes the idea of enlightenment being achievable as if being struck by a lightning bolt (Anonymous; Anonymous, Religion Facts, 2007).

Brummans and Hwang (2010) conducted an empirical research study into Mahayana Buddhism concerning the organization of everyday practices within the Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation, which is a Taiwanese Buddhist nonprofit voluntary organization. They found that the practice of Buddhist compassion and wisdom were implemented in an organizational context, showing significant interactions between Buddhist philosophy and organizational activities. In Thailand, the majority of the population is Buddhist and, thus, most ethical principles come from Theravāda Buddhism, its beliefs and faiths which are the basic foundations influencing Thai people's thoughts, personalities and actions. The Buddhist philosophy is both simple and very practical. It has been applied to some organizational contexts (Lovichakorntikul & Walsh, 2011). Wongphaet (2010) described the “Five Precepts” as a foundation to develop peoples' minds with a direct impact upon job performance. Further, the “*Iddhipāda* 4” inspires aspiration, effort, dedication and investigation and is a core part in the working life. The “*Brahmavihāra* 4” is composed of loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and neutrality. It is at the heart of the issues involved in people living together. At the Samrong General Hospital, when there is a meeting, this is also an opportunity to provide *Dhamma* teaching and give their employees various insights and suggestions (Lovichakorntikul & Walsh, 2011).

Buddhist Principle: The Five Precepts (Pañcasīla)

The Lord Buddha stressed to all people the importance of trying to develop the soul in the midst of the hardships of life on earth. People can develop themselves to win the bliss of enlightenment or the highest level possible in the next world, which is also known as eternal bliss or nibbāna (Cittasobhano, 1982). In addition, to protect lives, property, family, true information and the wisdom to which human beings can aspire, the Lord Buddha has laid down the five precepts or *Pañcasīla* as a human virtue that is part

of the basic morality of the Buddhist philosophy. Phrabhavanaviriyakhun (2010) interpreted the meanings of each precept in different aspects as explained in the table below:

Order of Precepts	Explanations
1. To abstain from killing any living beings	To give life safety to oneself by not killing other people/animals
2. To abstain from stealing or taking what is not given	To give property safety to oneself by not stealing others' belongings
3. To abstain from sexual misconduct	To give spouse safety to oneself by not have sexual relationship with others' spouses
4. To abstain from telling a lie, false speech	To give faithfulness to oneself and others
5. To abstain from intoxicants causing carelessness	To give consciousness to oneself and others

Source: Phrabhavanaviriyakhun (2010).

This concept is similar that of Thanissaro Bhikkhu (2011), who explained that if we maintain the standards of the precepts, as the Buddha mentioned, we are providing unlimited safety for all lives, particularly the first precept. We also provide unlimited safety for other possessions and sexuality, and unlimited truthfulness and mindfulness in our communication with them. When we find that we can trust ourselves in matters like these, we gain an undeniably healthy sense of self-respect. In this interpretation, the concept of reciprocity is made very clear. The actions of an individual will rebound directly and proportionately in the future. The temporal delay is uncertain but causality is certain. While it may appear that unjust acts are not being punished, this may be an issue of temporality. The same, presumably, must be true for rewards to be received for virtuous acts performed. It may also be the case that the reward for the act will not arrive in the same form in which the original act manifested itself (Lovichakorntikul & Walsh, 2011). Keeping the five precepts in daily life means not only avoiding antagonism but also protecting other people's lives by giving them safety in these five aspects. Consequently, the society would be peaceful and orderly.

Normally, working in a healthcare organization, to maintain the first precept is not a problem. Wongphaet (2011) observed "We do not kill anyone, instead we help patients to be safe and save their lives also. But most interviewees agreed that taking the fourth precept is a really difficult one since they always talk nonsense, chatter or sometimes they have to comfort patients or soothe them. This is relevant to the business world as well. In this particular situation, the teaching from Phramongkolthepmuni (Mata, 2010) is a good example stating that the holy speech is worth doing because one will have a holy word from telling the truth and not be incoherent. People who observe the fourth precept will apparently have nice white teeth and a good smell. He or she will have holy and powerful speech which leads to success and truthfulness in the next life, if it can be sustained in this life.

