

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The literature review chapter will be divided into eight main sections that are relevant literatures concerning employers' expectation and perception. In addition, this research had applied and compared with the theory of the tourism and hospitality industry to explore the employers' expectation and perception on tourism and hospitality vocational students graduated. A literature review of previous research and practice has informed the design of the field survey. The particular parts of concern in this research are as follows:

1. Tourism and hospitality industry in Thailand
2. Vocational tourism and hospitality curriculum
3. Vocational tourism and hospitality performance of student
4. Employers' expectation and perception
5. Related concepts and theories

Tourism and hospitality industry in Thailand

Thailand tourism: vision 2012

Since Thailand launched "Visit Thailand Year" in 1987, the number of foreign tourists visiting Thailand has increased dramatically, despite the Gulf War in 1991. The period 1987-1996 can be termed the Golden Decade of Thai Tourism. Over this period, unprecedented economic growth of Thailand has also stimulated local tourism. By 1996, the number of trips taken by Thai tourists was estimated by a Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI) study at 42.5 million.

A number of positive and interactive factors have contributed to making 1987-1996 the Golden Decade for Thai tourism. These include the end of the Cold War, the expansion of international trade and investment, the shift of the growth pole from the Atlantic rim to the Pacific rim (especially to the Asian Pacific-rim countries), the opening of new tourism destinations in the socialist countries in Thailand's

vicinity, technological progress in the aviation and telecommunications industries and others. These factors have combined to increase demand for tourism and at the same time increase the comfort as well as reduce the costs of long-haul travel.

Thailand has been well placed to benefit from these global changes. Recognizing the benefits tourism can bring, Thailand was an early starter compared to its neighbors in the region, in implementing active tourism campaigns. Its location as a half-way stopover between Europe and East Asia and Australia and as a gateway to Indochina and Inner China provides a strategic position to offer a diversity of tourism packages to international tourists. Within Thailand, the expansion of the middle income class following rapid economic growth has encouraged unforeseen growth in local tourism, especially the demand for nature-based attractions. Increases in income have also stimulated demand for foreign travels among the Thais, which in turn has reduced the net foreign exchange from tourism.

Concurrently, the rapidly growing manufacturing industries as well as government sponsored projects such as the Eastern and Southern Seaboard have slowly penetrated the areas considered as prime locations for tourism. In addition to the stress on the environment, a rapid increase in demand for tourism also competes for funding for infrastructure improvement. Given both demand and supply pressures, planning for tourism management in the next decade is therefore, a very challenging task.

The article reviews the trends in international tourism, traces the growth of Thai tourism, analyzes the structure of Thai tourism together with the income it generates, and evaluates the potential and competitiveness of the Thai tourism industry (TDRI, 1997).

International tourism trends

The World Tourism Organization reported 567 million international arrivals in 1995. By 2000 and 2010, this number is expected to reach 664 million and 937 million respectively, implying an average annual growth rate of 4.7 percent. The Asia-Pacific region tends to register higher growth than other regions.

The number of tourists visiting the Asia-Pacific is forecast to increase to 104 million arrivals in 2000 and 190 million in 2010, implying an average annual growth rate of 6.7 percent (Figure 1) (TDRI, 1997).

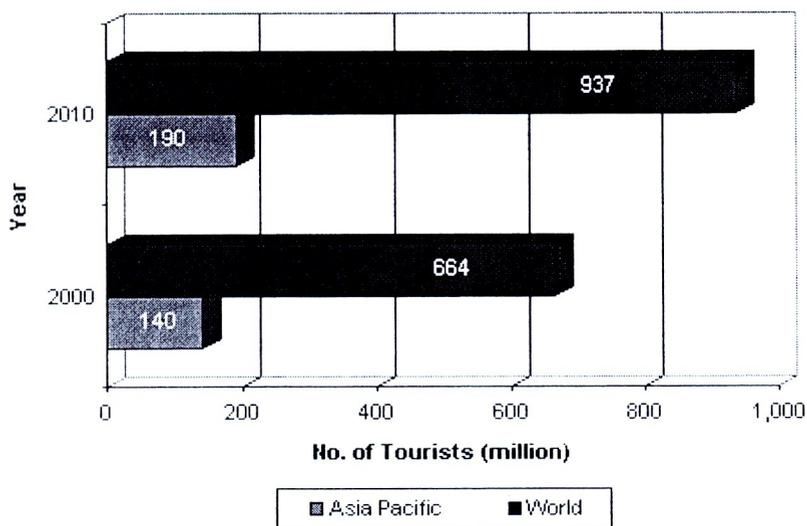


Figure 2 Projected International Tourist Arrivals in 2000 and 2010 A.D.

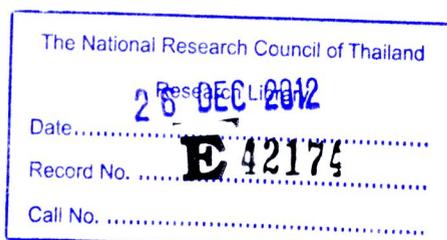
Source: World Tourism Organization, 2011

In terms of income, the world tourism industry generated US\$372 billion in 1995. By the year 2000, global tourism receipt is expected to reach US\$527 billion. About a tenth of global employment is in the tourism industry which contributes about 10 percent of the world's GDP.

Growth and structure of Thai tourism

In the last two decades, the number of international arrivals in Thailand has increased fivefold from 1.2 million arrivals in 1975 to about 7 million arrivals in 1995. This figure represents approximately 1 percent of the world's total travels. This means that Thailand has ample opportunities to tap more new arrivals and expand its market.

Strategically located between destinations of great attractions of the West and the East and between those of the Northern and the Southern hemispheres, Thailand stands to gain from increased tourism in the region. As a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Thailand is well positioned to offer packaged services or to implement joint tourism promotion schemes which will yield increased mutual benefits, especially in areas where concurrent investments are necessary, e.g., sea-port facilities.



The number of international tourists visiting Thailand is projected to increase to 9.6 million arrivals in 2000 and a further 11.2 million arrivals in 2003 (Figure 2) (TDRI, 1997).

