

The Study of Staffing and Strategic Training and Development on Religious Mission of Monks and Novices in the Southern Border Provinces of Thailand

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Abstract

The main objective of this research is to study the staffing, Strategic Training and Development including problems and suggestions affecting the religious mission of monks and novices in the Southern provinces of Thailand. The population of this study consisted of 720 monks and novices on mission in Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat Provinces. The tools used for data collection are questionnaire and interview schedule. A convenient sampling technique is employed in this study. The completed 247 questionnaires are returned for data analysis.

Main findings from this research are summarized as follows: majority of respondents are between 20-30 years old, with less than 5 years of monkhood. Their education includes general and religious studies. For religious study, most of them studied Dhamma rather than Pali education. Most of them completed the highest level of Dhamma studies. They finished 3, 4, 5 and 6 grade of Pali studies. With regard to general education, majority of respondents obtained higher secondary school. They live in temples with 5-6 staying monks with its location at Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat Provinces. The distance between district city to the temples is more than 20 kilometers. The staffing is viewed as problematic. With respect to strategic training and development which are categorized into needs or requirement for training, the findings reveal that it derives from the needs of organization with the aim at self-development and there is requirement for training course to upgrade specialization emphasizing on Dhamma. Relating to training operation, majority of respondents rarely get trained (1-2 times per 2 years) due to limited budget. The 3-day morning project being held at the temple is required by most of respondents. For evaluation and monitoring aspect, most of them regard it as reward bestowment. In the past, evaluation and monitoring were used to be conducted and the conditions for the training should be created. The suggestions of this study indicate that there should establish the Center for Strategic Human Resource Management for monks and novices in the Southern provinces of Thailand with the aim to function in both staffing and training. The need for training should be regularly traced in order to upgrade the competencies along with the provision of general and Dhamma education. The conditions to perform mission as being trained should be created with the fund support from the temple.

Introduction

According to the history, Buddhism was introduced to Thailand started from the south in during the 1st century B.C. Its progress was indicated in Srivijaya kingdom during 7th – 13th century. The kingdom enlarged from Chaiya District, Suratthani Province, Thailand to Indonesia. The main historical evidence of this is Burobudho temple, world heritage in Java. The changes from kingdom to country depend on respective time. However, Buddhism has been prevalent in the southern Thailand. Pattani has been regarded as the centre of economy, polity and religion. When there is unrest, the Buddhists in Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat have definitely faced its impact. This also affects propagation of Buddhism as well as the mission of monks and novices living in these areas. Therefore, members of various organizations should focus on this issue seriously.

The current trend of world society has led to the high degree of socio-economic competition. This has brought about the reduction of numbers of Buddhists participating in religious activities. At the same time, numbers of Buddhists who are intended to obtain the monkhood have been less. In addition, the unrest situation in these areas deteriorated this problem. These have negative impact on human resource administration, especially, staffing, training and development which affect each other. In this paper, strategic training and development consisting of need or requirement in training, method design for training and evaluation of training, suggested by Mello, Noe and others, are used (Mello, 2011:389; Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart and Wright, 2008:268).

For the continuity of Buddhism in deep south provinces of Thailand, it is very important to have monks and novices carrying out their missions to propagate Buddhism to people. Therefore, a study of staffing, strategic training and development is the first important factor to religious propagation of monks and novices so that Buddhism has been progressive in these areas and sustainably established in Thailand.

Objectives of the Study

In the light of the above statements, the following objectives have been put forward:

1. To study the staffing of human resource affecting the religious mission of monks and novices in the Southern Provinces of Thailand.
2. To study the strategic training and development affecting the religious mission of monks and novices in the Southern Provinces of Thailand.
3. To study the problems and solutions in strategic training and development affecting the religious mission of monks and novices in the Southern provinces of Thailand.

Limitation of the Study

1. Research population comprised 720 monks and novices on mission in Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat Provinces (Office of National Buddhism, 2010). In addition, governors of Southern region and 18th Sangha Region who oversees all monks and novices in these Provinces was interviewed.
2. Variables of the Study
 - 2.1 Independent variables consist of personal factors, physical factors of temple, staffing and strategic training and development
 - 2.2 Dependent variable is Buddhism mission
3. Theoretical contents of this study include i) staffing emphasizing problems in recruitment and recruitment dissemination, and ii) strategic training and development focusing on needs or requirement in training and development, how to carry out the training project and its monitoring and evaluation
4. Research sites are Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat Provinces where monks and novices are on mission.
5. Period of carrying out the study is from 1 January to 30 September 2011

Definitions of Terms in this study

Staffing defines as the process by which an organization persuades person who has competency and attitude consistent with it to work for achievement of its goal.

