

**QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED FOR EMPLOYEES IN THE HOTEL
INDUSTRY IN BANGKOK FROM HR MANAGERS' PERSPECTIVES:
GETTING READY FOR THE AEC IN 2015**

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate employee qualifications as required by human resource (HR) managers in the hotel industry in Bangkok when the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) launches in 2015. Researchers applied the qualitative research method through interviews with 12 HR managers of three- to five-star hotels in Bangkok. The results indicate that some HR managers have done no planning for AEC. However, those managers with plans reported that they would train staff in both languages and work skills. In addition, they will make staff aware of AEC's influence and work to improve service quality.

The results also reveal that labor mobility may solve the hotel industry's labor shortage problem in Bangkok. Moreover, labor mobility will pressure Thai workers to improve themselves by enhancing their service quality. Furthermore, hotel managers will consider hiring employees from other ASEAN countries on the operational level.

The findings also indicate that hotel employee qualifications should include five traits: work attitude, skills in multiple languages, service-oriented personality, professional appearance and emotional intelligence. Additionally, HR managers should consider the location of applicants' homes, which should not be far from the workplace so as to avoid problems related to traffic and transportation.

Lastly, the results show differences in the weightings among required qualifications for front-line and back-office staff. For example, having an applicant possess a warm, easy smile is far more important when hiring for front-line positions than for back-office work. Therefore, this study provides insights for those seeking employment in Bangkok hotels as well as for those seeking employees. Both parties can prepare to meet the qualifications needed to survive and thrive in the hospitality industry.

Keywords: hotel industry, human resources, employee's qualifications, front line staff, Bangkok, AEC

1. Introduction

This study investigated staff qualifications required in the hotel industry in Bangkok by human resources (HR) managers in preparing their workers for the AEC, which begins in 2015. Multiple factors will increase competition in the regional labor market. First, the AEC will lead to the free flow of goods, services, capital investment and skilled labor. Moreover, large disparities in wages and employment opportunities, geographic proximity and social-cultural-linguistic environment, and disparities in educational development will increase regional labor mobility. Finally, as mentioned above, the AEC will lead to higher competition within business sectors.

Furthermore, Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs) are the major instrument for skilled labor mobility within ASEAN. The MRA was created to promote regional mobility of workers and service suppliers. Thailand signed an MRA for tourism professionals in support of AEC's establishment (ASEAN Secretariat, 2012).

The number of tourist arrivals in Thailand grew annually in years 2010, 2011 and 2012 by 12.63%, 20.67% and 16.24%, respectively. Arrivals in the first half of 2013 rose 20.01% compared with the first half of 2012. For the years 2007 to the first half of 2013, the maximum annual increase in revenue occurred between 2010 (approximately 593 billion baht) and 2011 (approximately 776 billion baht), or 30.94%. The number of tourist arrivals from 2007 to the first half of 2013 and revenue generated are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Tourist Arrivals and Revenue, 2007-2013 (Jan.-Jun.)
(Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2013)

Year	Number of tourists	% of change	Tourism revenue (million baht)	% of change
2007	14,464,228	+4.65	547,781.81	+13.57
2008	14,584,220	+0.83	574,520.52	+4.88
2009	14,149,841	-2.98	510,255.05	-11.19
2010	15,936,400	+12.63	592,794.09	+16.18
2011	19,230,470	+20.67	776,217.20	+30.94
2012	22,353,903	+16.24	983,928.36	+26.76
2013 (Jan.-Jun.)	12,744,374	+20.01	559,425.18	+19.82

The hospitality industry combines products and services and has three major characteristics: (1) it offers numerous job opportunities in many nations, (2) it is an important contributor to a country's gross domestic product (GDP) and (3) it faces greater global competition than other business sectors (Deng, Yeh & Sung, 2013; Guerrier & Deery, 1998).

In summary, the AEC leads to the free flow of people, service, capital and goods incorporated in the seven tourist-related MRAs that will lead to much greater labor competition in the hospitality industry. Overall, these seven agreements bring advantages and disadvantages to the tourism industry, so how hotels in Bangkok manage this situation is a great challenge.

According to the research problems and questions mentioned above, this study's objectives are as follows: 1) to explore how hotels are preparing for AEC, 2) to understand how hotels plan to take advantage of the increasing labor mobility that AEC will enable, 3) to investigate whether Bangkok-based hotel managers are considering the hiring of other

nationalities when AEC-enabled labor mobility begins, 4) to identify the qualifications of applicants and present employees that the hotel industry in Bangkok is seeking in preparation for the AEC, and 5) to examine the differences between qualifications required for front-line and back-office staff.