Buddhist Principle: The Basis of Success (Iddhipāda 4)

It is the basis of success or path of accomplishment (Phradhammapīṭaka, 2003) which consists of 1) *Chanda*: will, zeal, aspiration; 2) *Viriya*: energy, effort, exertion, perseverance; 3) *Citta*: thoughtfulness, active thought, dedication; and 4) *Vīmaṃsā*: investigation, examination, reasoning, testing. Whereas Phra Buddhadasa Bhikkhu (1957)

identified that *Iddhipāda 4* is the chain of continuous righteousness and each form of goodness has its own particular duty starting from *Chanda*, which is the basic foundation supporting other virtues. *Viriya* is how to pursue until one reaches the target by acting bravely. *Citta* is the intention within one's mind and not giving up from doing, including the sense of concentration. The last one, *Vīmaṃsā* is the way to investigate causes and effects and improve to the better and the best ultimately by having totally wisdom. With this virtue, it will take anyone to be successful in worldly life and in attaining the nibbāna at large (Phrarajabhavanavisudh, 2004).

Buddhist Principle: The Sublime states of mind (Brahmavihāra 4)

This virtue is composed of 1) *Mettā*: loving-kindness, friendliness, goodwill; 2) *Karuṇā*: compassion; 3) *Muditā*: sympathetic joy, altruistic joy, no envy; and 4) *Upekkhā*: equanimity, poise, neutrality (Phradhammapīṭaka, 2003). *Brahmavihāra 4* means the Dhamma of *brahma* which is the Dhamma principle for human beings and it will help us to have purely lives. Whoever can keep his or her mind neutrally, he or she can maintain the precepts at all times and might subsequently attain the wisdom within (Anonymous, 2004).

3. Methodology

This paper is an empirical case study, consisting of research using a qualitative method along with the secondary data in order to scrutinize facts from the real situation in the Samrong General Hospital. Interviews were conducted in person and on an in-depth basis, in addition to focus groups; which were recorded and subsequently transcribed. Some interviewees were contacted in advance for interviews, so as to obtain the right and relevant participants. Other respondents were contacted by chance to balance the data, not to receive only well-prepared information and to address overly homogeneity of data. The Managing Director, the Human Resource Manager, chiefs of various departments, and operational staff members were interviewed by answering specific questions. Further, their body language was also observed and it was found that this was meaningful to these findings. Secondary data from articles, Dhamma books, online accesses and thesis papers have also been integrated into the research.

4. Analysis - Overview of the Samrong General Hospital

The hospital was established in 1981 by a couple of medical doctors who desired to have a place to save the lives of patients and injured people in Samut Prakan province. Before that, it was very difficult to access remote hospitals in Bangkok and many patients would die before being able to receive medical treatment. When they opened the private clinic, there were only two hospitals available but now there are 26 private hospitals nearby. Thus it is highly competitive for the healthcare business in that area but the 250-bed Samrong General Hospital remains one of the leading medical institutions in Samut Prakan province because of its policies, management principles and, it is claimed, Buddhist-based organizational practices.

Founders Dr. Sutep and Dr. Prapa Wongphaet graduated from German universities and had a clear vision that: "This hospital will save patients' lives and help them to get better, we do not want to make any business or aim for profits from patients' lives." Consequently, they have never ever asked any patients before helping them that "Do you have money?" or asked them to make a deposit in advance (Wongphaet, 2011; Wongsutal, 2011). The first thing for all employees to do for patients is to help and save their lives.