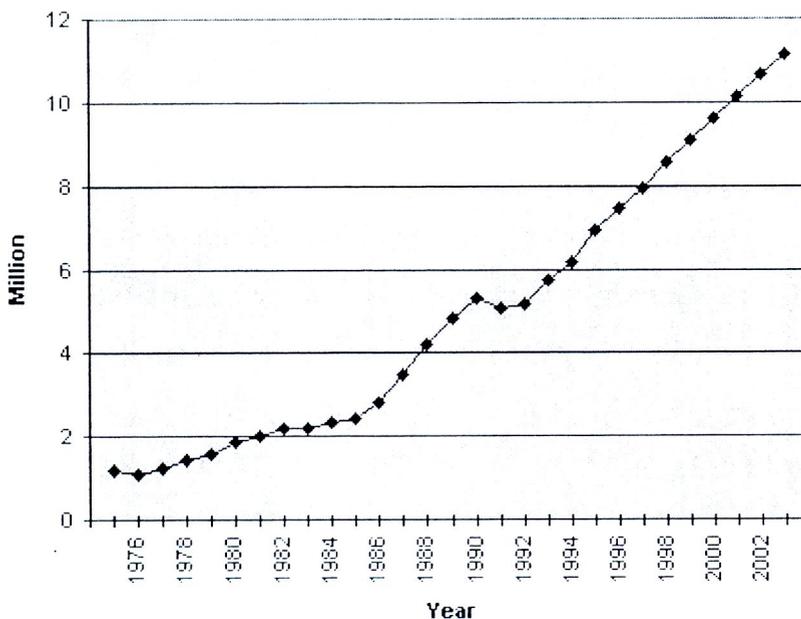


Figure 3 Forecast of Thailand's International Tourists

Source: Thailand Development Research Institute, 1996

Hospitality

Hospitality is in the research refer to “hotel” means “a building where people stay usually for a short time, paying for their room and meal.” (Oxford dictionary, 1995) Or according to Longman dictionary, it means “A building that provides room for people to stay in (usually for a short time) and usually also meals, I return for payment. Hotel is usually expensive to stay than guest house or bed and breakfast but offers a higher standard of comfort.” It includes service, facilities, and activities foods. Now hotels do not offer only rooms perhaps including selling meeting room, where to give a banquet, or have a selling point by restaurant or food in the hotel and any items.

Classifications by luxury

Deluxe = 5 stars

First class = 4 stars

| | | |
|---------------|---|---------|
| Second class | = | 3 stars |
| Third class | = | 2 stars |
| Economy class | = | 1 star |

The key criteria for every rating are cleanliness, maintenance, quality of furnishings and physical appointment, service and the degree of luxury offered.

One-star rated establishments should be clean and comfortable and worth the prices charged when compared to other accommodations in the area. If they are below average in price, they may receive a checkmark for good value in addition to the one star. They offer a minimum of services. There may not be 24-hour front desk or phone service; there may no restaurant, the furniture will not be luxurious. Housekeeping and maintenance should be good, service should be courteous, but luxury will not be part of the package.

Two-star rated accommodation – has more to offer than one-star and will include some, but not necessarily all, of the following: better-quality furniture, larger bedrooms, restaurant on the premises, color TV in all rooms, direct-dial phones, room service, swimming pool. Luxury will usually be lacking, but cleanliness and comfort are essential.

Three-star motels and hotels include all of the facilities and services mentioned in the preceding paragraph. If some are lacking and the place receives three stars. It means that some other amenities are truly outstanding. A three-star establishment should offer a very pleasant travel experience to customer.

Four-star and five-star rated hotels make up a very small percentage (less than 2%) of the total number of places listed; therefore they all deserve the description of outstanding. Bedrooms should be larger than average, furniture should be of high quality; all of the essential extra services should be offered; personnel should be well trained, courteous and anxious to please. Because the standard of quality are high, prices will often be higher than average. A stay in a four-star hotel should be memorable. No place will be awarded four or five stars if there is a pattern of complaints from customers, regardless of the luxury offered.

Standard for Deluxe Hotel (5 stars) of Europe

1. Separate building located at a suitable area
2. Independent road level entrance for guest only

3. Garage or parking space plus parking attendant service, in accordance with the hotel capacity and location
4. Lobby with the minimum area of 50 square meters
5. Lobby with front desk service, luggage handling and luggage store facilities changing rooms and telephone booths with soundproofing
6. Lounge is with setting, reading and writing facilities, conveniently planned and compatible
7. Minimum sizes of public areas commensurate with size of hotel
8. Suites corresponding to 10% of the number of rooms
9. All rooms with private bathroom and running hot and cold water
10. Air-conditioning and heating in all common area and those used privately by guests
11. Furniture, fixtures and all installations of the highest standards and taste, ensuring an atmosphere of comfort and luxury
12. Telephone capable of connecting with internal and external telephone through the hotel private switch board
13. Dining room and restaurant
14. Special bar areas
15. Banquet Hall
16. Children's dining room
17. Lifts when there are more than 2 floors including ground floor
18. Service lifts connecting with housekeeping area in each floor and with the restaurant
19. Safe deposit service
20. Hairdressing and beauty saloon
21. Housekeeping in every floor
22. Laundry and ironing service
23. Public lavatories (separate for ladies and gentlemen) for guests near common area
24. Swimming pool whenever the hotel is located near beaches or out of main urban area
25. Sports facilities with service and independent access

26. Recreational facilities
27. 24 hours room service
28. Administration offices
29. Reception staff should be able to speak English, French or German and local
30. Kitchen, pantry, cold storage and support facilities duly equipped to ensure efficiency in accordance with the category and capacity of the hotel
31. Wine Cellar
32. Service area in all floors
33. Independent service access for luggage, good and staff
34. Staff in uniform
35. Staff quarters separated by sex, comprised of changing rooms and toilet facilities with shower and lavatory
36. Adequate storage areas for food, beverage and general supplies
37. Adequate refuse dumps and fuel storage

Hotel organization structure

Organizing, the process of structuring human and physical resources in order to accomplish organizational objectives, involves dividing tasks into jobs, specifying the appropriate department for each job, determining the optimum number of jobs in each department, and delegating authority within and among departments. One of the most critical challenges facing lodging managers today is the development of a responsive organizational structure that is committed to quality.

The framework of jobs and departments that make up any organization must be directed toward achieving the organization's objectives. In other words, the structure of a lodging business must be consistent with its strategy.

