CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background / Rationale

The Asia-Pacific region is the world's fastest growing tourism area in terms of visitor arrivals. Thailand is one of the countries in the Asia-Pacific region that has experienced tourism growth since the first Thai tourism plan was set up in 1976 at the end of 3rd National Economic and Social Development Plan (NESDP) (1972-1976). Even in the year after financial crisis in 1997. The number of international tourist arrivals increased from 7.22 million in 1997 to 7.76 million in 1998 and up to 10.80 million in 2002. In 2002, tourism industries become the top most foreign currency earner when compared to other industrial sectors such as computer and parts, electronic components and textiles.   The growth rate of tourist arrivals keep growing even after the regional and world crisis such as the incident in the United States, the bombing in Bali and SARS epidemic. But in terms of revenues receives from the industry in dollar terms were decreasing as opposed to baht term. Thailand generates less revenue per tourist that leading competitors, for example Indonesia and Thailand has not been able to increase the revenue per tourist overtime. Even after the 1997 devaluation, revenues in terms of Thai Baht only remained stable, while tourists reduced their spending in terms US-Dollar (Chaisawat, 2004).

The proposed tourism action plans under the 9th NESDP (2002-2006) (TAT, 2001) were set to achieve:

1. The access ability to tourism is the basic rights to all Thai people with no discrimination.
2. The management of tourist must be united and intergraded manner for the preservation of national tourism heritage for Thai younger generation.
3. Tourism as a means to educate younger generation, for continuing education to people and as means to preserve, not destroy, natural culture and identity.

4. Tourism is a manner to offer employment opportunity, revenue generation and a process to strengthen the community.

5. To maintain international competitiveness, to increase the quality of management standard in both private and public sectors and to increase personal skills for the quality of international service standard.

The main principle of the tourism policy as established by the Ministry of Tourism and Sports during 2003-2006 (Brickshawana, 2003):

1. Develop as well as promote sustainable tourism with the least environmental, natural, social and cultural impact, so as to preserve the existing national resources for the benefits of later generations.

2. Enhance the quantitative expansion of the tourism industry through the development as well as management of potential tourism resources in manner that generates the extreme benefits.

3. Standardize tourism products in order to attract quality tourists.

4. Use Thai uniqueness as the country's selling point while establishing a brand image for each region and push them to be developed accordingly.

5. Present the products from different points of view in order to meet the tourists' demands due to fact that 51 percent of tourist visitors to Thailand are repeaters.

6. Promote international sports events as a major tourist activity.

7. Develop an integrated management of information, public relations and customer relations through the use of information technology.

   The topmost target set by the government that Thailand will become the Tourism Capital of Asia within 3 years starting from 2004 to 2006.

To achieve the ambitious government target, to success of any tourism development strategy will be determined to a large extent by human resources, which can deliver efficient, high quality services. As a consequence of Thai rapid growth in tourism, the need to develop the required human resources in various segments of the industry has become imperative.

From the studies of Thai Hotels Association: Annual Report 1995-1996, revealed that there were 81 non-Thai General Managers (GMs) from 259 hotels or 31.27%. The same figure for Phuket was 17 out of 38 or 44.74%. Reggies Shiu, Accor Asia Pacific' chief executive for Thailand, Cambodia, Burma, and Laos said that "the most important problems of human resources is to recruit and to keep good people. One problem that is facing Accor Asia Pacific at Bangkok office is the inability to develop Thai management staff. Now, there is only one Thai, Assistant Chief Executive and Directors, working with the company (Chaisawat, 1999).

The past 30 years have seen unprecedented growth both in higher education in general and in hospitality education in particular. One common explanation for the explosion in the number of hospitality programs is tremendous growth of the hospitality industry in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, which increased the demand for hospitality staffs. As the industry grew and matured, and become more sophisticated and specialized, the need for an educated workforce intensified. The increasing complexity of running a business requires staff with greater academic preparation than had been necessary in the past (Barrows, 1999). The finding of 'Baccalaureate and Graduate Degrees in Tourism and Hospitality Studies in Thailand: The Comparative Studies Between 1996 and 1999 by Chaisawat, M.(1999) concluded that the universities and institutes offered programs in hospitality and tourism education in 1999 as compared to those in 1996 had changed with a lot of quantity improvement in terms of number of the institutes, number of staffs, number of in-put/out-put of students as well as research projects. But the very important issues that directly to the quality of the graduated, and the problems and constraints running the hospitality/tourism programs, still exist. The issues of problems and constraints running Tourism and Hospitality Programs in Universities/Institutes between 1996 and 1999 were:

1. Lack of qualified teaching staff
2. Negative attitude of the students/parents to the industry
3. Insufficient practical training place for students
4. Lack of financial support from the government
5. Low quality of the students

6.   Lack of textbooks in this area of study

7.   Lack of overseas staff

8.   High investment for this program

9.   Lack of laboratory

Those issues support the targets of the national plan to produce the graduates in sufficient number to meet market demand and of international quality standard to cater to the free trade in service, as well as to support the employment of more Thais in the tourism industry. Three recommendations in 'Baccalaureate and Graduate Degrees in Tourism and Hospitality Studies in Thailand: The Comparative Studies Between 1996 and 1999 by Chaisawat, M. (1999) was proposed to solve the immediate problems. There are: the need for curriculum development, setting up a joint-program for staff development, and the need for an association and meeting for coordination and development of the program.