2. Literature Review

This part summarized related literature on human resources management in hotel industry and characteristics of hotel employees in order to provide an overview of the hotel industry and personal traits required for workers in the industry.

2.1 Human Resource Management in Hotels

Lucasa & Deery (2004) point out that human resource management (HRM) can be discussed in many contexts, such as competencies, turnover, employee development, service quality, retention, management and training, though typically the subject of recruitment/selection sees less discourse. Buller and McEvoy (2012) stated that HRM practices such as recruitment/selection, performance appraisal, training/development and compensation are important to produce firm-specific human and social capital. Human capital directly affects performance outcomes; therefore, in this study the researcher focused on recruitment, especially on the employee qualifications that Bangkok-based hotels are seeking to prepare for the AEC.

Lengnick-Hall et al. (2009) also support that HR practices directly affect organizational performance and that strategy moderates the relationship between HR practices and organizational performance, with the current trend of strategy human resource management (SHRM) focused on human capital because its diversity affects performance. Tsaur and Lin (2004) state that 1) HRM practices of “recruitment/selection” are significantly related to service quality and 2) better HRM practices lead to a higher service levels. They suggest that an organization could select employees based on factors such as job-related characteristics, job knowledge and personality.

2.2 Characteristics of Hospitality Employees

2.2.1 Emotional Intelligence (EI)/Emotional Quotient (EQ)

Emotional intelligence (EI) is important for service providers because customers judge the quality of services by their feelings toward providers. EI comprises self-awareness, self-management/discipline, relationship management skills and social awareness. Social awareness includes empathy, organizational awareness and service orientation (Scott-Halsell, Blum & Huffman, 2008).

2.2.2 Competencies

Competency domains include practical competency, adaptability to a working environment, ability to make progress, interpersonal skills, active participation in social gatherings, and flexibility of time management (Kim et al., 2011). Front-line employees need a professional appearance, voice and tone (Tsaur & Tang, 2013). Kamau and Waudu's research (2012) demonstrated that employer expectations of overall staff competency were affected by the ratings of hotels in Nairobi, but specifics such as customer care and the ability to communicate in different languages was expected by international guests regardless of

hotel rating. Tsaur and Tang (2013) stated that the hospitality industry seeks front-line employees who give aesthetic pleasure, but also expects them to understand customer expectations of quality service.

2.2.3 Experience

Work experience relevant to an available position is an important factor in a recruiter's decision to hire a fresh graduate in the hospitality industry (Karani, 2011; Kwok, Adams & Price, 2011). Scott-Halsell, Blum & Huffman (2008) showed that the level of emotional intelligence was positively related to the number of years of experience in the service industry, which in turn leads to better service.

2.2.4 Managerial Competency

Managerial competency is required for managerial-level employees. Using the New Zealand Institute of Management Capability Index, Blayney & Blotnick (2010) outlined nine major determinants of competent managers: (1) innovation of products and services, (2) interpersonal relationships, (3) knowledge and technology, (4) organizational capability, (5) financial management, (6) people leadership skills, (7) performance leadership, (8) results and comparatives, and (9) visionary and strategic leadership.

2.2.5 Gender

Managerial competency shows no difference between male and female managers. However, the research points out that female managers were less likely to switch jobs than male managers. However, switching positions frequently provides varied experience and, as mentioned in earlier paragraphs, experience is a condition for a hotel industry employee. This condition seems contradictory to the statement that male and female managers are equally competent.

2.2.6 Behavior

1. Feminine & Masculine: Feminine behavior characteristics are associated with emotionality, selflessness, sensitivity and inter-personal relationships, whereas male behavior is typically characterized as assertive, activity-driven, self-developing (this one cited as a managerial competency) and goal-oriented (Blayney & Blotnick, 2010).

2. Personality: Through the recruiting process to select the person most suitable for an organization, the suitability of an applicant's personality in a work context is very important (Karani, 2011). According to Jovičić et al. (2011), an individual's personality for the hospitality industry should include five traits: extroversion, conscientiousness, pleasantness, openness to new experiences and negative affectivity.

3. Organizational Citizenship Behavior: Organizational citizenship behavior references self-initiated and positive employee behavior (Chiang & Hsieh, 2012).