Room department

Managers give structure to a hotel and lodging through job specialization, organization, and establishment of patterns of authority and span of control.

Typically, the rooms department (called the front desk department in a limited-service facility) includes reservations, the front office, housekeeping, and telephone or PBX. In smaller full-service hotels, security and engineering might also

be included in the rooms department. Responsibilities of the rooms department include reservations, guest reception, room assignment, tracking the status of rooms (available or occupied), prompt forwarding of mail and phone messages, security, housekeeping of guest rooms and public spaces such as lobbies, and answering guests' questions. To perform these many duties effectively, the rooms department may be divided into a number of specialized subunits. To complicate matters, in many instances these subunits are also referred to as departments. For example, the laundry department shown in Figure 2-1b is responsible for cleaning and pressing all the hotel's linens and employee uniforms as well as guest laundry. Because of its specialized function, little of the knowledge and skills required to manage a laundry operation is transferable to other areas of hotel operations.

The front office is one of the most important departments in a hotel, as it often offers the only contact between guests and staff. A hotel's front office is where guests are greeted when they arrive, where they are registered and assigned to a room, and where they check out. Usually, the telephone operator, other guest communications functions, and the bell staff or those employees responsible for delivering luggage and messages and attending to special guest requests also fall under the front office umbrella. The reservations department takes and tracks the hotel's future bookings. The housekeeping department is responsible for cleaning guest rooms and public spaces. Because of their specialized nature, the security and engineering departments are discussed in separate sections.

A great deal of interdependence exists among the subunits of the rooms department. For example, reservations must inform the front office of the number of presold rooms each day to ensure that a current inventory of salable rooms is always available. On the other hand, the front office must let reservations know whenever walk-in guests (those who do not have reservations) register. A similar level of cooperation is required between the front office and housekeeping. When a guest checks out, the front office must inform housekeeping so that the room may be cleaned. Once a room is cleaned, housekeeping must inform the front office so that the room may be sold. Certain tasks within the rooms department must occur in a specific order. For example, housekeeping cannot properly provision a guest room if the laundry does not supply enough clean towels or bed sheets. Engineering cannot

replace a defective light switch in a guest room if housekeeping does not report the problem. Effective management of this busy department calls for standardized plans, procedures, schedules, and deadlines, as well as frequent direct communication between the executives who manage the key operating units of the rooms department.

Food and beverage department

The primary function of the food and beverage department is to provide food and drink to a hotel's guests. In earlier times, when an inn had a single dining room that could hold a limited number of guests, this was a fairly simple task. Today, however, providing food and drink is much more complicated. A large hotel might well have a coffee shop, a gourmet restaurant, a poolside snack bar, room service, two banquet halls, and ten function rooms where food and beverages are served. It might also have a lounge, a nightclub, and a lobby bar. On a busy day (or night), it's quite likely that functions will be booked in many outlets at the same time. In addition, some outlets may have multiple events scheduled for a single day. As you can see, there is great diversity in the types of activities performed by a food and beverage department, requiring a significant variety of skills on the part of its workers.

Because of the diversity of services provided, the food and beverage department is typically split into subunits. The executive chef, a person of considerable importance and authority in any full-service hotel, runs the food production, or kitchen, department. The variety of culinary specialists is responsibly for different aspects of food preparation report to the executive chef.

The actual serving of food in a large hotel's restaurants is usually the responsibility of a separate department, headed by the assistant food and beverage director. The food service department is composed of the individual restaurant and outlet managers, waiters, waitresses, and bus help.

Because of their special duties and concerns, many large hotels have a separate subunit that is responsible only for room service. Because of the high value and profit margins associated with the sale of alcoholic beverages, some hotels have a separate department that assumes responsibility for all outlets where alcoholic beverages are sold.

The person responsible for this department is the beverage manager. Most full-service hotels also do a considerable convention and catering business. The typical

convention uses small function rooms for meetings and larger rooms for general sessions, trade shows, exhibits, and banquets. As a hotel or lodging business increases the use of its facilities for conventions and meetings, it may form a separate convention services department. The convention services department and its personnel are introduced to the client, a meeting planner, or an association executive by the marketing and sales department. The convention services department then handles all of the client's meeting and catering requirements. Individually catered events include parties, wedding receptions, business meetings, and other functions held by groups. To provide for the unique needs of these types of customers, hotels often organize separate catering and convention departments.

Depending on the size of the hotel, the job of cleaning the food and beverage outlets themselves as well as of washing pots and pans, dishes, glasses, and utensils is often delegated to a subunit known as the stewarding department. It is only through continuous cooperation and coordination that a hotel's food service function can be carried out effectively. A guest who is dining in a hotel restaurant requires the joint efforts of the kitchen, food service, beverage, and stewarding departments. A convention banquet cannot be held without the efforts of the convention and catering department along with the food production, beverage, and stewarding departments. The sequence of events and cooperation required among the food and beverage staff is even more important than in the rooms department, thus increasing the importance of communication between managers and employees alike. Another challenge faced by management is the diversity of the employees in the food and beverage department; the dishwasher in the stewarding department is at a dramatically different level than the chef in the kitchen (The Organization of a Lodging Establishment, 2009).

