

GUIDELINES TO DEVELOP QUALITY OF GRADUATES ACCORDING TO THAILAND QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK AND NEEDS OF LABOR MARKET IN TOURISM, HOTEL AND SERVICE INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to study on guidelines of developing the quality of graduates from the quality evaluation of the graduates in Tourism and Service Industry Program and Hotel and Restaurant Program, The College of Tourism and Hotel Industry, Nakhon Phanom University according to Thailand Qualification Framework, 2009. This research has compared satisfaction and needs levels of the employers who hire those graduates with the purpose to develop the curriculum so that the future graduates are qualified according to the labor market's needs. The method of this research is the survey study. The questionnaires were distributed to the employers who hire the graduates, then the data given was processed and analyzed by employing descriptive statistics. The results find that the employers are satisfied with the overall properties of the graduates in high level of six levels in the order of 1) Human relationship skill and responsibility, 2) Personality, 3) Knowledge, 4) Wisdom skill, 5) Virtue and morality, 6) Numeral analysis, communication and technology skill. The suggestion for improvement is to improve the study curriculum and focus on any activity that enhances preferable skills as mentioned above so that the graduates could have properties corresponding to the needs of labor market, especially in wisdom skill, virtue and morality, numeral analysis, communication and technology skill.

Keywords: Thailand Qualification Framework, Tourism and Hotel program

INTRODUCTION

To produce graduates with high standard according to qualification framework and in order to serve the needs of labor market is the main task of Nakhon Phanom University. The Program of Tourism and Service Industry and the program of Hotel and Restaurant, the college of Tourism and Service Industry, Nakhon Phanom University have been operated since 2009 and 2010 respectively and have been producing a large number of graduates into labor market of tourism and hotel industry since 2013. The philosophy in producing graduates of both programs is to provide graduates with knowledge and capability of key skills professionally by associating knowledge gained from the classroom with the real practice in many situations so that they could enhance their ability in thinking and problem-solving skills creatively which corresponds to the requirement of the jobs in operational and intermediate levels in tourism, hotel and service industry. Moreover, the programs aim to educate the learners about the local cultures as well as the neighborhood cultures and train them to speak some languages of neighborhood countries located along Mekong River. The ways of producing graduates of Tourism and Service Industry College are under the rules and regulations of Quality Assurance in Education in university (Office of the Higher Education, 2010).

Internal quality assurance is considered as elevating the standard of Thai education level. The National Education Act, 2000 and the revised one (2nd issue) have been used as a

qualification framework for producing the graduates in Tourism and Hotel Program, 2010. The mentioned Act is a key factor that general university use as a framework for producing the graduates with predetermined standard. The framework covers 5 desirable properties which include 1) virtue and morality, 2) Knowledge, 3) Wisdom skill 4) Human relationship skill and responsibility and 5) Numeral analysis, communication and technology skill. Moreover, undergraduate qualification framework in producing graduates of Tourism and Hotel Program, 2010 is also a framework that corresponds to the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Tourism professionals or MRA on TP in which ASEAN members had signed under that agreement at Hanoi, Vietnam in January 2009, wherein the tourism professionals were divided into 23 positions in hotel jobs and 9 positions in transportation jobs, totally 32 positions. The purpose of the agreement is to enhance the acceptable qualification of the graduates not only in Thailand but also in ASEAN countries (ASEAN Secretariat, 2012). In order to produce graduates with above qualifications, the program have to be revised every 5 years so as to correspond to the change of society, economy, politics and culture.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

From the above reasons, this research considers that the data received from the evaluation of the graduates' qualification covering of the 5 desirable properties according to undergraduate qualification framework in producing the graduates of Tourism and Hotel 2010 and other properties such as ASEAN qualification framework which correspond to the needs of the employers would lead to the corresponding way of developing quality of the graduates to match with the needs of labor market in tourism, hotel and service industry in national and international levels. The purposes of this research are written below:

1. To study satisfaction and needs level of the employerstoward the qualifications of the graduates.
2. To compare the difference between the satisfaction and the needs of the employers towards the qualifications of the graduates.
3. To set the ways to develop the quality of the graduates which corresponds to qualification framework and the needs of labor market in tourism, hotel and service industry.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This research aims to evaluate the quality of the graduates who graduated from the college of Tourism and Service Industry, Nakhon Phanom University since2013-2017. This research has studied on the satisfaction level and the needs level of the employers toward the desirable graduates and compare between the satisfaction level and the needs level of the employers according to qualification framework and the needs of labor market in this industry. The qualification framework comprises of 1) virtue and morality, 2) Knowledge, 3) Wisdom skill, 4) Human relationship skill and responsibility, 5) Numeral analysis, communication and technology skill and 6) Personality. The results gained from this research will be used in developing the quality of the graduates so as to serve the needs of the employers and labor market in tourism, hotel and service industry.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Population and samples

Population and sample of graduates' evaluation are employers of 108 graduates who graduated the Bachelor Degree of Arts in Tourism and Service Industry and Hotel and

Restaurant from Tourism and Service Industry College, Nakhon Phanom University since 2013-2017.