4. Psychological Empowerment: Psychological empowerment refers to the perspective of an employee toward his or her job: is it important or meaningful to him or her? An employee should feel confident in his or her competence to perform a job. Moreover, psychological empowerment is a positive influence on employee organizational behavior and job performance (Chiang & Hsieh, 2012).

3. Research Methodology

The researcher applied a qualitative approach, whereby the research outcomes would be interpreted to understand the requirements of an employee by HR managers in Bangkok-based hotels in preparation for the AEC. The population was HR managers in Bangkok-based hotels whose ratings are between three and five stars. Researchers interviewed 12 respondents, whose positions were related to managing staff recruitment. Interview questions were set to achieve the objectives required. The in-depth interview guideline is listed below:

1. Please tell me a little bit about your work experience in the hotel industry and specifically in your HR department.
2. As the AEC is coming in 2015, how will AEC policies such as the free flow of labor and service affect your hotel?
3. How is your hotel preparing its staff for AEC?
4. What are the hotel's requirements for recruiting new staff?
5. What qualifications and characteristics do you expect from your workers?
6. Why are those characteristics important?
7. Of those characteristics, which one is most important and why?
8. Are there any differences in the required characteristics for front-line versus back-office staff?
9. In conclusion, how would you describe a model employee of your hotel?

3.1 Data Collection

Face-to-face interviews were conducted using semi-structured and open-ended questions. Firstly, researchers sent request letter to the hotels with interview questions and a letter provided by UTCC requesting permission to collect data. Secondly, the hotels replied and they were asked to confirm an interview time set by them. Thirdly, researchers met respondents at their work places. Interviews were conducted in the language convenient for respondents: Thai or English. Before starting, researchers asked for permission to record the interviews. Finally, the interviews were transcribed and interpreted.

3.2 Data Analysis

Researchers did data analysis as per Creswell (2003), employing qualitative inquirers that often conveyed a generic process of data analysis. The three generic steps are as follows:

1. Organize and prepare the data for analysis. This includes transcribing interviews, optically scanning material, typing field notes, and sorting and arranging data into different types depending on the sources of information.
2. Read through all data to obtain a general sense of the information and to reflect on its overall meaning.
3. Begin data analysis with a coding process, such as placing text data into categories and labeling those categories with a term based on the participant's language.

4. Results

The researchers completed 12 hotels interviews. Hotels' general information and respondents' positions are listed below (Table 2). The serial number of respondents is shown in Table 3.

Table 2 Profile of Respondents

Hotel Serial Number	Hotel Name	Respondent Position	Hotel Star Level	Hotel Address
1	Pullman Bangkok King Power	Director of Human Resource	5 stars	8-2 Rangnam Road, Thanon Phayathai Ratchathewi, Bangkok 10400
2	Intercontinental Bangkok	Director of Human Resource	5 stars	973 Ploenchit Road, Bangkok 10330
3	Swissôtel Le Concorde Bangkok	Director of Human Resource	5 stars	204 Ratchadapisek Road, Huay Khuang, Bangkok 10310
4	Plaza Athénée	Director of Human Resource	5 stars	61 Wireless Road (Witthayu), Bangkok 10330
5	Royal Orchid Sheraton	Director of Human Resource	5 stars	Charoen Krung Road Soi 30 (Captain Bush Lane) Siphya, Bangrak, Bangkok 10500
6	Windsor Suites & Convention	Human Resource Manager	4 stars	10/1 Sukhumvit Soi 20 Sukhumvit Road, Klongtoey, Bangkok 10110
7	Miracle Grand Convention	Human Resource Manager	4 stars	99 Khamphangphet 6 Rd. Talad Bangkhen Rangsit, Bangkok 10210
8	Rama Garden	Human Resource Manager	4 stars	9/9 Vibhavadi Rangsit Rd, Bangkok 10210
9	The Royal River	Personnel Manager	4 stars	66/1 219 Charansanitwong Rd, Bangkok 10700
10	Furama	Operation Manager & Senior Assistant Human Resource Manager	4 stars	533 Silom Rd, Silom, Bang Rak, Bangkok 10500
11	101 Holiday Suite	Human Resource Manager	4 stars	194 Soi Ladpro 101, Ladpro Road, Bangkok, Bangkok 10240
12	Ratchada City Hotel	Human Resource Manager	3 stars	Ratchadaphisek Rd, Chatuchak, Bangkok 10900