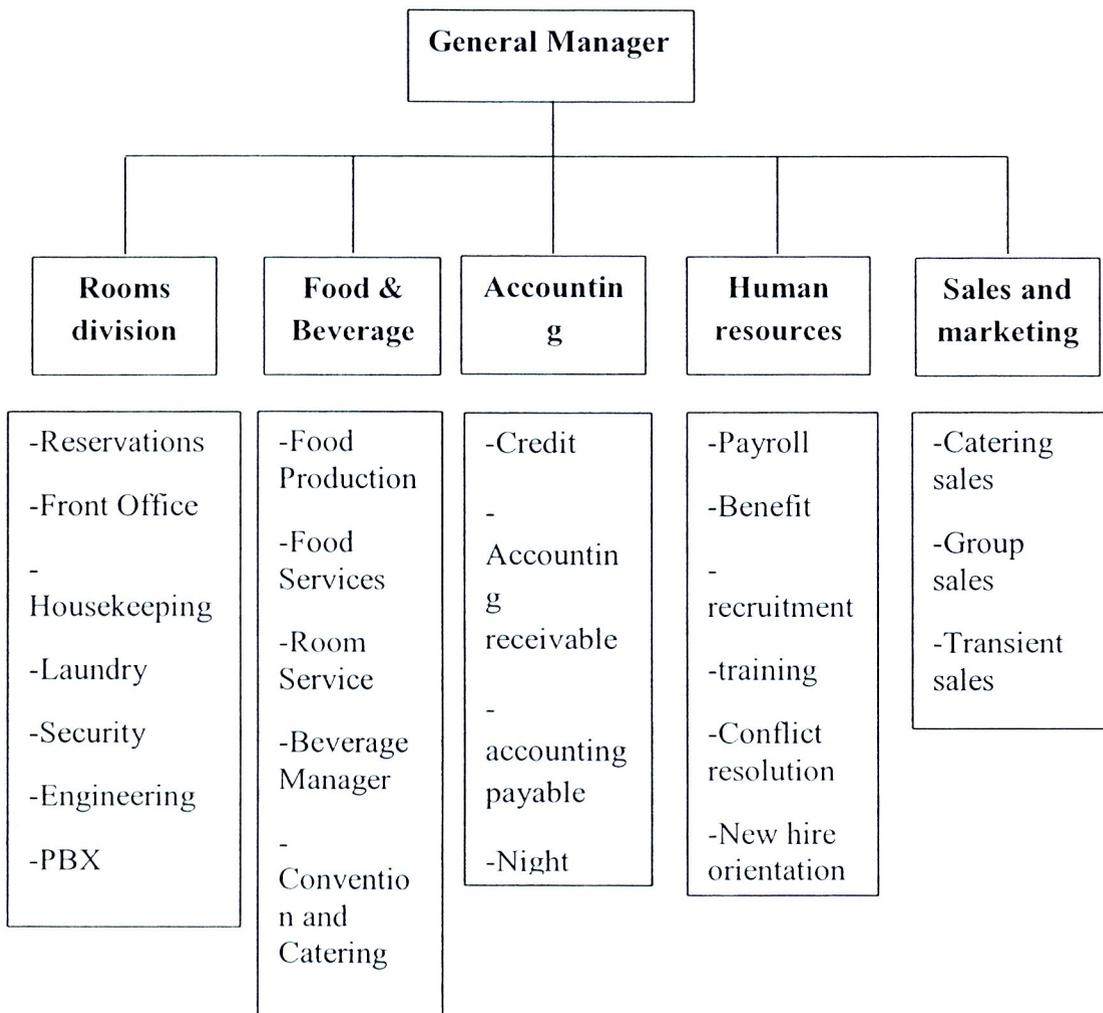


Figure 4 Department Structure in the Hotel and Lodging Industry

Source: The Organization of a Lodging Establishment, 2009.

Vocational tourism and hospitality curriculum

2002 Curriculum for certificate of vocational education

1. Principles

1.1 The curriculum, after the lower secondary education, aims to produce and develop skilled workers in particular occupational areas with appropriate morals, ethics, personality, attitude, and ability to work in accordance with the needs of labour market and self-employment, and also economic and social conditions at both local and national levels.

1.2 The curriculum offers the learners more learning modes and entries to study focusing on specific skills and real practice. Learners are able to choose their learning modes according to their abilities, interests, potentialities, and time. The results of study can be accumulated and transferred, and their prior knowledge and experience from academic sources and workplaces can be accredited.

1.3 The curriculum emphasizes the cooperation of public and private agencies and organizations in educational management.

1.4 The curriculum also provides opportunity for educational institutes and local communities to take part in curriculum development in accordance with the needs of local communities and conditions.

2. Objectives

2.1 To provide the occupational knowledge, skills and experience according to the vocational education standards; to be able to put them into practice at work efficiently; and to be able to choose their own ways of life and careers appropriate to themselves and in accordance with the needs of local and national communities.

2.2 To promote intelligence and creative thinking; to develop their quality of life and career; and to promote skills for their professional management and development.

2.3 To promote positive attitude toward a career, self-confidence and pride of work, love about work and organization, ability to work with others in groups, and respect to rights and duties of oneself and others.

2.4 To produce citizens with good social behaviour, good work habits, group work skills, responsibility towards their families, local organizations and the country; who devote oneself to society; who understand and see the value of Thai arts, culture, and local wisdom; and who have awareness of environmental issues and importance.

2.5 To promote good personalities, human relations, morals, ethics, self-disciplines, and good health and mind.

2.6 To promote an awareness and involvement in national and world economic, social and political issues and solutions; and to build personal consciousness about Thai nation, devotion to the public, national security,

maintenance of nation, religion and Royal Family institutions, and the democratic regime with the King as the head of the country.

Curriculum implementation

2002 Curriculum for the certificate of Vocational Education

1. Learning-teaching

1.1 According to the learning and teaching in this curriculum, learners are able to enrol in any modes of learning offered and to combine them. Learners can transfer credits between various modes and also from prior learning and experience to their formal courses.

1.2 Learning and teaching management emphasizes actual practice by offering courses to practice or train in the workplace, for not less than 1 semester.

2. Time duration

2.1 The academic year is divided into 2 regular semesters (20 weeks each) with class contact hours and credits as determined. An additional summer semester can be provided according to the requirements of each institute for about 5 weeks.

2.2 For in-class learning system, the institute opens for not less than 5 days a week. Each period is 60 minutes (1 hour).

3. Credits

Program has a minimum of 102 credits. The relevant calculations are as follows:

3.1 Courses with theory: 1 credit is made up of 1 hour per week, with a total of not less than 20 hours per semester.

3.2 Courses with theory and practice: 1 credit is 2-3 hours per week, with a total of minimum 40-60 hours.

3.3 Courses to be practiced or trained at the workplace: The total hour of not less than 40 hours is equivalent to 1 credit.

3.4 On-the-job training in a Dual Vocational Training (DVT) Program: Minimum 40 hours is equivalent to 1 credit.

3.5 Project: It follows the regulations stated in the curriculum.

4. Structure

The structure of the 2002 Curriculum for the Certificate of Vocational

Education (2003 Revised Edition) consists of 3 course groups, on-the-job training, and extracurricular activities as follows:

4.1 General courses

4.1.1 Basic general courses are courses applicable for everyday life.

4.1.2 Vocational-based general courses are specific to the workplace.

4.2 Vocational courses which are divided into

4.2.1 Basic vocational courses are those basic related courses groups necessary for particular areas of study.

4.2.2 Core vocational courses are those vocational courses for specific programs.

4.2.3 Specialized vocational courses are those vocational courses aiming to provide learners specific knowledge and specialized skills in careers according to their abilities and interests.

