

A Guideline of Human Capital Mobility in Thailand's Tourism Industry for 23 Positions of Hotel Services under the Mutual Recognition Arrangement on ASEAN Common Competency Standards in Tourism*

ทิศทางของการเคลื่อนย้ายทุนมนุษย์ทางการท่องเที่ยวของประเทศไทยใน 23 ตำแหน่งงาน สาขาที่พิก ตามข้อตกลงว่าด้วยการยอมรับคุณสมบัติบุคลากรตามมาตรฐานสมรรถนะร่วมวิชาชีพสำหรับการท่องเที่ยวอาเซียน

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Abstract

The objective of this academic article was to present a guideline of human capital mobility in Thailand's tourism industry for 23 positions of hotel services under the Mutual Recognition Arrangement on ASEAN common competency standards. Any applications and explanations made in this article were based on the concepts and theories about tourism, human capital mobility, tourism mobility, types of labor migrated under the free trade agreements in the service industry, policies relating to the temporary labor mobility, and policies relating to ASEAN, AEC, and the Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) on ASEAN common competency standards in tourism. The information from this article can be used as the preliminary guideline of human capital mobility policies in Thailand's tourism industry for 23 positions of hotel services under the Mutual Recognition Arrangement on ASEAN common competency standards in tourism.

Keywords: *Human Capital Mobility, Mutual Recognition Arrangement on ASEAN Common Competency Standards in Tourism*

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* This academic article is a part of the complete research study titled "Policy Suggestions on Preparation for Flow of Tourism Labor in Preparation for the AEC in 2015," sponsored by the National Research Council of Thailand (NRCT) and the Thailand Research Fund (TRF), Contract No. RDG5650038.

บทคัดย่อ

บทความวิชาการนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อนำเสนอข้อมูลทิศทางของการเคลื่อนย้ายทุนมนุษย์ทางการท่องเที่ยวของประเทศไทยใน 23 ตำแหน่งงาน สาขาที่พิกัดตามข้อตกลงว่าด้วยการยอมรับคุณสมบัติบุคลากรตามมาตรฐานสมรรถนะร่วมวิชาชีพสำหรับการท่องเที่ยวอาเซียน โดยการประยุกต์และอธิบายตามหลักแนวคิด ทฤษฎี จากแนวคิดและทฤษฎีเกี่ยวกับการท่องเที่ยว การไหลและการเคลื่อนย้ายทุนมนุษย์ การเคลื่อนย้ายทางการท่องเที่ยว ประเภทของแรงงานที่เคลื่อนย้ายผ่านทางการค้าเสรีในภาคบริการ นโยบายที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการเคลื่อนย้ายแรงงานชั่วคราว อาเซียนและประชาคมเศรษฐกิจอาเซียน และข้อตกลงว่าด้วยการยอมรับคุณสมบัติบุคลากรตามมาตรฐานสมรรถนะร่วมวิชาชีพสำหรับการท่องเที่ยวอาเซียน เพื่อนำเสนอเป็นข้อมูลเบื้องต้นของทิศทางข้อมูลเชิงนโยบายการเคลื่อนย้ายทุนมนุษย์ทางการท่องเที่ยวของประเทศไทยใน 23 ตำแหน่งงาน สาขาที่พิกัดตามข้อตกลงว่าด้วยการยอมรับคุณสมบัติบุคลากรตามมาตรฐานสมรรถนะร่วมวิชาชีพสำหรับการท่องเที่ยวอาเซียน

คำสำคัญ: การเคลื่อนย้ายทุนมนุษย์ ข้อตกลงว่าด้วยการยอมรับคุณสมบัติบุคลากรตามมาตรฐานสมรรถนะร่วมวิชาชีพสำหรับการท่องเที่ยวอาเซียน