Table 3 Serial Number of Respondents

Respondents	Serial Number of Respondents
Director of Human Resource of Pullman Bangkok King Power Hotel	Respondent 1
Director of Human Resource of Intercontinental Bangkok Hotel	Respondent 2
Director of Human Resource of Swissôtel Le Concorde Bangkok Hotel	Respondent 3
Director of Human Resource of Plaza Athénée Hotel	Respondent 4
Director of Human Resource of Royal Orchid Sheraton Hotel	Respondent 5
Human Resource Manager of Windsor Suites & Convention Hotel	Respondent 6
Human Resource Manager of Miracle Grand Convention Hotel	Respondent 7
Human Resource Manager of Rama Garden Hotel	Respondent 8
Personnel Manager of The Royal River Hotel	Respondent 9
Operation Manager & Senior Assistant Human Resource Manager of Furama Hotel	Respondent 10
Human Resource of 101 Holiday Suite Hotel	Respondent 11
Human Resource of Ratchada City Hotel	Respondent 12

4.1 Results of the Study

Summaries of the main themes from the respondents' statements are shown below.

4.1.1 Free Flow of Labor is an Opportunity for Selecting People

The AEC will provide an opportunity for managers in selecting candidates for the hotel industry because of three problems in the industry cited by some HR managers:

1. The hotel industry will become more competitive because of increasing supply, which will constrain the supply of qualified staff. Respondent 3 indicated that many newly built hotels are ready to open; demand for qualified employees is high, while supply is low.

2. Some positions are experiencing greater shortages than others. Respondent 3 pointed out that, "Nowadays, Thai people may not accept any position that looks low in the public eye."

3. Hotels are eyeing the hiring of foreign staff who can better communicate with guests from the same countries.

4.1.2 Free Flow of Labor Will Affect Some Positions

Only some positions are open for workers from other ASEAN countries, as shown in Table 4. The positions mentioned most frequently are housekeeping, room maid, room attendant, front line, and food and beverage. Front-line positions and those in food and beverage require good English skills and an ability to communicate well with guests.

Table 4 Hotel Positions on Offer to Workers in Other ASEAN Countries

Offered Positions	Hotels by serial numbers											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Housekeeping	√	√				√			√			√
Front Line	√	√	√	√		√	√				√	
Room Maid			√			√			√	√		
Room Attendant	√		√			√						
Food & Beverage	√			√	√	√						
Supervisor	√											√
Gardener								√		√		
Bellboy				√		√						
Steward			√		√							√
Cook												√

4.1.3 Knowledge & Cultural Exchange & Business Risk

The AEC will lead to the free flow of labor, and hotel managers' concern about knowledge and cultural exchanges and the resulting business risk can be seen from both positive and negative perspectives. While a free labor flow might ease labor shortages, it could present a big challenge to ensure that people from different countries and cultures work together well and can run a business smoothly. As Respondent 7 explained: "It could be challenging for the managers to manage well and make people from different countries and cultures get along well."

4.1.4 Worries from the HR Managers

Some hotel managers have concerns regardless of whether they hire people from other ASEAN countries:

1. Most HR managers mentioned that a work permit would be a barrier for hiring labor from other ASEAN countries.
2. Cultural clashes among workers may cause problems at work.

4.1.5 AEC will not affect Recruitment for some HR Managers

Despite the opportunities of an expanded, regional labor pool from AEC, some managers still prefer to hire Thai people. Other HR managers reported that they will recruit people only according to their hotels' needs; they see little or no effect on their hiring practices with the onset of AEC.

4.1.6 Hotel Staffing Preparations for AEC

1. No plan: Respondent 2 explained that she does "not really have a plan to prepare, as English-language training is already required by a five-star hotel. We're not concerned about AEC. We hire a company to train staff and we have our own permanent English teachers."
2. Language training: Respondent 8 said, "We develop them, train them...for hotel jobs; good language skills are necessary."
3. Work skill training: Respondent 4 explained that "We keep training them on job knowledge and additional knowledge that concerns their jobs, such as online systems."
4. Staff awareness of AEC's implications: Respondent 4 said, "I keep reminding our staff that if they do not improve, they will be in trouble or even lose their jobs because of rising competition."
5. Efforts to maintain or improve service quality: Respondent 10 explained, "We must improve English skills and work standards for every position. With AEC coming, the staff needs to maintain our service standards as high as before or even better."