More than 600 staff members, including physicians, nurses, nursing assistants and back office staff members serve about 1,800–2,000 outpatients daily. Approximately 60% of them are patients with the social security fund program, of whom some 110,000 people are registered with Samrong General Hospital. More than 600,000 patients are treated annually. From an internal survey, it was determined that patients were impressed with staff members and services.

In 2000, the Samrong General hospital was the first in Samut Prakan province to receive ISO 9002 certification and was recertified in 2006; it was also accredited by the Healthcare Accreditation Institute, receiving Hospital Accreditation (HA), again the first hospital to do so in Samut Prakan. In 2009, it was the first hospital in the province to receive ISO 9001 certification and, in 2011, HA reaccreditation was received. Since 2006, the hospital has received best organization award in Labour Relations for five years consecutively, which brought them pride. With a good relationship between employers and employees, this corporation sees no need for a labour union in its workplace. Thai law is very repressive towards freedom of association, freedom of speech and collective bargaining in the workplace.

Organizational Policies

The first crucial policy of the Samrong General Hospital is to refuse to perform procedures which they consider to be morally questionable, such as abortion and sexual reassignment surgery. They claim they wish only to do ‘good’ and ethical actions, including “transparency” with respect to accounting and financial systems. In addition, they have just one accounting system for submission to the Revenue Department (RD) of Thailand ever since their establishment. As a result, Ms. Laiyangkurn (2011) indicated that this accounting and taxation system for the RD represents her most proud lifetime achievement. Being an honest person makes her feel comfortable and happy to work with and, consequently, the Government Saving Bank is in the process of providing Samrong General Hospital with a “Good Governance” award in the year 2011.

This policy also applies in the marketing department, in which they claim or launch any programs to customers, then they meant as they stated to them. As a Marketing Manager who has been with this organization since she was a trainee in the accounting section in 1982, Ms. Krigchak (2011) felt very proud of working in this hospital since she has never told a lie to her patients. Whatever she promises to her clients, she can do it without any change. She is happy with her life that she does not make any sins by breaking the fourth precept because of the hospital’s policy.

With the original intention, the founders wished to be a “safe shelter” for patients and employees in Samrong district. Moreover, they think that the hospital is a place that they could earn more merits because it is a place to save patients’ lives. Once the Social Security Office operated in 1991, the Samrong General Hospital accepted employees and people who have a medical care service in 1992. Since then, they have been serving this group more than 20 years with as the same standards as other patients. Because of the large numbers of patients in this group and also other patients, the revenue could cover all expenses and make them pursue their objective.

To expand their business is not the main idea for them. They would prefer to have a small size that they can take a “closed-look” and prolong the family-like or paternalistic environment in their organization. Hence, they stress on “quality” more than “quantity.”

For the master plan, everyone in the hospital participates in order to share their ideas and suggestions. They have plans for building up new generations to replace the old staff who are going to retire in the future by connecting them with Buddhist principles particularly the “*Brahmavihāra* 4.” Especially the loving-kindness, Mr. Wongphaet

(2011) stated that it would help his new staff members who work for the operational level dramatically. According to the new employees, most of them are still young. They need to learn and have more responsibilities. Regularly they make some mistakes by their carelessness or being late to work, fortunately he handles these problems by having the senior staff to be in charge of this section. With her mercy and warm-hearted, she could sit in their hearts by means of giving sweets and snacks to them; understanding them; and talking with them nicely.

Organizational Cultures

The dominant organizational culture of this firm is to train its employees to be “good, smart, and happy” persons respectively. To compare the healthcare business staff with other fields such as the manufacturing or factory staff, the conspicuous point is people who work for hospitals are likely to have tender minds and soft characters. It is much easier to train them. Therefore, it reflects to the organization’s cultures at some degrees.

The Managing Director has expressed that every policies and projects should get started from the top and senior executive management going down to the operational level. The role model persons play a vital part for their subordinates to follow, then they should pay respect to everyone including their followers, and not look down to them. Subsequently, it will be like a chain reaction that will get back to the senders. As a small piece of jigsaws, everyone goes to the same direction and ultimate goal, eventually they will reach their aim. And it will be a nice “whole picture” of the corporate.