Background and significance of the study

Based on the mission to achieve the establishment of ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) by the year 2020, it was considered at the ASEAN Summit that the members of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) should determine a guideline for the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in the year 2015. ASEAN is an organization for economic cooperation, which consists of 10 member countries including the Kingdom of Thailand. Thailand was to come up with a guideline to prepare education personnel for the ASEAN Economic Community according to the Eleventh National Economics and Social Development Plan (2012-2016) to supply the market with skilled labors in the tourism and service sectors. Although Thailand is assigned to be the center of developing the said skilled labors, the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) will incur mass migration, which is one of the goals of the ASEAN Community in 2015. The ASEAN members have also signed the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on tourism professionals. Being part of the ASEAN Economic Community enables high competition and mobility among the 10 member countries (Thailand Development Research Institute, 2008). The objectives of the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) on

tourism professionals are to facilitate the ASEAN tourism professional mobility and to exchange the competency-based best practices. It is also an objective of this MRA to cooperate and strengthen the capability of the members in 32 positions in the field of hotel and travel services consisting of 23 positions of hotel services in 4 departments and 9 positions of travel services in 2 fields (William Angliss Institute, 2012). The 23 positions of hotel services in 4 departments are 1) Front Office Department: Front Office Manager, Front Office Supervisor, Receptionist, Telephone Operator, and Bell Boy, 2) Housekeeping Department: Executive Housekeeper, Laundry Manager, Floor Supervisor, Laundry Attendant, Room Attendant, and Public Area Cleaner, 3) Food Production Department: Executive Chef, Demi Chef, Commis Chef, Chef de Partie, Commis Pastry, Baker, and Butcher, and 4) Food and Beverage Department: F&B Director, F&B Outlet Manager, Head Waiter, Bartender, and Waiter. The 9 positions of travel services in 2 fields are 1) Travel Agency: General Manager, Assistant General Manager, Senior Travel Consultant, and Travel Consultant, and 2) Tour Operation Agency: Product Manager, Sales and Marketing Manager, Credit Manager, Ticketing Manager, and Tour Manager.

Figure 1 shows the number of migrant workers who had work permits in Thailand in 2009, with 2,848 workers in the hotel and the food & beverage industries, and 1,119 workers in the tourism industry. (Registrar and Information Office, Foreign Workers Administration Office, Department of Employment, Ministry of Labour (2007) and Overseas Employment Administration Division, Department of Employment, Ministry of Labour (2007).