4.1.7 Qualifications Required for Employees in the Hotel Industry in Bangkok

According to the results (see Table 5 for more details), normal competencies related to their jobs, such as good attitude, being service-minded and displaying friendliness, are the basic requirements of every hotel employee. The ability of an applicant to work is also important. Some HR managers consider the distance between an applicant's home and the hotel an important issue. They explained that the traveling distance should not be far so as to minimize the travel time from home to work. Other managers stress different factors. For example, the weighting of requirements among various positions differs. Jobs involving guest contact emphasize service-mindedness and smiling, such as, while back-office positions such as accounting may need close attention to habits and details, and housekeeping requires hard physical labor.

4.1.8 Qualification of Characteristics between Front-Line and Back-Office Staff

Qualifications of characteristics among front-line and back-office staff can be stated as "Different" or "Not Different". The answer would depend on perspectives. On the one hand, some managers see no difference between the two because they are all doing service jobs, so they should have the same characteristics. On the other hand, it could be different in the level of each qualification required; back-office staff and front-line personnel both are required to have the right attitude, service-mindedness and friendliness, but front-line staff are required to place more emphasis on physical traits such as appearance.

Table 5 Qualifications Required for Employees in the Hotel Industry in Bangkok

Requirements	Hotels by serial numbers											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Team work					√		√			√		√
Transportation							√		√			
Languages (English)	√		√	√			√				√	√
References/CV	√									√	√	
Attitude	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√
Depend on Position		√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√		
Service Minded	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√
Appearance	√		√	√								
Experience				√		√		√		√	√	√
Vacancies					√	√		√				
Personality		√		√					√	√		
Potential				√								
Integrity										√		
Eye Contact	√				√							
Active	√				√							
Friendly		√		√	√		√	√				
Love Job						√	√		√		√	
Positive Thinking							√					
Open Minded							√					
Flexible							√					
Attentive									√			
Integrity										√		
Knowledgeable	√	√										
Understand Guests' Needs		√										
Take Ownership		√										
Sharing		√										
E.I.				√			√			√	√	
Self- Improvement				√			√					
Doing Own Job Well					√			√			√	√

5. Discussion

Researchers made the following conclusions per the objectives and compared the results with the literature review to provide the following discussion.

5.1 Preparation for AEC

This part answered the study's first objective to investigate how hotels are preparing for AEC. The answers are shown below.

1. Staff training in languages, such as English, as required. Three-star and four-star hotels prefer to train staff about their customer group's native language, such as Chinese or Vietnamese. For example, Respondent 8 said, "We improve them, train them...language is necessary for a hotel job."

2. Training staff in specific work-related skills. Respondent 4 explained that, "We keep training them in job knowledge and additional knowledge concerned with their jobs, such as online systems."

3. Raising staff awareness of AEC's implications. Respondent 4 said, "I keep reminding our staff that if they do not improve, they will be in trouble or even lose their jobs because of rising competition."

4. Maintaining and improving service standards. Respondent 10 pointed out, "We must improve English skills and work standards for every position. With AEC coming, the staff needs to maintain our service standards as high as before or even better."

5.2 Making labor mobility: an advantage

The second objective was to inquire as to how the hotels will turn labor mobility into an advantage. These answers are from the first question seeking opinions on the forthcoming labor free flow.

1. To solve the labor shortage problem in operational positions, such as housekeeping, Respondent 1 said, "It is a good opportunity for the hotel because we have a problem finding labor. Everyone is looking for labor."

2. Greater labor mobility will lead to greater competition, providing an opportunity for management to enhance their staff so as to improve service quality. The staff must improve or face competition from other ASEAN countries.

5.3 ASEAN workers hiring

HR managers will consider hiring workers from other ASEAN countries in some positions. This points to the study's third objective to investigate if HR managers would consider hiring other nationalities under AEC. The answer is yes, because it would allow them to solve their operational-level labor shortage in jobs such as housekeeping. "Maybe only in certain departments like housekeeping, because it is very difficult to find housekeeping staff now," said Respondent 2. The hotel might hire someone who can speak English well for a front-line position, but will not hire non-Thai nationals for back-office positions such as accounting, HR and engineering. Respondent 4 expressed that, "I will be happy to hire more applicants who can speak English well from other ASEAN countries and put them in the guest contact area. I think I will be happier to get more applicants who can speak English well in the guest contact area."