To support doing good deeds is a positive thinking to create a nice working atmosphere in the Samrong General Hospital. They encourage their employees who come up with good ideas and give them a chance to do so. Not only for the organization’s projects but also for employees’ benefits, for instance, they have a “handicraft club” to teach participants having more skills, producing some products, and earning some money for a side-line job. Whereas some off-duty staff members could set up booths at the hospital to sell their goods.

Management Styles

The organization chart is a horizontal-oriented. They do not have several lines of commanders in order to have rapidness and flexibility in management and making decisions. Hierarchy is one of the obstacles in organizational management. According to Kettley (1995) explicates the components of human resource management strategy which typically accompany the move to a flatter structure are: 1) a greater emphasis upon team working; 2) cross functional working; and 3) employee involvement or empowerment. At the Samrong General Hospital, everyone can come and talk to the Managing Director directly.

One-minute meeting every morning is one of their strategies to implement in the hospital. Only the urgent issues or updated information will be reported to the Managing Director. Thirty-minute meeting will have every week for each department and One-hour monthly meeting is for the management team. Every six months, they will hold an executive meeting for a few days to examine, analyze, and plan ahead for hospital’s directions (Wongphaet, 2011).

Managing people is the first priority to do before managing tasks, therefore, they emphasize on souls and minds of their employees by applying the Buddhism into their working environment. SHA (Wongphaet, 2011) stands for Sustainable Health Care and Health Promotion by Appreciation and Accreditation that the management team has designed for its work. Furthermore, they encourage their employees to create the learning

organization, and to understand life and working approach by applying consciousness, supporting concentration, and implementing their wisdom to solve problems acquiring benefits for all.

Once they face with problems or obstacles, they will communicate and search for causes. After that they will analyze, adjust, and correct them. Back to 2006, Ms. Nijjanpansri (2011), the Human Resource (HR) Manager expressed that the HR department had surveyed and found out that more than 90% of their staff indicated that they were happy in their lives and working with this organization. These happiness indexes showed for 5 years consecutively. With the effort of HR department, they were working on the survey again, but on the other hand they were looking for the hardship of their employees and finally they came up with the problem of their debts. Hence, they set up “The Samrong General Hospital Saving Cooperative Limited” to solve financial situations of their employees. It was a good example that they managed and tried to please their staff.

Projects/Activities

The organization has provided several projects/activities for their staff members to support them working happily. Most of them are base on the Buddhist principles as follows:

1. Internal Projects/Activities

- “Inexpensive Lunch Project” has been operating about 10 years ago. It costs only Baht 5 per meal. This program helps employees to save their money on living. In reality some staff quit from this hospital, then they came back again because of this program since they could save more money if they work here. For instance they have 3 meals/day, it will be only Baht 15.
- “Half-price Rental Apartment” provides for employees who have a salary less than Baht 10,000 which means employees pay for the rental charge only 50% and another 50% will be paid by the hospital. And another good advantage for this program is that they can only walk from their residency to the workplace, then they can save for the transportation charges as well.
- “Half-price Shoes” is another project that the firm would like to give more benefits to staff members, so they pay only a half price of their shoes and the hospital pay the rest for them.
- “Free 3 Uniforms” for one year and a half to their employees. Some companies give 2 uniforms to their staff every year but this idea is more reasonable. Since Thai people rarely use the dryer machine, once their uniforms get wet, then they will get troubles with the shortage of their uniforms.
- “Scholarship” for employees and their children which is no obligations and conditions. More than 20 years ago, the founders had a broad vision by sending their employees to study at a master’s level. All of them still have been working for the hospital until now.
- “Making Merits” on a monthly basis for ones who were born in each month operated by the HR department. The activities include making donation (*Danā*), praying, listening to Dhamma sermons, and meditation. This is to emphasize that their career is a merit making one which they will receive good things from their good deeds every day and to assure them to be proud of themselves. It is such a good activity and help participants feel happy and get a chance to do good deeds together on their special occasions.
- “Practice Dhamma and Meditation” on the first day of every month. According to they will have new employees start working on that day. This is kind of a

Dhamma orientation for them as well, in the mean time other staff members can attend this program and will not count as absentees.