Tools and Validation

In order to collect the data, the questionnaires were devised. I have studied textbooks, theories and related research and checked the validity of the content with qualified philosophers in this field in order to consult about the questionnaires and correct and cover all purposes of the research.

Data Collection

The approved questionnaires were distributed to 108 employers in 2013-2017. In addition, I have also interviewed the employers regarding the related issues so that I could understand how to develop the next generation of the graduates effectively.

Data Analysis

After received all of the questionnaires, I have checked the completeness of them, created codebook and made a coding to all of the data. Then, I analyzed and processed the data by employing the instantprogram. I used Descriptive Statistics to describe frequency value, percentage, average and standard deviation. T-test statistics has been used in analyzing the hypothesis.

RESULT

1. Employers' satisfaction toward graduates' properties

The results find that most of the graduates worked with their employer more than one year. Most of the employers own an individual business and they satisfy with the graduates' properties in high level. Their satisfaction from high to low is in this order: human relationship skill and responsibility, personality, knowledge, wisdom skill, virtue and morality, numeral analysis skill and communication and technology skill.

Hereinafter, each skill of the graduates will be described in detail.

- i. Human relationship skill and responsibility – the employers mentioned that the graduates have good relationship with other colleagues. They have responsibility when working in a team and perform their duties well. They always listen to other people's opinions.
- ii. Personality – the graduates have service mind and good manner. They are very enthusiastic and they also have a leadership skill.
- iii. Knowledge – the employers are most satisfied with the graduates' knowledge, i.e. they are eager to learn new things and improve themselves regularly. They also understand about the work process and how to perform their duties effectively. They have competency in their job and extra knowledge which can be applied in their job.
- iv. Wisdom skill – the employers are most satisfied with the punctuation of the graduates most. They can finish their job within a deadline and able to manage themselves. In addition, they can handle their jobs in accordance with priority. Lastly, they have creative thinking and able to solve problems and find ways to prevent such problems as well.
- v. Virtue and morality – the employers are most satisfied with their honesty, responsiveness in their jobs and punctuation. In addition, they always follow the rules of the organization and they have a good attitude to their job.
- vi. Numeral analysis skill and communication and technology skill – the employers are most satisfied with their communication in Thai, the ability to use office tools, the

ability to coordinate in English and the ability to use basic mathematics and statistics to process and analyze data respectively.

2. Qualifications that the employers need

Overall, the employers want to work with the graduates who have virtue and morality in mind. Next, the graduates should have good relationship with a team as well as their responsibility. Further, they should be able to apply their knowledge in the job, show their wisdom skill and the ability of communication and they should be able to use their numeral analyzing skill and the ability in technology.

From the viewpoint of the employers, each qualification of the graduates can be described in detail as follow:

- i. **Virtue and morality:** What the employers want most from the graduates is their responsibility in their job. Next, they want the graduates to be punctual and follow the rules of the company and society. They suggest that the graduates have good attitudes toward their job and dedicate to the society. Lastly, they want the graduates to be honest.
- ii. **Human relationship skill and responsibility:** In this aspect, the employers want them to get along well with the colleagues. Next, they want them to be responsible in their job when working as a team, listen to other people's opinion and work with other colleagues professionally.
- iii. **Personality:** In this aspect, the employers want them to be enthusiastic. Next, they should have a service mind and good manner. Lastly, they should have a leadership skill.
- iv. **Knowledge:** In this aspect, the employers want the graduates to be ready to learn new things all the time. Moreover, they should improve themselves regularly. Next, they should understand the work process and know how to perform their job effectively. In addition, they should have enough competency in their career and general knowledge in order to apply it in their job.
- v. **Wisdom skill:** In this aspect, the employers want them to hand in work on time. Next, the employers want them to solve some problems occurred during their work and find the way to prevent those problems appropriately. The graduates should be able to work independently, organize the priority of the assigned tasks. In addition, they should be creative, capable of applying their knowledge and integrate it into their job.
- vi. **Numeral analyzing skill, communication and technology skill:** In this aspect, the employers expect that the graduates can communicate in English because in some tasks they have to use English. Next, they should communicate in Thai fluently and use office tools effectively. Lastly, they should be able to use basic skill of mathematics and statistics in processing and analyzing the data.