4.2.4 Project

4.3 Free elective courses

4.4 On-the-job training

4.5 Extracurricular activities

The number of credits and courses of each group of courses throughout the program follow the regulations stated in the structure of each area and program of study. For courses in each course group, the institutes can organize courses as determined in the curriculum or appropriate to the local conditions. However, the institutes must provide courses codes, and numbers of periods and credits according to the regulations stated in the curriculum.

5. Project

5.1 The institutes must organize time for learners to carry out their projects in the sixth semester for not less than 160 hours which is equivalent to 4 credits.

5.2 Evaluation and grading is done the same as other courses.

6. On-the-job training

6.1 The institutes select vocational courses for students to practice or train in the workplaces for at least 1 semester.

6.2 Evaluation and grading is done the same as other courses.

7. Qualifications

The learner needs to have background knowledge and entrance qualifications according to the educational management section of the 2002 (Curriculum for the Certificate of Vocational Education, 2003).

8. Evaluation

The evaluation has already determined by the Ministry of Education according to the evaluation section of the 2002 (Curriculum for the Certificate of Vocational Education, 2003).

9. Extracurricular activities

The institutes must organize activities to promote morals, ethics, values, self-disciplines, recreations, and work habits by using group process; to contribute to the community; and to maintain valuable traditions and customs. The activities comprise planning, practice, evaluations, and work improvements.

10. Graduation students must have:

10.1 Passed general, vocational and free elective courses according to the standards stated in each area and program of study.

10.2 Achieved the total number of credits according to the curriculum structure of each area and program of study.

10.3 Obtained a grade point average of not less than 2.00.

10.4 Participated the extracurricular activities and passed them as determined.

11. Adjustment of curriculum

11.1 The Secretary-General of the Office of Vocational Education Commission has the authority to add, change or cancel any areas, programs, specifications, courses and structures in the 2002 Curriculum for the Certificate of Vocational Education.

11.2 The institutes have the authority to add, correct, and change courses in the 2002 Curriculum for the Certificate of Vocational Education, and these must be reported to the Office of Vocational Education Commission.

Hospitality and tourism program

Objectives

1. To provide the understanding and ability to apply the knowledge of Thai, English, Social Studies, Science, Mathematics, Health Education, and Physical Education in a career and for self-development.
2. To provide the understanding of the principles and processes of tasks related to the career selected.
3. To provide the understanding of the principles, methods and processes in the specifications areas of study selected.
4. To provide knowledge of roles, duties and ability to work in the specifications selected.
5. To develop communication skills in the specifications selected.
6. To promote good personality, speaking and writing skills, and team working.
7. To promote awareness in the conservation of tourism resources and the environment.
8. To promote the ability to work appropriate to the knowledge and ability.
9. To promote morals, ethics and positive attitude towards career.

Vocational education standards

Students should be able to:

1. Communicate using Thai, English and other languages in daily life and career.
2. Develop oneself and society according to the principles of religions, human rights, culture and economics.
3. Develop oneself and career solve problems by using the scientific and processes mathematics.
4. Develop personality and health by using the process of health and physical education.

5. Use the computer package and information technology system to develop the business.

6. Plan for career in business by using quality management system and productivity in organizations.

7. Manage the environment, vocational hygiene, and security in organizations and community.

8. Apply the basic business principle work and daily life.

Specification: hospitality

9. Understand the principles and work processes of hotel front office, housekeeping, kitchen, and food & beverage services.

10. Develop skills in hotel front office service, using language for communication, cleaning rooms and public areas, linen and florist, using kitchen equipment, and food & beverage preparation and service.

11. Promote good personality, spoken and written skills, and team working.

12. Be able to follow the advanced technology and to apply the knowledge to develop hotel work efficiently and modern.

Specification: tourism

13. Understand the principles and processes of people offering services.

14. Understand Thai arts & culture and culture of tourists.

15. Understand and have skills in the use of office equipment.

16. Promote skills in using foreign language for communication in service.

17. Co-ordinate other organizations related to tourism.

18. Organize tour schedules suitable for and in relation to the market needs.

19. Prepare equipment and use service skills as guide assistant.

2003 Curriculum for the certificate of Vocational Education

Area of study: tourism industry

Hospitality and tourism program

Students who have graduated the Certificate of Vocational Education 2002 in Hospitality and Tourism Program must study courses and get involved in extracurricular activities not less than 102 credits as follows:

1. General Courses (not less than) 26 credits

1.1 Basic General Courses 18 credits

- 1.2 Vocational - based General Courses (not less than) 8 credits
2. Vocational Courses (not less than) 66 credits
 - 2.1 Basic Vocational Courses 8 credits
 - 2.2 Core Vocational Courses 18 credits
 - 2.3 Specialized Vocational Courses (not less than) 36 credits
 - 2.4 Project 4 credits
3. Free Elective Courses (not less than) 10 credits
4. On-the-job Training (not less than 1 semester)
5. Extracurricular Activities (not less than 200 hours) Total 102 credits (see the details in the appendix)

Vocational tourism and hospitality performance of student

As Fullan (1992, p. 109) asserts “educational change is technically simple and socially complex”. Whatever the plans on paper, the process of leading people through change on such a scale presents challenges which require micro-political as well as pedagogic skills. Changes in policy for vocational education are linked to national aspiration and achievements in human resource development and economic growth worldwide. The Thai government has continued to enhance the capacity of vocational education sector in order to meet the increasing demands for skilled manpower. In 2007, Thailand’s Ministry of Education aims to achieve a 20% increase in the number of vocational students’ enrolment. The government has seen the necessity to adapt the educational system to the development and labour needs of the country.

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) refers to a range of learning experiences which are relevant to the world of work and which may occur in a variety of learning contexts, including educational institutions and the workplace. It includes learning designed to develop the skills for practicing particular occupations, as well as learning designed to prepare for entry or re-entry into the world of work in general (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2007). TVET has been given much promotion and priority and support to enhance the new policy changes. Various types of training programs are offered and administered by the Thai Vocational Education Commission.