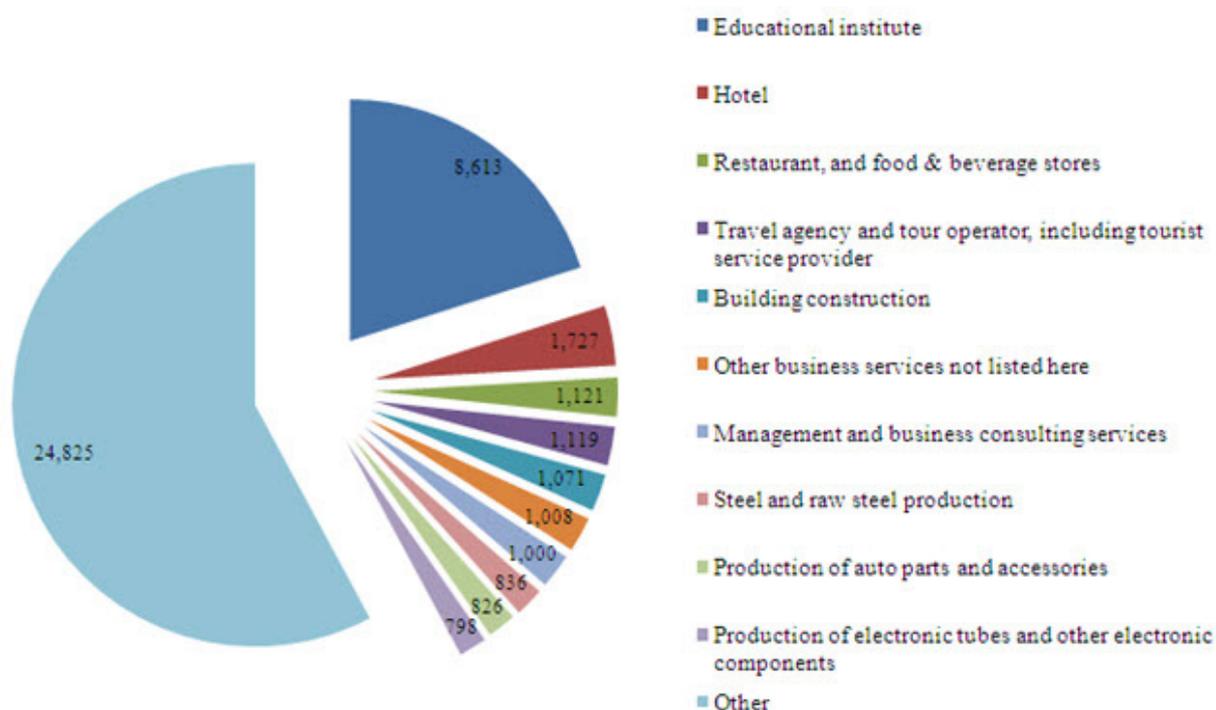


Figure 1 Number of migrant workers with work permits in Thailand in 2009

Source: Registrar and Information Office, Foreign Workers Administration Office, Department of Employment, Ministry of Labour (2007)

Table 1 shows the number of foreign labors in the hotel industry in 2009, in different job positions. The numbers of foreign labors who worked as the executive chef and F&B director are 63 and 49, respectively. These two positions are listed in the 32 positions under the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on tourism professionals.

Table 1 Number of foreign labor in hotel industry in 2009, in different job positions

Positions	Total (persons)
1. Street or nightclub musician, singer, and dancer	216
2. Singer	208
3. Other managers not listed here	207
4. Trainee	181
5. Other office staff	98

Table 1 Number of foreign labor in hotel industry in 2009, in different job positions (continued)

Positions	Total (persons)
6. Executive chef	63
7. Musician and musical instrument operator	51
8. F&B Manager / Director	49
9. Private sector executive	47
10. Marketing manager	44
11. Others	390
Grand total	1,554

Source: Registrar and Information Office, Foreign Workers Administration Office, Department of Employment, Ministry of Labour (2007)

Figure 2 shows the number of ASEAN labors in comparison to the number of foreign labors in the hotel industry in 2006-2009. The number of ASEAN labors who worked in the hotel industry (483 workers in 2006, 605 workers in 2007, 684 workers in 2008, and

492 workers in 2009) was less than all foreign labor. However, it shows a fairly large number of ASEAN labors who legally came to work in Thailand even before the Free Trade Agreement which allows the free flow of labor in the hotel and tourism industries.

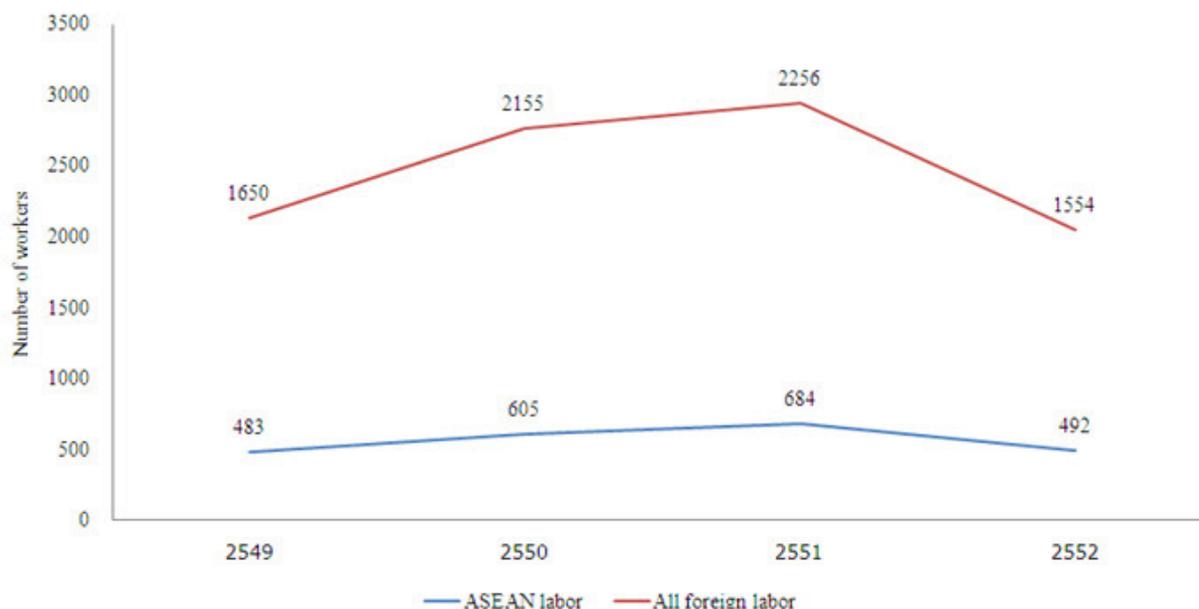


Figure 2 Comparison of number of ASEAN labor and all foreign labor in the hotel industry in 2006-2009