- “Dhamma Retreat” will provide for supervisors, leaders, and ones who are interested in Dhamma practices. This program will arrange for 7 days with the Young Buddhist Association Under Royal Patronage in Pathum Thani province, and will not count as absentees. The corporate will provide a ride and support all expenses for attendants.
- “Retirement Plan” for staff members who are going to retire, Mr. Wongphaet will give them suggestions and plan for their future. Some want to extend working, while someone want to further their study to be an instructor. They will get support from the organization.

2. External Projects/Activities

- “Health Education” is to promote how to take care of good health to the community in Samrong District.
- “Free Physical Check-up” to nearby community and policemen in that area.
- “Anti-Drugs” is a program that the Samrong General Hospital provides for schools and community and gives knowledge on drugs in order to prevent them from drugs and to help addicts stop taking drugs. The Samrong General Hospital is a “White Hospital” in Samut Prakan province as well.
- “Samrong Ruamjai Foundation” was established in 1983 and has been helping the needy since then.
- “Scholarship” to youths on the Children’s day and other occasions in community around Samut Prakan area and also donating book supplies and stationery to schools.
- “Mobile Blood Donation”
- “Vocation Education” is a teaching program to housewives to learn how to develop themselves and improve their skills to earn more money.

Spiritual Environment and Development

With their objectives to be “A giver” to their employees and community, it was explicit that the founders and top executive management have been performing this scheme since then. They would like to help miserable patients to be happy, and in case they could not help and they would be dead, they desire to help them to be rest in peace. And the patient’s relatives feel good that the hospital gives a good treatment. Moreover, the staff on Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of the Samrong General Hospital was trained to know-how of giving good suggestions and taking care of patients who are going to pass away, comforting them to be calm down, also inviting the Buddhist monks to preach them and pray for them.

On the back of employees’ identification card (ID), there are 6 declarations: 1) Be loyal to the organization; 2) Be nice to all patients; 3) Love and honor all co-workers like a “Samrong Family”; 4) Follow the rules and regulations of organization; 5) Be diligent, honest, and responsible; and 6) improve oneself to develop the corporate. Thus, this is a statement that will remind all of staff members to perform good deeds everyday when they put on their ID.

Besides, the HR department showed the movie “*Departures*” to staff members. It was a Japanese movie which won the academy award winner for best foreign language film in the U.S. and received 10 Japan academy prize awards in 2009. It was about an encoffineer who performed his duties with his heart and devoted all his effort to decorate corpses beautifully. The main idea from this movie was that although they were dead, but

he prepared the dead bodies be ready for the cremation. He did not behave in a bad manner or neglect to them; in the mean time the staff members are in charge of persons who are still alive. After watching this film, most of employees got in tears and made a resolution to take a good care of their patients. It was very touching and useful to cultivate senses of morality by this method (Nijjanpansri, 2011).

In addition, the HR department provides a basic course for their new employees training them to be good helpers with their pride such as one staff member working in a service aid department for 3 years, Mr. Wongsutal (2011) pointed out that "I'm very proud of my job to help patients and save their lives. I'm doing like "a giver" and I give help to everyone without any prejudice, unfairness, and discrimination. And I never expected to get anything back from them." Before working here, he had experienced as a salesman, chef, and clerk in various places. Finally he decided to follow his father who has been working with this hospital for 18 years and he said that he is happy every day and he does not want to change to other jobs or even change to another department in this firm because at his point only 3 minutes he can save others' lives. Thus, it is very important for him to do so. Once he helps these people, he feels happy within. During the interview, he always had a big smile on his face and his eyes.