Training is the process for preparing the members of organization to obtain knowledge and skills for the betterment of their work performance focusing on the present.

Strategic training and development is the process consisting of planning to find the needs in training, design of project, operation and evaluation of project which is the subcomponent of human resource management.

Training need is the process of finding the need in managing the training from responsible organization, persons or works.

Evaluation and monitoring is the system that makes to compare the changed behavior or results after getting training by considering from the trainee, friends, boss, subjects and services recipients in order to improve the training.

Personnel development is the process of personnel's behavior adjustment in better working emphasizing on the future.

Religious mission in the Southern Provinces is ways of normal life of monks and novices for Dhamma practice in order to be the model or sample of good practice including preaching Buddhadhamma to Buddhists when opportunity permitted.

Methodology

Keeping the study's objectives in mind, this study was conducted by using survey research with the following steps:

1. The basic related data were collected from texts, books, documents, journals research works to study and categorize into groups as the guidelines in drafting the questionnaire and interview schedule by accepting the suggestions and advices from experts such as deputy governors, military officials, high

- ranking monk administrators who specialize in problems of southern border Provinces in order to specify the objectives and construct the questionnaire and constructed interview schedule.
2. To improve questionnaire and interview schedule with advices from qualified experts and the improved questionnaire was put on tryout.
 3. Field work was conducted to survey the opinions in Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat Provinces by interviewing Sangha administrators and executives in Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat Provinces as an added information/data covering all research problems mentioned in questionnaire and interview schedule.
 4. To analyze data, when all questionnaires were returned to researcher including data from interview schedule. The completed ones were analyzed in order to make presentation in the form of reports.

Population and Sample of the Study

Population of this research consisted of 720 monks and novices on mission in Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat Provinces (Office of National Buddhism, 2010). Out of these, 280 monks and novices being drawn by using convenience sampling technique constituted the sample of this study. The key informants of this study are governors of Southern region and 18th Sangha Region who oversees all monks and novices in these Provinces.

The Administration of Tools

1. The collection of data from questionnaire: researcher made survey and gathered it by himself. 247 completed questionnaires representing 88.21 percent were collected for process of data analysis. The field study was conducted from 9 June to 9 August 2011.
2. Regarding the interview, researcher approached and interviewed governors of Southern region and 18th Sangha Region who oversees all monks and novices in these Provinces in 17 March 2011 and 26 April 2011, respectively.

The Findings of the Study

1. Personal or General Characteristics

Majority of respondents are between 20-30 years old, with less than 5 years of monkhood. Their education includes general and religious studies. For religious study, most of them studied Dhamma rather than Pali education. Most of them completed the highest level of Dhamma studies. They finished 3, 4, 5 and 6 grade of Pali studies. With regard to general education, majority of respondents obtained higher secondary school. They live in temples with 5-6 staying monks with its location at Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat Provinces. The distance between district city to the temples is more than 20 kilometers.
2. The Staffing, Training and Human Resource Development
 - 2.1 Most of respondents were informed from the temple
 - 2.2 They viewed staffing in southern Provinces as problematic.
 - 2.3 With respect to training and development,

most of them regard it as reward bestowment with the reason that they obtained knowledge and utility. Less of them viewed it as punishment by giving the reason that their working performances were not satisfied.
 - 2.4 Relating to training operation, majority of respondents rarely get trained (1-2 times per 2 years) due to limited budget.
 - 2.5 During their working performance, most of them expressed that there was problem in working but this was solved by getting trained.
 - 2.6 Relating to the needs or requirement for training, the findings reveal that it derives from the needs of organization with the aim at self-development.
 - 2.7 The objectives of training were mostly viewed as to develop knowledge in working.
 - 2.8 For course of training, majority of them acknowledged that it is useful for themselves rather than for organizations.
 - 2.8.1 For themselves, they learned more new principles and theories.
 - 2.8.2 For organization, it increased efficiency of working.
 - 2.9 Most of them revealed that problem of the training was the presentation of knowledge by trainers.