Source: Registrar and Information Office, Foreign Workers Administration Office, Department of Employment, Ministry of Labour (2007)

The statistics in the figures and tables above show that although the number of ASEAN labors coming to work in Thailand in hotel services (hotel and food) was still low, that number reflected only the legal migrant workers. There are a lot of ASEAN labors in other positions, such as housekeepers and laundry attendants, who illegally come to work in Thailand. Thailand needs to develop its own labors to acquire the competency set by ASEAN. The Department of Skill Development also needs to conduct an analytical study to come up with a guideline for seeking cooperation among related agencies to prepare for the labor mobility under the ASEAN agreements (Chanda & Pasadilla, 2011; Siam Commercial Bank Public Company Limited, 2012). Therefore, it is an objective of this article to study the human capital mobility in Thailand's tourism industry for 23 positions of hotel services under the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on ASEAN common competency standards in tourism. The concepts, theories, and related research studies presented in this article constitute the preliminary data for further research studies.

Objective of the study

The objective of this study was to present a guideline of human capital mobility in Thailand's tourism industry for 23 positions of hotel services under the Mutual Recognition Arrangement on ASEAN common competency standards in tourism.

Scope of the study

This academic study is a guideline of human capital mobility in Thailand's tourism industry for 23 positions of hotel services under the Mutual Recognition Arrangement on ASEAN common competency standards in tourism.

Review of concepts, theories, and related research studies

The applications and explanations below were made based on the concepts and theories about tourism, human capital mobility, tourism mobility, types of labor migrated under the Free Trade Agreements in the service industry, policies relating to the temporary labor mobility, and policies relating to ASEAN, ASEAN Economic Community, and the Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) on ASEAN common competency standards in tourism.

1. Concepts about tourism

Nowadays, tourism is a crucial element to promote economy, culture, environment, and better understanding among different nations. It relates to many businesses in a dependable and inseparable manner. For example, transportation, restaurants, hotels, entertainment, or other facilities are involved in the services provided to the tourists or travelers. Tourism is important and relevant to human in the aspects of business, society, and culture, as some tourism scholars such as Hsu and Powers (2002), and Blanke, Chiesa, and Herrera (2009) stated that tourism would be a large industry and hold great significance to humanity in terms of politics, society, culture, economy, and environment. The terms 'tourism' and 'travel' are often used interchangeably, but they have different meanings. In the tourism dictionary, 'travel' means 'to travel from one place to another by different means of transportation and purposes, and sometimes without returning to the same place' (Mason, 1990). Sharpley (2008) also said that 'travel' means 'to leave one place to other places, like leaving home routinely and traveling to stay at another place.' Hall and Page (1999), Wall and Matheison (2006), and Nash (2007) concluded that tourism refers to the phenomena and relations resulting from the interaction between tourists and businesses or services, including government, host country, and local people. Many tourist destinations attract the tourists or visitors by giving them a warm welcome and hospitality.

2. Concepts and theories about human capital mobility

Lee (1966) proposed the concept of Pull and Push Theory to explain about migration. The push factors of migration include poverty, land shortage, and overpopulation in the origin country. The pull factors of migration include better job opportunity, wages, and modernization of the destination country. The decision to migrate to pursue work depends on many factors. Generally, the two main factors are the push factor and the pull factor. The push factor refers to the factors within the local residence, which drive the residents to migrate outside their home country, such as high rate of unemployment and lack of motivation for career advancement. The pull factor refers to the factors outside the residents' hometown, which attract them to work there, such as higher wages or salaries, shortage of skilled labors in some fields, and career advancement opportunities. Aldaba (2012), Orbeta (2013), and Sugiyarto and Mendoza (2014) also stated that the concept of push and pull factors could be applied to determine a conceptual framework of the study to prepare for the free flow of labors in the ASEAN countries. One of the factors includes the skilled labor market, which affects the demand of labors and can help in the consideration of the ASEAN labor mobility trend, the MRAs, and the possibility of professions other than the 7 professions in the MRAs. In addition, the factors of policy, method, and procedure of migrant worker employment in the ASEAN countries should also be taken into consideration in order to analyze and determine a guideline for further development in Thailand to accommodate the free flow of labors within the ASEAN Economic Community.