The persons who give out with their pure intention will get good things in return. It was proved by Mr. Wongsutal (2011) that his patients always come back to visit him and buy some snacks for him treating like he is their child or relative. One kind of situations that happens quite often is that he has free meals because the food owners in that area do not charge it. They told him that he took a good care of them when they were in the hospital.

Not only the aspects from their patients, but also the warm feeling from their employees will be the happiness index that indicates how working environment of this firm would be. Ms. Suwannawin (2011) addressed her feeling that she is eager to work every day, with her 18 year-experiences. During her weekends, she is looking for Mondays to go to work. She feels like this is her family. Similarly, Mr. Wongsutal (2011) said that "We spend time working here more than we are at home, so I feel like this in my second home. We are brothers and sisters. Everybody gives hands to help each other. We are happy here." Additionally, Ms. Kongprecha (2011) added that "Working at this hospital for 30 years, it likes a love-bondage and makes me feel that this organization is more than my house." Further, Ms. Roadduang (2011) impressed on organizational culture that everyone greets and bows to each other both in the morning and in the evening. She feels like being in a warm family. The corporate also gives a chance for employees to study and practice Dhamma. Hence, they could calm down their minds, and have more consciousness (Onanong, 2011; Roadduang, 2011).

Likewise, Ms. Onanong (2011) explained to her subordinates that "We are so lucky to have a good boss who is generous to us and to our patients so we have to do our best for our hospital." In addition, she also shares Dhamma teachings with her patients and patients' relatives by praying and meditating with them (Seangtharathip, 2011; Onanong, 2011). Correspondingly, Ms. Wongsirinopakun (2011) indicated that her department always sponsor for the Dhamma books providing for patients free of charge. This method helps her staff to read more Dhamma teaching as well. Once the staff members have Dhamma inside their minds and they practice in everyday life, then they can serve patients with fully service-minded which come out of their pure intentions as Swanson and Holton (2001) cited that the HR professionals use a tool for the benefits of the organization. With this method, however, it is beneficial to both employees and the corporate.

From the internal projects such as the “Inexpensive Lunch Project” and “Monthly Making Merits” providing for their employees, the HR department has extended these 2 programs to be successful in 2011 as following:

1. “Full of Merits” is the project that supports any staff members who practice 3-minute meditation in each department every day. They can do it 3 times a day: morning, noon, and afternoon. Once one does it, he or she will receive a “meal coupon” amounting Baht 5. Then they will get meal for free and if they practice meditation 3 times/day, totally they will have 3 coupons. It means they can save their money in each day. Ms. Nijjanpansri (2011) and the HR department emphasize this project by following up to each department and taking pictures of these activities and post on the board. It was a good encouragement.

At first, some departments could not make it, for example the ICU section, thus they take turn to do so (Seangtharathip, 2011); the security guard section has no place to meditate, then they just sit on the floor in front of the Chinese spirit house next to the hospital (Nijjanpansri, 2011); for the service aid section, they have to be ready to serve patients all the time, as a result they have a standing-meditation for 3 minutes after 1-minute morning meeting (Wongsutal, 2011). Whereas at the beginning some departments get against from young members, however the head of that department encourage them to try and later on they could meditate longer starting from 3 minutes to 5 minutes and up to 10 minutes which they themselves ask for it (Laiyangkurn, 2011; Seangtharathip, 2011).

For the back office staff members, they get together at 7:45 am at the conference room on the 7th floor to do the morning chanting and meditation from Mondays to Fridays every week (Charoenchai, 2011; Laiyangkurn, 2011). From the record of HR department, it showed that the numbers of coupons is increasing originating from 3,440 coupons in April to 4,364 coupons in May and up to 4,752 coupons in June 2011 (Nijjanpansri, 2011).