2.10 Training in the class was supported by the majority of respondents.

2.11 The 3-day morning project being held at the temple is required by most of respondents.

2.12 They viewed that evaluation and monitoring were used to be conducted and the conditions for the training should be created.

2.13 It was noticed that requirements for various training courses such as increase of special efficiency, specialization emphasizing on Dhamma, Buddhist missionary (Dhammaduta), Psychology based course, executive development and leadership course.

2.14 There should be organization responsible i.e. the Office of National Buddhism, for Training and Development for monks on the mission.

Discussion of Results and Findings of the Study

This part presents discussion of results and findings according to objectives of this study:

1. In respect of the staffing of human resource affecting the religious mission of monks and novices in the Southern Provinces of Thailand, the survey shows that staffing in southern Provinces is problematic. The data from interview reveals that there are rare of those who want to get ordination due to limitation that Act of Compulsory Education has come into effect. The information of this is limited within the temple not disseminated in public and all over remote areas. When it is difficult to get people ordained, this causes the shortage of monks and novices being developed and trained, resulting in quality of Buddhism propagation, respectively.
2. With regard to the strategic training and development affecting the religious mission of monks and novices in the Southern Provinces of Thailand, when having considered with problems, researcher suggested that:
 - 2.1 To find the needs or requirement for training, the findings reveal that it derives from the needs of organization (with the aim at self-development need) and there is requirement for training course to upgrade specialization emphasizing on Dhamma which consistent with data gathered from interviewing executives that there are requirements of various courses training .
 - 2.2 Relating to training operation, majority of respondents rarely get trained (1-2 times per 2 years) due to limited budget. The 3-day morning project being held at the temple is required by most of respondents.
 - 2.3 For evaluation and monitoring aspect, most of them regard it as reward bestowment. In the past, evaluation and monitoring were used to be conducted and the conditions for the training should be created which pertaining to the information gathered from interview.

Suggestions of the Study

The study suggests that:

1. Staffing : those who take responsibility in overseeing monks and novices in the southern Provinces of Thailand must integrate to establish the Centre for Strategic Human Management for monks and novices in the Southern provinces of Thailand with the aim to function in both staffing, training, motivating and maintaining, and later in propagation. This idea should bring into effect all over country. The centre should be grouped provinces based on similar culture, for example, Trang, Krabi and Nakhonsithammarat. It should not categorize according to government grouping. The centre consists of representatives from Office of National Buddhism, the Elders Sangha Council, Regional Sangha Governor, Provincial Sangha Governor, District Sangha Governor, Tambol Sangha Governor, In and Out Areas based temple, Provincial Chamber, Southern Border Provinces Administration Centre (SBPAC), and qualified Buddhist scholars. The organization

- administration must small, swift and ready to solve the problem. The staffing must be planned and proactive approach.
2. Training and Development: it must relate to organization's main plans and strategies of human resources which comprise staffing, development and maintenance. All these components must be strategically conducted. The responsible persons must be fixed in each component and encouraged to work together corporately.
 - 2.1 To find the needs and requirement in training and development: for this, it should noticed that whether the needs derive from organization, working performance or trainees. After that the objectives of training must be set in the same directions with the needs or requirements.
 - 2.2 Operation, Design and Methods of Training: the findings reveal that the training and development is useful. Trainees regard it as reward bestowment with the reason that they obtained knowledge and utility. It is suggested that there should be regular organized in morning about 3-4 days not only in one place but also in other areas being considered convenient and safe in southern Provinces at least every 4 months. The methods of training should be various techniques including Online network, Satellite Distance Learning, etc. The expertise trainers from educational institutions should be invited.
 - 2.3 Monitoring and Evaluation of Training: there should be independent agency to take responsibility in monitoring and evaluating the training. It should not be the Office of National Buddhism. The agency must consist of representatives from government, private sector and Sangha. Monitoring and evaluation should be regularly conducted in every aspect and dimension. With regard to the conditions for the training being created, this can be done by allotting fund for the trained monks and novices to carry out their missions. The budget for this, the Centre for Strategic Human Resources Management should seek cooperation from all Sangha institutions to donate the money to set up the fund for this objective/project. The budget must be used for human resource management in all its components, i.e. staffing, development, and motivation and maintenance.

The suggestion for Further Study

The study dealing with the development of executive Dhammaduta for the Provincial Sangha positions in Southern Thailand: Songha, Satun, Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat, should be further conducted. This will fulfill the shortage of Sangha executives in the Southern Provinces.

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