3. Concepts and theories about tourism mobility

Many scholars have done some studies on tourism and migration flow, such as Larsen et al. (2006), Sheller and Urry (2004), Urry (2007), and Williams and Hall (2002). They claimed that tourism

did not only relate to the concept of going away from one place to another, but also included the social relationship and daily obligations of people in the society. Many research results of these scholars revealed that foreign labors greatly played an important role in the cultural change of the host's community. In addition, Duval (2004) stated that human mobility was one of the concepts that helped to understand the short-term and long-term job opportunities abroad, which influenced the well-being of the family. The short-term human mobility could be a temporary move to another place for tourism purpose or just to get away and recharged before coming back to work. Larsen et al. (2006), and Urry (2007) also said that tourism is a form of temporary population flow and mobility. A temporary migration is considered a part of population mobility at any time and place, depending on a tourist's interest and desire to gain experiences offered by various tourist attractions where the tourists are willing to pay for affordable prices. Furthermore, Hall (2005) and Tucker (2001) also stated that tourism mobility involved time and social network as well as agility and social life. Migration and tourism also have an influence on visiting friends and family. Hall (2005) and Urry (2007) commented that tourism was a means to expand social network and drive the labor market to the countries where skilled labors are needed. These people will in turn become tourists when they have free time from work and may spend money shopping in that country or go back to visit their hometown.

Hall (2005) and Urry (2007) stated that tourism was considered a temporary migration of people, and depended on continuity of time and place. However, Larsen et al. (2006) said that tourism could take place in different places and at different times. The reasons for boosting tourism depend on the types of tourism and economic status which are changeable as time goes by. The studies of Muller and Jansson (2007), and Sheller and Urry (2004) showed that tourism

mobility partly reflected social status and power of the tourists. On the other hand, tourism mobility can also cause social exclusion if the mobility is forced by any situations, such as in case of refugees and migrant labors. Therefore, the analysis of tourism mobility should involve the inspection procedures to prevent people who may migrate to another country as a tourist, but with the intention to work abroad or take refuge. This is an undesirable issue for the host country as it will become social and economic problems in the future.

Hall (2005), Larsen et al. (2006), and Urry (2007) said that tourism had an effect on a lot of people either in the business or vacation aspects. There are tourists not only at hotels, museums, beaches, but also in the countryside and rural places that arrange tourist activities for them. Borocz (1996) stated that when tourists left their home to other places, it was not only because they wanted to be away from their home and mundane routine, but they also looked for a residence in those places. Williams and Hall (2000) stated that migration designated the tourism trend, especially through the geographical expansion of friendship and kinship. These migrant workers could be part of the tourism trend as they could become tourists who went back to visit their friends and acquaintances in their home country. Sometimes, the notions of migration and tourism are very complicated as there are a lot of factors to be considered, such as a good quality of life and a cultural or traditional bond, which make the migration different from before.

Duval (2004) and O'Reilly (2001) conducted research studies on British home owners in Costa del Sol, Spain. The results from the studies showed that due to the increasing number of retired people in Northern Europe, more and more people traveled to Southern Europe. In addition, these home owners who were retired people migrating there welcomed their friends and family who came from England to

visit them approximately 7 times a year. Two third of these immigrants in Spain also returned to England for a visit to their hometown once a year. This shows that tourism can facilitate migration. Migration is not a single long-distance trip of an individual to leave their hometown, but a two-way trip between the new residence where one migrates to and the home country.