Other qualifications that the employers want are the ability of communication in Chinese and Vietnamese and the good attitude toward the organization.

3. Comparison of Employers' Satisfaction and Needs.

When compare between the satisfaction and needs, it is found that the satisfaction is less than the needs. The most different point between the satisfaction and the needs of the employers is the virtue and morality skill, followed by knowledge skill, wisdom skill, personality, numeral analyzing skill, communication and technology skill and human relationship skill and responsibility respectively as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparison of Employers' Satisfaction and Needs

Quality of the Graduates	Satisfaction of the Employers			The Needs of the Employers			Diff.
	\bar{x}	S.D.	The level of needs	\bar{x}	S.D.	The level of satisfactions	
Virtue and morality	4.04	0.53	High	4.55	0.54	Highest	-0.51
Human relationship skill and responsibility	3.93	0.63	High	4.34	0.53	High	-0.41
Personality	3.92	0.60	High	4.31	0.55	High	-0.39
Knowledge	4.31	0.56	High	4.40	0.69	High	-0.09
Wisdom skill	4.07	0.61	High	4.16	0.74	High	-0.09
Numeral analyzing skill, communication and technology skill	4.04	0.57	High	4.40	0.72	High	-0.36
Overview	4.00	0.45	High	4.36	0.53	High	-0.36

When consider each of the skills, it is found that ability of using office tools is the most satisfaction of the employers which is higher than their needs whereas they are satisfied with their communication in Thai, the ability to work with other people and their relationship in a level slightly less than their needs. When consider each skill in term of satisfaction and needs from high to low, it is found that:

In term of virtue and morality, the property that should be enhanced so that the graduates meet the requirements of the employers includes their obedience in regulations of the organization and society. They should be responsible, punctual, positive, dedicated and honest.

In term of knowledge, the graduates should be eager to learn new things and improve themselves regularly. Moreover, they should have useful knowledge in other fields too so that they can apply it to their job. They should be competent in their job, the work process and method of work so that they can work effectively.

In term of wisdom, the property that should be enhanced so that the graduates meet the requirements of the employers includes the ability to solve problems and the ability to prevent those problems appropriately. In addition, they should be capable to complete their job and be creative in applying and integrating their knowledge in their job. Lastly, they should be able to work on their own and know what to do first according to the priority.

In term of personality, the property that should be enhanced so that the graduates meet the requirements of the employers includes the enthusiasm in their job, leadership skill and service mind respectively.

In term of numeral analyzing skill, communication and technology skill, the property that should be enhanced so that the graduates meet the requirements of the employers includes the

ability to use English language in communication and the skill of using basic technique in mathematics and statistics in processing and analyzing data respectively.

In term of human relationship and responsibility, the property that should be enhanced so that the graduates meet the requirements of the employers includes their responsibility when working as a team. In addition, they should listen to another people's opinion.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Quality evaluation of the graduates from Tourism and Service Industry Program and Hotel and Restaurant Program, The College of Tourism and Service Industry, Nakhon Phanom University according to Thailand Qualification Framework in university, 2009 can be discussed as details written below:

The satisfaction of the employers toward the property of the graduates

From the study, it is found that the employers are satisfied with the graduates' performance in high level. In term of human relationship and responsibility, the employers are most satisfied that the graduates can get along well with other colleagues. The reason why they can get along well with other people is that they had an opportunity to join many activities provided by both programs such as voluntary activities while studying. Thus, they had learned to work with other friends as a team. Next, in term of personality, the employers are satisfied that they are enthusiastic to work and polite. In addition, they have a service mind. However, the problem has been found as well, i.e. the graduates are not competent in numeral analyzing skill, communication and technology skill, especially English communication skill which is one of the important problems. This weak point of the graduates is considered as the problem of the university and the country in overall because it obstructs the country in term of competing with other ASEAN countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore in hotel and tourism business (Wannachotphawate, W., 2015). These findings correspond with the report of TDRI that the weak point or the main problem of Thai labor is English communication which is a medium language among this region. Of course, this is the problem that many parties are concerned about. From the report of TDRI, it is found that the English skill of Thai graduates is in intermediate level (Yabushita, N. W., 2016). Therefore, the faculty should organize a curriculum that enhance their English skill so that they can communicate in English effectively and compete in the labor market among ASEAN countries in the future.