1.2 The Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are mainly to see the responses of educational institutes in adapting to the changing environment:

1.2.1   To know the numbers of institutes and size or level of graduate output in the discipline of hospitality and tourism management at bachelor degree level and above.

1.2.2   To see the problems and obstacles in producing graduates in the hospitality and tourism fields of study.

1.2.3   To propose recommendations for producing graduates in hospitality and tourism fields of study, that meet the human resource requirement needs sufficiently in both quality and quantity, that can find work in different parts of the world under international economy.

1.3 Statement Hypothesis

The existing universities and institutes offering hospitality and tourism programs could not produce qualified graduates, both in terms of quantity and quality, to meet manpower needs of the country.

1.4 The Statement of the Problem

Tourism is a major foreign exchange industry; in general, the key benefits of the tourism industry are in from of export earnings, employment, infrastructure investment, tax revenues, rural opportunities. According to World Tourism Council, tourism industry in 2005 is expected to account for 11.4 per cent of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP). It is also anticipated to create 120 million's jobs opportunities in the world being related with intensive labor tourism industry with direct and indirect ways. Thailand has some of the world's finest hotels and resorts, a reputation for cultural and historical attractions, distinctive cuisine and service with smile. Therefore, the only way that Thailand can compete in the international tourism market is to position Thailand as a quality and sustainable tourist development by improving and developing the basic factors necessary for increasing the efficiency and boosting the competitiveness of Thailand's service sector. This includes the production and development of service sector personnel, the development of different forms of providing services, and development of technology and infrastructure. To complete those factors, human resource development is needed to be considering in the first stage. We need people to work with new information technology. Therefore, the key issue is whether the universities and institutes can produce qualified graduates in a sufficient number to meet market demand, and of international quality standard to cater the free trade in services, or not.

1.5 Expected Benefits

Baccalaureate and Graduate Degree in Tourism and Hospitality Studies in Thailand in 2003 will provide basic data for planning and developing human resources in the Thai tourism industry in the period of the rapidly changing environment.

1.6 Data Sources:

1.6.1 Primary Data

A questionnaire surveyed covering the total population of the institutes, colleges and universities in Thailand.

1.6.2 Secondary data

Search data from documents, journals and websites about hotel and tourism international education, Thai the economic crisis that effected to tourism, and

1.6.2.1	Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT)
1.6.2.2	Thai Tourism Promotion and Development Policies 1997-2003.
1.6.2.3	Tourism Action Plans under the 9th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2002-2006) (TAT, 2001)
1.6.2.4	www.tat.or.th
1.6.2.5	www.tourismthailand.org
1.6.2.6	www.itehk.com
1.6.2.7	www.thaitambol.net
1.6.2.8	www.lib.ru.ac.th
1.6.2.9	www.world-tourism.org

1.7 Scope of the Study

1.7.1 The total of the institutes, colleges and universities in Thailand

1.7.2 The area of the study covers in Thailand

1.8 Research Methodology

1.8.1 Population

The study will cover the total population of the institutes, colleges and universities in Thailand those offer hospitality and tourism programs at a bachelor degree and above, as follows:

1.8.1.1 21 Public Universities

1.8.1.2 29 Private Universities

1.8.1.3 41 Rajabhat University

1.8.1.4 38 Rajamangala Institutes of Technology[1]

1.8.1.5 65 Public and Private Educational Institutes/Colleges

1.8.2 Data collection

Qualitative and quantitative methods of study will be used for this study. The data collection will cover documents, data, statistics (for examples, WTO, WTTC, TAT, Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI)) and interviewing teachers, who are responsible in the tourism/hospitality educational institutes, colleges and universities.

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[1] Now the name have changed to Rajamangala Universities of Technology

1.8.3 Data analysis

Using The Statistical Package for Social Science for Windows (SPSS Program) to analyze and conclude the result for this research. This program can be categorized to:

1.8.3.1   Simple Frequency: measure the distribution of the data to describe Descriptive Statistics for both Measures of Central Tendency and Measures of Dispersion.

1.8.3.2   Joint Frequency Distribution (Cross-tabulation): to find out the number of universities, institutes and colleges, where offer degree programs in the hotel   and tourism fields of study, and their input and output students. Therefore there will be the important data in order to see the problems and obstacles in producing graduates in the hotel and hospitality fields of study.

1.8.3.3   Manual Tabulation: to analyze the open-ended questions such as the question, which ask about problems and recommendations in tourism/hospitality study in those institutes, colleges and universities.