Muller et al. (2004) also mentioned in the context of foreign labor flow that migration was an individual's move to other countries. These individuals bring with them the culture from their home countries, including food, cuisine, craft-making, and performing arts, which turns to be a complement to a good quality of life and relaxed feeling for the foreign labors in a new place and culture. Furthermore, it was found that foreign labors often saved some money for a short vacation back to their home country on holidays. They also spent money shopping for gifts for their friends and families. This behavior is consistent with the study of Larsen et al. (2006) which indicated that tourists including foreign labor influenced tourism both directly and indirectly. It can be clearly seen that during holidays or special occasions, tourists and foreign workers would spend money on tourism to travel, shop, and get services to treat themselves as well as their friends and families. Williams and Hall (2002) stated that the diversity of tourism mobility and work-related migration of tourists and foreign workers led to tourism activities arranged for them by the public and private sectors, including transportation, accommodations, products, and services. In addition, Larsen et al. (2006) and Muller et al. (2004) said that highly skilled foreign labor needed in the industries would be those who had more purchasing power than ordinary skilled foreign labor. They also had a better goal in living and consuming things. In other words, they had a better consumption and travel lifestyles.

4. Concepts about types of labor migrated under the free trade agreements in the service industry

Britton (1982), Cetron (2001), and Nordin (2005) said that labor who traveled to conduct a short business negotiation could stay for only a few days, weeks, or months. However, they still reside in their home countries, and are not employed in the countries they migrated to. They also abide by two basic rules and regulations: 1) They are not allowed to earn a salary or income in the country they migrate to, and 2) They can only participate in some definite types of business activities, such as business negotiations or trade shows. Furthermore, Bell and Ward (2000) stated that labor who temporarily migrated to another country could stay for months or years in order to gain benefits from that country (such as in the form of income and salary).

Cohen (1972), Crozet (2000), and Hurn (2007) indicated that for trade in services that required a long-term business relationship and alliance between the customers and manufacturers, it was necessary for this type of labor to have a visa and a work permit. These businesses can be divided into two main groups: 1) The companies that provide trade show services may allow the transfer of their employees from a subsidiary to the headquarters to obtain higher trade efficiency (the employees acting as representatives), and 2) The companies that have a policy to transfer their employees abroad to work as a representative in a subsidiary or a branch company in a big industrial country. In the latter group, the company usually allows only highly skilled employees to transfer and stay for many years. It also depends on work permit verification to prevent competition in the job market for local labor in that country.

Britton (1982), Lash and Urry (1994), and de Chavez (1999) stated that the development of labor's skills and knowledge is a key for a company to have more efficient human resources. If the

foreign workers migrate to work in another country after getting a certified workshop training from an organization with the international standard, it will be easier to get a quick job offer, especially in the positions of legal officers, auditors (accountants), or tax officers. Usually, this type of labor is easily permitted to migrate if they pass a certified workshop training from an organization with the international standard. They will be offered a yearly employment contract with high salary and attractive work benefits. However, this type of labor does not have a direct contact with the company to negotiate and sign the contract. They have to go through an agency to prevent any possible risks that may arise before, during, or after the contract because the company does not want to hire these employees when they find problems of corruption or violation of ethics and morality.

5. Concepts and theories about policies relating to the temporary labor mobility

The study of Kaufmann (2003), Adey (2009), and Dwyer, Edwards, Mistilis, Scott, and Roman (2009) showed that labor mobility often supported other service sectors. For example, a software consultant may travel to sell and give advices on how to use a software, or a professor may travel to give a special lecture. Normally, the more the labor mobility in the service sector there is, the more the regulations in the market there are, in terms of visa, or work and residence permits. In addition, free flow of labor in the service sector has a lot of advantages. For example, it helps solve the problem of skilled labor shortage in the industry. In order to recruit these skilled labor, it is necessary to enforce relevant measures to revise the rules and regulations to facilitate the migration of skilled foreign workers.

However, Willmott, and Graham (2001), and Balch (2011) indicated that in the case that the skilled labors requested a wage that was higher than the market rate, foreign workers could migrate to work when there was a problem of skilled labor shortage,

which could lead to an increase of job competition in the market. This will benefit both the employers and the consumers. The developing countries in the central and eastern regions of Europe have the advantages in terms of labor and skill-based services. This temporary labor migration also helps increase the efficiency of the comparative advantage in competition, making the overall global economy better as well as increasing the capacity of both the importing and exporting countries. However, the studies of Bommess and Geddes (2000), Boswell (2009), and Menz and Caviedes (2010) reported that the free flow of labors in the service sector also had its disadvantages. For example, the sudden labor mobility can cause market turbulence, decreased wage rates, unemployment, which affect the social welfare benefits and lead to the financial stress.