This program is very successful that each department could gain more “free meal” coupons and they have a “coupon box” in each department, whenever anyone get a coupon, he or she will drop it in that box to share to others. And the one who needs to get a meal, he or she will draw one coupon from the box. Some departments use these coupons to buy some special foods to eat together occasionally. During the focus group interview, some departments realized that the service aid staff members really need to have more meal coupons, so they will share to them later on. (Kongpreecha, 2011; Laiyangkurn, 2011; Nijjanpansri, 2011).

2. “Monthly Making Merits” started from the HR Manager. She thought that in the previous year, employees learned how to receive from others on their birthdays such as getting a birthday gift from the HR department, receiving blessing and Dhamma sermon from the monks. Hence, in this year she would like them to be “a giver” instead (Nijjanpansri, 2011).

This project will be held on the forth Friday of every month for everyone who is interested in making merits not only for the birthday people. They will meditate and listen to Dhamma sermons from Buddhist monks. Further, the alms offering will be prepared by the donors. This is the more advanced stage that they have cultivated to their employees’ minds. Mr. Wongphaet (2011) stated that our lifetime is very short, we should have a clear objective in our life. To purify our minds is a good thing to do so and our minds today should be better and purer than yesterday. This is kind of a spiritual development in our everyday life (Phrarajabhavanavisudh, 2004).

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The Samrong General Hospital applies both approaches: the Buddhist principles, and the Innovative management approaches in managing their human resources as below:

1. The Buddhist principles: basically they base on Buddhist principles since the beginning as the statement of Phradharmakosajarn expressed in the 30 years of the Samrong General Hospital book (2011) that “The Wongphaet family has been supporting Wat Prayurawongsawas Waraviharn before 1957. This family is aware of the importance of Buddhism. It is noticed that they all support and take good care of Buddhist monks and laypeople. Besides, they bring Buddhist doctrines and implement them by inviting monks to give monthly Dhamma lecture to their employees. In addition, they also promote staff members to make donation, take five precepts, and meditate in order to develop their quality of life. It is such a good work to create a peaceful world.” It would claim that this corporate has truly built a “Buddhist Social Work” in their workplace.

From observation, the researcher found out that the most conspicuous of Buddhist principles that is applies in this firm was *Mettā* or loving-kindness. The teaching of Phramongkolthepmuni (Mata, 2010) clarified about the powerful of *Mettā* that everyone can do it. We all have loving-kindness to others as if mothers love their children, in other word, we will get tremendous of loving-kindness in return. For the Samrong General Hospital, starting from the founders passed along to the second generation, the Managing Director. One of the interviewees showed her impression of the top management level by giving a case of one staff members who got pregnant and found out that her child had a thalassemia. Once Mr. Wongphaet had known about this issue, he told her not to get an abortion and he would support all treatment expenses. As a result, that child is still alive until now.

Particularly, *Mettā* from the Managing Director, there were two more witnesses, Ms. Charoenchai (2011) and Ms. Laiyangkurn (2011) who felt very impressed and appreciated in his mercy and support both verbally and performingly. Ms. Charoenchai got a breast cancer, brain tumor, and thyroid but she used Dhamma and medical treatment to heal her symptoms. Sometimes, she felt suffered but Mr. Wongphaet gave her warmed words, cheered her up, and concerned about her health. This was the same as Ms. Laiyangkurn who also got a brain tumor. At this present, both of them are normal. They can work regularly and also give Dhamma talks to the sufferers by showing their cases to them.

From the employees’ impression, it presented that leadership is truly vital in each organization especially the leaders who have morality in their minds and apply to management policy. Moreover, leaders handle and organizes thing with their ethical thinking, then come out through their speeches, and finally transit into their actions. Subordinates could perceive and touch by their hearts as well (Krigchak, 2011; Onanong, 2011; Suwannawin, 2011; Wongsirinopakun, 2011).

2. The HR management approaches: according to Stone (2009), he indicates how to manage human resources especially on-the-job experience which starts from:
 - 2.1 **Coaching** is planned one-to-one instruction. The coach sets a good example of what is to be done.
 - 2.2 **Mentoring** involves the creation of a learning relationship with the mentor acting as a coach and role model.