Eight levels of studies ranging from semi-skilled level, offered to students who have completed the lower secondary level, to technical teacher training programs (degree level), open to holders of Higher Certificates of Technical Education with high academic records and a desire to become technical teachers at colleges and vocational training centres have been programmed by the Ministry of Education to suit the student's previous academic background (Bureau of International Cooperation, 2006).

With rapid transformation of societies in social, political, economic, technological, and education atmospheres in Thailand, there has been a major change in people's perception on the need for and nature of TVET. New challenges have begun to emerge, while old ones reemerge. Unfortunately, TVET is not necessarily favoured by all. Foster (1965) challenged the vocational school myth and called it "vocational school fallacy." Foster and Blaug clearly argued that vocationalisation cannot be a remedy for educated unemployment:

...It cannot prepare students for specific occupations and reduce mismatches between education and the labor market; academic streams promise higher wages than vocational streams; accordingly demand for vocational education might not exist.

Furthermore, vocational schooling may create "a sense of second class citizenship among both teachers and taught which militates against effective learning" (Bureau of International Cooperation, 2006). With the succinct, clear and powerful arguments of Foster, Blaug and others, it was hoped that the issue was buried. Few countries have given up their efforts in developing elaborate systems of VET. After all, it has inherently a powerful appeal. Many countries have set ambitious targets. For example, China had a goal of expanding vocational education so that at least fifty per cent of the enrolments in secondary education would be in vocational education in the near future; India has a similar target of reaching 25 per cent; and Bangladesh 20 per cent.

Thailand is one of the industrial countries in the Asia-Pacific region that requires a number of skilled labors. One of the major tasks of the current government in Thailand is to improve the vocational qualification standard for the international and national market. The Office of Vocational Education Commission (OVEC) in Thailand formulated the Thai Vocational Qualification (TVQ), wherein vocational

competencies are divided into five levels (Bureau of International Cooperation, 2006). The TVQ places emphasis on competencies, the accreditation of prior learning and experience, the promotion of public private sector cooperation in providing additional skills training for workers in various enterprises so as to raise labor productivity to international levels, and enhancing the global competitiveness of Thailand.

Although the attempt has been made to create quality in vocational education, OVEC reported that social attitudes to vocational education are not encouraging. Negative attitudes to manual work severely dampen the demand for vocational education. Furthermore, TVET is conceived as a system of education for the poor, and for the educationally backward sections that are not eligible for admission into higher education (OVEC, 2006). This view perpetuates inequalities in the system.

Low prestige attached to vocational education and its inherent inequities are somewhat a common phenomenon in Thailand. The suspicion that vocational curricula provide “a second-class education and track some individual’s lower class or lower caste, racial minorities and women - away from academic education and access to jobs of the highest pay and status” became quite strong over the years and became obvious through some public policies of ill-treatment of vocational education in educational planning and resource allocation, while contributing to the strengthening this belief.

Presently, in Thailand, people are valued for what they know more than what they actually produce. Employers demand more educated people, who are equipped with new sets of knowledge and skills, to perform high value-added forms of business activities to continue to compete in the global market. Fewer young people start their careers with vocational education, but more working people acquire vocational education for enriching and updating their industry-specific knowledge and skills. The drastic changes in industry and society require the Thai vocational education institutions to define their new roles and to create new values to a new composition of stakeholders, and, their performance will be evaluated by a new set of criteria and standards.

Nabi presented in Vocational Education and Training, as in many other countries in the region, the system of vocational education and training consists of two different sectors. The first is formal vocational education, carried out as a fulltime school scheme. Graduates are awarded a certificate, which is on par with that of

graduates of general upper secondary education. Therefore, only graduates of lower secondary education have access to this educational path. The other sector, non-formal vocational training, offers many social groups open access to the training programs; graduates are awarded internationally recognized certificates of skills development on different levels. Since the 1960s, both sectors have been extended continuously and in parallel by government funds and with support of international development cooperation. Today both sectors have a dense network of institutes that stretch across the whole country.

The segmentation is based on regulatory policy. Occupational training is regarded as a task of the government and is, consequently, placed under the jurisdiction of certain government bodies. Primarily, it is the task of formal vocational education, which is under the jurisdiction of the Office of Vocational Education Commission (formerly Department of Vocational Education) in the Ministry of Education to produce qualified staff for public establishments, administration, and state enterprises, where personnel are classified for grade and pay scales according to educational qualifications. The vocational training of staff for private companies and of workers to be sent abroad under the scheme of bilateral labor exchange is the responsibility of the Department of Skills Development in the Ministry of Labor.

The great numbers of private vocational schools, where around 35% of all students in formal vocational education on the upper secondary level are enrolled, are not in conflict with this system, because they must follow the guidelines given by the Ministry of Education pertaining to duration and contents of courses and awarded certificates. Formal vocational education of this kind is closer to the educational system than to the labor market. Since the awarded certificate is of the same level as the certificate of general upper secondary education, achieving this certificate has greater importance for a successful entry into employment than acquiring occupational skills and knowledge. Private sector organizations have no function in this government-controlled system, and private companies are only involved as providers of internships that form part of study programs driven by educational requirements rather than by labor-market demand.

This division of labor began to soften more and more at the end of the 1980s, when economic growth was gradually accelerating. The demand of the public sector

for personnel declined significantly, and private companies, which were becoming larger in number mainly due to foreign direct investment, were increasingly recruiting graduates of formal vocational education. Since the growing national economy offered more jobs in their home country, Thai workers began to lose interest in being sent abroad for work. As a result, a main incentive to undergo skills development was lost. At the same time, the holders of certificates of skills development fell behind graduates of formal vocational education in competition for well-paid jobs in the surging industry.

Fullan (2009, p. 27) illustrated that the result Factors Influencing Students' Choice of Vocational Education to study confirms that the key criteria students used in confirming their decision making to enroll in the vocational institutions are personal attitude towards vocational education, curriculum of the courses offered by institutions, potential for future employment after graduation, attractiveness of the campus, and tuition fees and scholarships. These factors should be strategically communicated to the potential students. With regard to the attitude towards vocational education, Thai Ministry of Education must carry on promoting a good image of vocational education and its students to the society. Since vocational education has suffered from being perceived as a second class education and taught which militates against effective learning, marketing communication, in an effort to create an on-going understanding with students and community, is strongly recommended.