Properties of the graduates that the employers require

From the study, the employers generally need all 6 properties from the graduates in high level. The most wanted property is virtue and morality focusing on responsibility in their job. Next, the employers want the graduates to have human relationship skill focusing on good relationship with other colleagues. In term of personality, the employers want them to be enthusiastic. In term of knowledge, the employers want them to learn new things and improve themselves at all time. In term of wisdom skill, the employers focus on the ability to work within deadline. Lastly, in term of numeral analyzing skill, communication and technology skill, the employers want them to have a good relationship with other colleagues. All of the needs are corresponded to the learning outcome which is a basic standard of quality to assure the quality of the graduates and the undergraduate qualification standard in producing graduates from the program of tourism and hotel (Whitelaw, P., and et al., 2015).

Comparison between satisfaction and needs of the employers toward the properties of the graduates

From the study, it is found that the employers are satisfied in 6 properties of the graduates in high level but less than the needs of the employers. When consider in each property, it is found that the ability of using office tools which is the only one property is more satisfied than the needs. The ability of using Thai language is a little bit difference between the satisfaction and the needs. Moreover, the ability of using computer, the ability to work with other people and the ability to get along with other people are slightly different when compared between the satisfaction and the needs of the employers.

The employers have different level of satisfaction and needs toward the property of the graduates, so the programs should provide qualified graduates to the market according to the market's needs. To do so, developing and enhancing their properties will help produce the ideal graduates for the labor market, and those properties are comprising of:

- i. Virtual and morality, where the discipline and acceptance the regulations of the organization should be emphasized as well as responsibility and punctuality.
- ii. Knowledge, where competency in the job, learning on new things and developing themselves should be emphasized as well as searching new knowledge to apply into their job.
- iii. Wisdom skill, where the ability to solve and prevent problems, the ability to work within deadline, the ability to think creatively should be emphasized.
- iv. Personality, where enthusiasm in the job, leadership skill, manner and service mind should be emphasized.
- v. Numeral analyzing skill, communication and technology skill, where communication in English, usage of basic mathematics and statistics in processing and analyzing data should be emphasized.
- vi. Human relationship skill and responsibility, where responsibility in the assigned job when work as a team and acceptance of another people's idea should be emphasized.

All these properties are corresponding to the current situations and future trends as mentioned by Ministry of Education (Pitiyanuwat, S., 2015) that the properties of the graduates in the program of Tourism and Hotel which meet the needs of society and labor market are comprising of virtue and morality, service mind and responsibility for the society based on their professional ethics. In addition, they should have knowledge and career skill in the field of tourism and hotel and they should be competent in their operation, capable to serve and manage as equal as the professional performance standard in other regions throughout the world. They should have the skill to analyze the situations by applying their knowledge, logic and consideration appropriately when encounter with different situations. Moreover, they should have good personality, be able to work with other people at all levels and be able to improve themselves both in knowledge and career continuously. Lastly, they should be able to communicate in English, be able to use basic mathematics in processing and analyzing data in order to plan, manage and develop their job.

Since, ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) has been established in 2015 and Thailand has been cooperating with all ASEAN countries, so Thailand has to be ready to compete with ASEAN countries and other countries throughout the world. Therefore, it is important for all universities which produce graduates to the labor market to create the curriculum that allow the learners to work professionally when they have graduated to the real world. The curriculum should provide the English courses that help the graduates to communicate fluently (Briguglio, C., & Watson, S., 2014). Moreover, the curriculum should integrate the

local identity of the region into the courses so that the courses have a unique identity to compete with ASEAN countries and the other countries around the world (Ismail, R., 2016).

SUGGESTIONS

1. To develop the graduates in order to serve the needs of the labor market, the curriculum should develop all of the 6 desirable properties of the graduates which comprise of:
 - 1) Virtue and morality – in this aspect, job responsibility, punctuation, acceptance of the regulations of the organization and society should be emphasized.
 - 2) Human relationship and responsibility – in this aspect, the graduates should be able to work with other people, responsible for the assigned job and listen to other people's opinion.
 - 3) Personality –in this aspect, the graduates should have a good manner and service mind. Also, they should be enthusiastic with their job.
 - 4) Knowledge – in this aspect, the graduates should never stop improving themselves. They should be eager to learn new things and the method of work.
 - 5) Wisdom skill – in this aspect, the graduates should focus on their job and do it within time. They should be able to solve and prevents any potential problems that can occur in their job. Moreover, they should be able to work on their own.
 - 6) Numeral analyzing skill, communication and technology skill –
2. Apart from these, the curriculum should help improve the knowledge and ability of the learners so that they can work in tourism and hotel industry effectively as well as educate them to have service mind and good attitude to their organization.
3. To develop the curriculum, the unique identity of the region should be integrated into the course so that it is different from other countries. Also, it can help elevate the standard of the graduates to compete in ASEAN and international level.

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