Nevertheless, if the process of free flow of labors is adjusted according to the predicted guidelines including the training program for employees as part of the economic restructuring, this issue can be solved easily. Furthermore, the studies of Stone (1988), Croucher (2004), and Adler and Vincent (2011) explained that the transfer or modification of economic structure would result in higher productivity. The developed countries will reduce the amount of raw materials and other production factors imported from the developing countries. On the other hand, they tend to have higher demand for services from the developing countries that have plenty of labor. The studies of Stark and Bloom (1985), Bommess and Geddes (2000), and Vertovec (2007) revealed that the benefits resulting from the labor mobility were evident in the form of service trade expansion together with the increased proportion of service sector in the overall demand of these industrial countries. The advantages include the increases of revenue in foreign currencies, capacity in importing raw materials and necessary production factors, employment opportunities, and economic efficiency through the mechanism

of comparative advantage, with low labor cost and economies of scale.

6. Concepts and theories relating to ASEAN and AEC

Rajaratnam (1992), Morada (2008), Roberts (2010), and Goron (2011) stated that the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established on August 8, 1967 by Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore. Brunei Darussalam joined in 1984, followed by Vietnam in 1995, Laos and Myanmar in 1997, and Cambodia in 1999. At present, there are 10 member countries: the Kingdom of Thailand, the Republic of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Republic of the Philippines, the Republic of Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the Union of Myanmar, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and the Kingdom of Cambodia. The objectives of the association are to promote peace and stability, and seek collaboration in economy, and social and cultural development in the spirit of equality and mutual benefits. The ASEAN's motto is "One Vision, One Identity, One Community." Its four pillars are 1) Single market and production base, 2) Competitive economic region, 3) Equitable economic development, and 4) Integration into the global economy. It initially focused on the first pillar, which comprises 5 elements: free flow of goods, free flow of services, free flow of investment, free flow of capital, and free flow of skilled labor.

The reports of Chia (2011), ASEAN (2013), and Fukunaga and Ishido (2015) showed that the ASEAN member countries had the Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs) on free flow of skilled labor in 8 professions: Medical Services, Dental Services, Nursing Services, Engineering Services, Architectural Services, Surveying Qualifications, Accountancy Services, and Tourism Professionals. The establishment of the ASEAN Community (AC) by 2020 aims to focus on three pillars: 1) The ASEAN Political-Security Community to ensure peace within the region, with conflict resolution and post-conflict peace building,

2) The ASEAN Economic Community to facilitate mutual trading and regional economic integration to compete with other regions, and 3) The ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community which is people-oriented and seeks to build a caring and sharing society where the well-being and welfare of the people are focused on.

7. Concepts and theories about the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) on ASEAN Common Competency Standards in Tourism

Castles and Miller (2009), United Nations (2010), and Martin and Abella (2014) viewed that the tourism industry plays an important strategic role in the economic growth of the ASEAN region. It helps develop the region by bringing about the social and cultural diversity, the historical heritage sites, and ASEAN image representation. As a result, ASEAN decided to establish the ASEAN Economic Community by the year 2015 as a significant strategy to increase its capability to compete with other nations in the aspects of economy, trade, investment and services. In addition, it came up with a roadmap for the integration of the tourism sector.

The ASEAN Secretariat (2011) and the ASEAN Secretariat (2012) reported that the roadmap for the integration of the tourism sector is crucial to accelerate the free flow of skilled labor among the member countries, and the services in the regional tourism industry. Relevant measures also need to be implemented to facilitate the travel of tourists, such as a standardized tourist visa process, visa exemption for the citizens of the ASEAN countries, including the measures to promote industrial investment and common market, and to promote ASEAN as the single destination for tourism. Besides the 7 Mutual Recognition Arrangements signed by all the ASEAN member countries, there is another Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Tourism Professionals.