With regard to curriculum, vocational institutions should emphasize on modernity of their curriculum, activities to develop students' academic skills, teaching approach and how these help students to excel in their studies. However, vocational education need not necessarily be purely vocational and technical. It should also include general skills and attributes that are useful across a wide variety of occupations. This is particularly important in the rapidly changing economic systems (Fullan, 2007).

Employers' expectation and perceptions in hospitality

This study focuses the employers' expectations and perceptions tourism and hospitality student graduates of vocational colleges in Thailand. This research also helps the Vocational Education Commission understand employers' expectation and

perception which is useful information in developing the students' characteristics and tourism and hospitality program. The aims of this study are to identify employers' expectations of vocational student graduates, to identify employers' perceptions of vocational tourism and hospitality student graduates, and to determine a difference between employers' expectation and employers' perception toward tourism and hospitality vocational students graduated

1. Definition of employers' expectations

In order to understand service quality, it is first important to define the term. Service quality has been widely researched in multiple disciplines. As such, a number of definitions exist to describe the phenomenon. Although these definitions differ somewhat, the majority share some key concepts which have become standard in the academic conceptualization of service quality Rust and Oliver (1991) provide one of the most complete definitions, specifically, they define service quality as "the outcome of a process in which employers' expectations for the service are compared with their perceptions of the service actually delivered."

The disconfirmation process used to explain service quality's formation begins with the expectations. According to Kettinger and Lee (1994) consumes form expectations about a service prior to its delivery. These expectations are based on factors such as quality of knowledge: room division such as the front office, reservation, communication, transportation personnel, concierge and housekeeping, food and beverage division and human and recourses division (Ismail, 2002) skills of tourism and hospitality, ethical and moral: responsibility, honesty, being trustworthy, being royalty, being positive leaders, being fair, having integrity, caring about employees and customer, legality, impunity, conscience, respect for human life, self-control, and courage (Walker, 2006).

When asked about their expectations of a service, individuals described their expectations as predictions (what will happen), as desires (what should happen), and as ideals (which may, or may not, be reasonable). Considering that expectations have multiple sources and multiple conceptualizations, two questions become relevant—1) What do employers expect from tourism and hospitality vocational students?, 2) What do employers require from tourism and hospitality students graduates?

2. Expectations toward vocational student graduates

Through the focused on toward vocational student graduates, employers' expectations are beliefs about service delivery that function as standards or reference point against which performance is judged (Bitner, 1995). In addition, Olson and Dover (1979) suggested that to know what the customer expects is the first and possibly most critical step in delivering service quality. Expectations are formed as a result of a variety of cognitive processes.

As a consequence, employers' expectations can lead to predictions about service quality, which can also influence the evaluation of service quality (Rust and Oliver, 1994). As Bettman refers to past experience as one basis for forecasting future service performance, consumers might predict the likelihood of poor service by reflecting on service received in the past and projecting that same rate of failure on future performance. However, Zeithaml and Bitner, (2003) have criticized that raising expectations can increase the risk of customer dissatisfaction. It may lead to over promise in order to be successful in business.

3. Levels of employers' expectations

Employers' expectations are marked into three different levels. First, desired service or an 'ideal expectation' defined as the level of service the customer hopes to receive or the 'wish for' level of performance, which is a combination of what customers believe can and should be delivered in the context of their personal needs. Second, adequate service or a minimum tolerable expectation, refers to a level of service that customer will accept without being dissatisfied. Adequate service can be thought of as the lowest expectation. Lastly, predicted service is a 'probability expectation' that reflects a level of service quality a consumer believes a firm will actually deliver. It directly affects higher level of service if a poorer level is expected. Kasper (1999) states that service is heterogeneous in that performance may vary across providers, across employee from the same provider, and even within the same service, to the specific employee on whom a specific situation depends for a need to be fulfilled. Furthermore, Treleavan and Voola (2008) suggested that the extent to which customers recognize and are willing to accept this variation is called the zone of tolerance, which reflects the difference between desired service and adequate service.

The same model is supported by Zeithaml and Bitner (2003). If service drops below adequate service, customers will be frustrated and their satisfaction with the company will be undermined. If service performance is higher than the zone of tolerance where performance exceeds desired service, customers will be very pleased. For example, an airline customer's zone of tolerance will narrow when she is running late and is concerned about making her plane, A minute seems much longer, and her adequate service level increases. On the other hand, a customer who arrives at the airport early may have a larger tolerance zone, making the wait in line far less noticeable than when she is under pressure for time (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2003).

Another aspect of variability in the range of reasonable service is that different customers have different tolerance zones. The zone of tolerance can increase or decrease for individual customers depending on factors such as competitions, price, and the importance of specific service attributes (Lovelock and Wright, 2002). These factors most often affect adequate service levels, while desired service levels tend to move up very slowly in response to accumulated customer experiences.

Related concepts and theories

1. Graduate attributes and industry perspectives

Graduate employability is an important aspect of higher education industry. It evaluates the success and ability of the particular institution in producing work ready graduates. Employability has been used as a performance indicator for higher education institutions (Smith, et al., 2000). Garavan (1997) has defined employability in various ways from individual and institutional perspectives. Individual employability is defined as graduates being able to demonstrate the attributes to obtain jobs. Commonly, institutional employability relates to the employment rates of the university graduates. Prior to this, Galavan (1997) cited in Zeithaml and Bitner (2003) suggested that graduates' success in their jobs depends more on graduates attributes than on narrow discipline specific degrees. Furthermore, Barrie (2004) indicates that the generic graduate attributes will directly relate the graduate outcomes to the employability. Graduate attributes as defined by the Higher Education Council Australia (1992) report *Achieving Quality* as "the skills, personal attributes and values which should be acquired by all graduates, regardless of their

discipline or field of study. In other words, they should represent the central achievement of higher education as a process.”