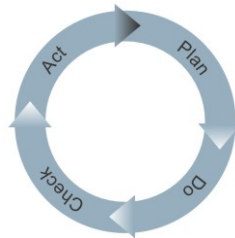
2.3 **Behavior Modeling** or observational learning is how people learn from others' experience.

As the above method, the Samrong General Hospital always follows this step by step and also showed in its policy.

3. Another perspective from Mr. Wongphaet (2011) was a linkage between the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle (PDCA) or the Deming Wheel which is used for the quality management approach (Anonymous, Mind Tools) and *Iddhipāda 4*. Additionally, the HR department implemented this approach in its practices, analyzing from several programs and activities. The four-step in the PDCA clarifies as follows:
4. **Plan:** Identifying and analyzing the problem.
5. **Do:** Developing and testing a potential solution.
6. **Check:** Measuring how effective the test solution was, and analyzing whether it could be improved in any way.
7. **Act:** Implementing the improved solution fully.

These are shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: The Plan-Do-Check-Act Cycle



8. Since the Samrong General Hospital is a service firm in the healthcare business, due to the five dimensions of service quality or “Servqual” which measures the service quality in various service organizations (Looy, Gemmel, & Dierdonck, 2003), the researcher analyzed from their practices from Buddhist doctrines such as *Iddhipada 4* and *Brahmavihāra 4* related to the five factors of Servqual as following:
 - 8.1 **Tangibles** – the appearance of physical facilities which provides for services and communication material. In this case, this year they just renovated the emergency room for this purpose because their location is in the industry zone and vocational schools, most of their patients get an accident or are injured. Moreover, they also decorated new rooms for inpatients feeling comfortably like in their home.
 - 8.2 **Reliability** – consistency of performance and dependability. This framework was approved by the Marketing, and Accounting and Finance department that assured on the “transparency” policy.
 - 8.3 **Responsiveness** – the willingness to help customers, prompt service. One example was staff members both the front-office and the back-office who keenly offered help to patients and the researcher. During the walk around the hospital, sometimes the employees asked for a permission to stop walking and greeted to their familiar clients.
 - 8.4 **Assurance** – knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence. The researcher could affirm on their politeness from her observation.

8.5 **Empathy** – caring, individualized attention to customers. This was implanted and cultivated to their employees since they first entered to this corporate and emphasize to them regularly by training courses and everyday working life.

However, as Looy et al (2003) stated about three different models of human resources management: the Michigan model, the Harvard model, and the Warwick model in terms of defining what needs to be done, and summarizing what is best for one company will not necessarily be best for another. That perhaps concludes into the criteria on Buddhist social work in each organization, yet it still depends on several factors which the top management team must integrate in terms of its context and practices base on human resources who play a crucial role in the healthcare business.

Nevertheless, one main factor that the Samrong General Hospital could create and maintain its Buddhist social work environment like this because the top executive level realize how its efficiency and potential to do so, with a certain number of employees. In the case of expanding business, they prefer not to do it at this present. The one who succeeds in one's life, he or she should know oneself thoroughly.

Notwithstanding, at this moment the Samrong General Hospital has reached its goal at some levels, but with the faith that “Today is better than yesterday, and tomorrow will be better than today.” The researcher truly believes that they are on their way to still serve community and employees with their wholehearted basing on Buddhism principles. According to the research, Anson (2000) and Vestal et al (1997) identified that HR's role is critical in building an adaptive, learning culture with the capacity for rapid change by creating right values and behaviors in healthcare workers. In this research, the HR department of this firm was one of the good role models to demonstrate that they truly cultivate ethics and morality to their staff employees including increase the better way of their lives. The researcher also agreed that the Samrong General Hospital is on the right track to its target by creating a Buddhist social work and “warm” atmosphere in its workplace.

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