Chia (2014), and Huelser and Heal (2014) mentioned that the MRA on Tourism Professionals has the same objective as the other MRAs, which is

to enable the free flow of skilled labor for foreign tourism professionals within the ASEAN region. It is beneficial for training purposes as they help improve their capacity. It also opens up the opportunity for collaboration and achievement of recognized standards within the member countries. Those who are qualified and receive the certificate of professional standards will be eligible to travel to work in the ASEAN member countries. However, they still need to comply with the rules and regulations of the country they work in. Therefore, the MRA is not the market access, but merely a means to facilitate the process of work permit by skipping the step of academic degree or professional knowledge verification. The essence of the MRA on tourism professionals is that the member countries are to consider the competence of personnel in different positions based on the educational qualifications, training and/or work experiences that are approved by the Tourism Professional Certification Board of the member countries as specified in the Competency Standards for Tourism Professionals.

The ASEAN Secretariat (2012) and ASEAN (2013) reported that the right to work in the destination country depended on the law and regulations of that country. The ASEAN MRA on Tourism Professionals will be effective once every member country has established its own local organization to be responsible for certifying the tourism professional competence and standards. Chia (2011) and ASEAN Secretariat (2012) stated that the ASEAN Common Competency Standards for Tourism Professionals (ACCSTP) are implemented in two fields, 6 departments, and 32 positions. The ACCSTP is a minimum requirement as the threshold competencies for tourism professionals in the fields of Hotel Services and Travel Services. The designation of the threshold competencies aims to enhance the services in the tourism sector and facilitate the implementation of the MRAs as planned. The threshold competencies designated by the ACCSTP

comprise of the Common Core Competencies, the Generic Competencies, and the Functional Competencies for 32 positions in two fields which are Hotel Services (4 departments, 23 positions), and Travel Services (2 departments, 9 positions).

Under the agreement according to the AEC framework, which is one of the three pillars of the ASEAN Community, the free flow of labor within the ASEAN region would be effective on December 31, 2015. The purpose of the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs) is to facilitate the labor flow among the member countries without going through the verification process of basic qualifications. However, it is still necessary to follow the foreign worker employment procedures of each member country. Initially, the MRAs were signed for the 8 professionals, including hotel and travel services, in which Thailand is the main country coordinator. The MRA requires that over 2.7 million Thai workers in the hotel and tourism sectors must improve their professional skills to meet the standard, and get certified in order to have more work options in larger markets. Generally, the 32 positions of Thai labor in tourism are still in need of improvement in terms of both quantity and quality.

Apparently, new undergraduates in the hotel and tourism major know the theories but lack the practical work skills. In addition, there is a shortage of operational employees in some positions, such as housekeepers and laundry attendants. These undergraduates also need to improve their language proficiency to communicate with the customers who are mostly foreigners. The studies of ASEAN (2013), and Huelser and Heal (2014) stated that as a preparation to secure job opportunities for Thai labor under the MRAs on free flow of professional labor among the ASEAN countries, there should be a framework of cooperation to develop the capacity of Thai labor in 32 positions under the

MRAs. Furthermore, it is necessary to study the factors that lead to international labor mobility. The factors causing the movement of labor from their own country to another country usually relate to their work life preferences, such as more income and career advancement opportunity. Nevertheless, such labor mobility has both advantages and disadvantages to the origin and destination countries.

Therefore, in order to prepare for the free flow of labors in the tourism sector under the ASEAN Economic Community, this study has adopted the concepts and theories about international labor mobility including the push factors and pull factors, and demand and supply as the conceptual framework for a guideline of human capital mobility in Thailand's tourism industry for 23 positions of hotel services under the MRA on tourism professionals.

Conclusion

This academic article is an analysis and synthesis of the preliminary data for determining a roadmap for the policy study on human capital mobility in Thailand's tourism industry for 23 positions of hotel services under the MRA on tourism professionals. Any applications and explanations in this article were made based on the concepts and theories about tourism, human capital mobility, tourism mobility, types of labor migrated under the free trade agreements in the service industry, policies relating to the temporary labor mobility, and policies relating to ASEAN, AEC, and the Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) on ASEAN common competency standards in tourism. This article can be useful for those concerned both in terms of policy and actual implementation as a guideline for planning a policy in human capital mobility in Thailand's tourism industry for 23 positions of hotel services under the Mutual Recognition Arrangement on ASEAN common competency standards in tourism. 💎

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