Earlier, the importance of graduate’s employability is centered only towards the professional courses such as medicine. However, due to the concern of contemporary higher education which emphasized on the graduate’s employability, courses offered should include the skills that will assist the graduates when they enter the workforce. In the previous research on graduate attributes based on employers perspectives, Knoblauch and German (1989) outlined few most highly sought after attributes for Cornell University Applied Economics and Business Management graduates. The attributes were enthusiasm, self-starting ability, general ability, working with others, oral communication and preparedness for the job. Mackenzie and Arnold (2000) also discovered that employers from hospitality industry places greater emphasis upon the graduates’ practical skills, level of commitment and ability to deliver high levels of service. They have conducted survey on 197 hotels managers working in hotels comprising 75 rooms or more in Australia. Nevertheless, in Clarke’s (1997) study based on 40 chief executives or managing directors from manufacturing and services industries under the Industry and Parliament Trust’s Study Group on Employability, United Kingdom, concluded that employers are actually looking for the graduates who possess attributes of long life learning, flexibility and adaptability to changes as well as some generic skills of communication, teamwork, initiative, problem solving and decision making.

After Quek’s finding, employers in the retail industry rated affective skills, such as leadership and decision making as most important based on Nicholson and Arnard (1989). Two years later, Struges and Guest (2002) carried out an extensive survey of employers of Monash University business graduates confirmed that the significant role of oral communication in the workplace. They further pointed that emphasis in university primarily on formal presentation is not an adequate preparation for workplace oral communication. The most often used forms of oral communication are informal work related discussions, listening and following instructions and informal conversations. In a recent research conducted at University Technology of Sydney, Smith, et al. (2007) interviewed the professional accrediting societies of Business and Information Technology to find out on work-ready graduate attributes.

The nine professional accrediting societies highlighted five most important attributes: application of knowledge, communication skills, critical thinking and creative problem-solving, global perspectives and teamwork.

Recently, a study conducted for Marketing courses highlighted that problem-solving skills is important to prepare students to capitalize on opportunities afforded by case based capstone courses and to better meet the needs and expectations of prospective employers (Tomlinson, et al., 2008). Also, Nicholson and Cushman (2000 cited in Lancelotti and Boyd, 2008) noted in the research findings of the importance of teamwork skill, the industry and corporate recruiters' top request is to see students with greater teamwork skills and experiences.

In the United Kingdom, employability remains high on the agenda for the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). It was noted (Rae, 2007) that it is important to analyse the curriculum through the institutional connectivity. This is part of the challenged as the connectivity would involve all the higher education stakeholders (students, staffs, and employers). A study conducted in China. Barrié reported that most educational institutions are trying to expand students' knowledge from not just the book view but moving towards providing the 'employability skills'. As such the curriculum has been re-designed, where the first two years of education; the students will be exposed to general business curricula. The last two years, the students were exposed with the subspecialty curricula.

Besides studies from overseas supported that graduates generic attributes are required in the job market, the local studies also conclude that the local graduates must have generic attributes to acquire job in Malaysia. This is proven by an earlier press release by the Malaysian manufacturing and service sectors expressing the view that most employers were unfavorably inclined to employing graduates who did not have generic attributes. It is supported by a study conducted by Quek on a group of employer (n=35) in Malaysia, it was reported that the employers expressed the importance of interpersonal skills, knowledge acquiring skills, flexibility, value-improving skill, practical orientation abilities and cognitive skills as major contributors toward success in work performance. With all these issues surrounding the attributes and capabilities of graduating students require ongoing focus in higher education. The pace of change and global focus in the contemporary workplace has led

to increasing pressure on universities and other higher education institutions to provide graduates with a set of skills and attributes which can assist them upon their entry into employment (Crosling and Ward, 2002; Kavanagh and Drennan, 2008). In particular, this agenda has been driven by graduate employers dissatisfied with both the technical competency and generic skills of graduates. Such concerns, and resultant changes to course curricula, have led to more recent studies aiming to measure the effectiveness of universities in meeting these employer needs, including different forums for gaining these skills, such as university and work placement. However, two key concerns with such studies underpinned our research. Firstly, many studies which look at graduate outcomes have represented graduates as a homogenous group, rather than differentiating the potentially different experiences across the range of disciplines represented. In particular, scant research has looked at human resources management students, which represents a specific vocational career path. Secondly, recent research on graduate employment has mostly focused on employers' expectations and tended to ignore the voices of graduates themselves. As the individuals who are making the transition from university to work, and hence having to "fit into the changing demands of employers" (Tomlinson, 2008), the stories and experiences of graduates need to be heard and understood. We therefore designed a study to examine the experiences of both graduates and employers.

As educators in the HRM and Management fields, the dearth of specific research in the discipline was matched by our personal concerns arising from interactions with our final-year students as to how ill-prepared they appeared to be for the day-to-day realities of the workplace. This was compounded by the surprise expressed by some recent graduates as to what their new jobs entailed, not merely with respect to the skills needed and used but aspects such as their levels of responsibility and autonomy, communication and interaction with colleagues and managers, and the time commitment involved. With this 'surprise' most commonly arising from the discrepancy between prior expectations and subsequent experiences, previous research has focused on the concept of organization socialization in assisting new employees in these transitions once they enter the workplace. However, the researchers argue that there is potential for more to be done to assist students before they enter the workplace, particularly if universities are to provide their graduates with

a competitive advantage upon entering the graduate labor market. There is a need to ensure that graduates are not only 'job-ready' in terms of their skills, but also in terms of their workplace expectations. Thus, the current study is planned to be longitudinal in nature, exploring individuals' expectations before graduation in the final year of their undergraduate studies, and their experiences after gaining graduate employment.

Davey and Arnold (1989) identified four stages in the transition cycle from university to work, namely, preparation/anticipation, encounter, adjustment, and stabilization. The findings presented how students "arrive at various stages of readiness for change, and what can be done to help them" (Davey and Arnold, 1989, p. 23). It was in exploring these perceptions that the current focus arose. Many of the students appeared uncertain, and sometimes fearful, in relation to their future. Indeed, in asking about feelings on readiness for work, some students were little able to articulate what they might be expected to do, which meant they couldn't adequately know if they did possess, or had developed from their studies, the skills set their future employers would require. This led to our focus on *how* their perceptions were shaped. The need understand graduates' perceptions of work – or their 'pre-joining expectations' – has also been identified by Sturges and Guest (2001).

They argued that these perceptions, and graduates' ultimate reactions upon entering the workplace, play a crucial role in the psychological contract between graduates and their employers. While the influences shaping students' perceptions were not an explicit question in our data collection, although we will include this in future rounds, it emerged from participants' discussion. If we are to assist students, then understanding these influences is crucial.