5.4 Qualifications for Hotel Employees in Bangkok

The study's fourth objective was to determine the employee qualifications that hotel HR managers in Bangkok are seeking to prepare for AEC. They mentioned 6 critical issues, as summarized below:

1. Language is required. As Respondent 4 explained: "I can hire Malaysians, Filipinos, Burmese and Vietnamese who can speak English well." Respondent 3 added that, "I want to hire anyone who can speak English."

2. Work attitude is important. Most managers indicated that it is the most important factor. It includes willingness to work, attentiveness to work, willingness to solve problems, an assumption of ownership, love for one's job, and service-mindedness as the important factors in the service sector.

3. A good personality is required. Traits such as politeness, a friendly smile and an ability to make a guest feel comfortable or even warm is important. Respondent 4 said, "We evaluate the English competency, attitude and an applicant's personality."

4. A professional appearance is required because it is the face of the service sector. Respondent 3 said, "I want to hire the one whose appearance is acceptable."

5. A high level of emotional intelligence/emotional quotient is desired. As respondent 4 said, "This kind of job is not easy, because we are confronting the emotions of guests. You have to be very good in emotional intelligence."

6. Transportation is a final issue. This can affect hiring decisions because Bangkok's notorious traffic jams can affect the staff's work quality and may lead to staff turnover as well. As Respondent 7 explained: "Transportation is a concern as well, because it's one factor that determines whether a staff member will work with us for long."

5.5 Differences between front-line staff and back-office staff

The study's fifth objective showed some differences between front-line and back-office staff. Some managers saw no difference between these two groups because of they are all doing service jobs and therefore they should have similar characteristics. In contrast, others believed there could be some differences in the weighting of qualification requirements. Respondent 1 believed that, "There is no difference: both require politeness, an easy smile, an active nature, frequent eye contact and a good attitude, but front-line staff might face additional physical requirements." Respondent 5 added that, "Although both types of work basically require a good attitude and a good service mind, we emphasize the service mind and an attractive physical appearance for staff who will be in contact with guests."

6. Conclusion

HR managers in Bangkok hotels may consider recruiting people from other ASEAN countries for operational positions such as those in housekeeping and on the front line (guest contact requires fluent English speakers). The most important point is professional certification. It means anyone who wants to work in other ASEAN countries must pass an exam under the same standard for all ASEAN countries.

The researcher summarized several concerns from HR managers, including work permits and potential cultural clashes. These problems create risks for business. If they are not managed well, they can damage a hotel's image and brand.

Furthermore, positions suffering from a labor shortage, such as in housekeeping, can be filled with labor from outside the country. Many hotels in Thailand already obtain visas

and work permits for Cambodian, Lao and Myanmar nationals. Those positions could possibly be filled from those three countries as well. Obviously if a hotel can find qualified applicants from the Thai labor market or those three nationalities, they will not consider hiring others as operational-level staff.

Relevant work experience is another important factor that affects recruiting decisions in the hospitality industry (Karani, 2011; Kwok, Adams & Price, 2011). This is not always correct, according to this study's results. In this case, five-star hotel managers do not see work experience as important. In contrast, three-star and four-star managers prefer to seek experienced people because it saves time for training and they can work immediately.

Implications for the hospitality industry from this study could be that (1) hotels should be aware of AEC's labor free flow as it may help reduce some hiring problems as identified in the research and (2) job-seekers can properly prepare themselves for employment by using the insights gleaned from this study as it relates to job requirements.

This research provides two recommendations for HR managers. First, the work permit process should become easier as employers have requested because it is the main barrier that affects hiring decisions of non-Thai nationals. If the work permit process remains unchanged, it will inhibit labor mobility. Second, managers must be aware of issues surrounding the hiring of multiple nationalities in terms of their working together.

7. Limitations and Future Research

This research met with several limitations. First, it was difficult to get respondent appointments because the interviewees are in high positions. Their time is valuable, and requesting 30-60 minutes for an interview was difficult. Second, data collection during times of political uncertainty, when hotel occupancy was low, added to the workload and time constraints of HR managers who were busy trying to solve the consequent business problems. Thus it was even more difficult to make appointments. Finally, language was a barrier in some cases.

Further research could address (1) all the characteristics that HR managers require and expect, how those characteristics are related to a hotel's performance and service quality, and (2) the free flow of labor and its effects on other industries.

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