



**Skill Upgrading for Informal Hair and Beauty Services Workers in Hat Yai,
Thailand**

Mayowa Abiodun Peter-Cookey

**A Thesis Submitted in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Human and Social Development**

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Thesis Title: Skill Upgrading for Informal Hair and Beauty Services
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Workers in Hat Yai, Thailand

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ABSTRACT

Skills upgrading for informal workers is key to the development of the informal economy in any nation and so bridging the skill gaps will essentially improve the gains of other interventions and total wellbeing of the workers. Improving the economic and productive capacity of informal economy workers (IEWs) in developing countries has been a major priority globally. Studies have revealed that informal workers (IWs) are generally plagued with low skills, low income and low productivity, which could tie to the fact that they do not have the requisite means to improve their performance quality through skills training. This in-depth multilevel research study of skill upgrading impact on the skill performance levels of informal economy workers (IEWs) was carried out on the informal hair and beauty services workers (IHBSWs) in Hat Yai, Songkhla, Thailand to explore the perceptions of workers, customers, business-owners and training-providers. The research employed the mixed methods research design with multilevel surveys and interviews, observations, secondary data as well as mixed purposeful sampling. The research sought to decipher the perceptions of all sample groups on the impact of skills upgrading on skill performance, the current skill acquisition process and workers' skill levels, skill upgrading needs and their consequences, and workers' skill performance levels as well as the challenges they face accessing skills upgrading and some key recommendations. The study found out that trainings provided and skill-levels of workers were basic, while only a small proportion of workers learnt their skills from vocational colleges, but more from social-media like Facebook and YouTube. In addition, only one skill set out of six (Haircare), didn't show any overall gap while 52 skills out of total of 85 had high gaps. The findings also revealed that people (71%) generally perceive that skill upgrading greatly impacts skill

performance and skills performance levels to be at novice levels for most skills and all other skill sets except General Skills, which relates to the general concept that informal workers are basically low-skilled with low-productivity. Conclusively, IEWs need skill upgrading to improve their performance and so thus skill upgrading should be an integral part of skill development strategies. We recommend that skill development policies and programs need to be more attentive to the training needs of the IEWs. This knowledge will help policy-makers, trainers and program managers of skill development for informal workers to identify which skill areas to focus on for training and how to improve training design as well as contribute to research on skill quality/demands for this occupational domain.

หัวข้อวิทยานิพนธ์:	การยกระดับทักษะของแรงงานในงานบริการด้านเส้นผมและความงามใน อำเภอหาดใหญ่ จังหวัดสงขลา
ผู้จัดทำ:	นางมาโยวา อาปิโอดัน ปีเตอร์-คูกี
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ปีการศึกษา:	2559

บทคัดย่อ

การยกระดับทักษะของแรงงานนอกระบบเป็นกุญแจสำคัญในการพัฒนาเศรษฐกิจนอกระบบในทุกประเทศ การลดช่องว่างทางทักษะส่งเสริมให้แรงงานได้รับสวัสดิการการดูแลและคุณภาพชีวิตโดยรวมที่ดีขึ้น การพัฒนาความสามารถทางเศรษฐกิจและผลิตภาพของแรงงานในเศรษฐกิจนอกระบบ (Informal Economy Workers) ในประเทศกำลังพัฒนาหลายมาเป็นปัจจัยสำคัญอันดับต้นทั่วโลก ผลการศึกษาหลายฉบับเปิดเผยว่าแรงงานนอกระบบ (Informal Workers) โดยทั่วไปจะประสบปัญหาเรื้อรังจากการมีทักษะระดับต่ำ รายได้ต่ำ และผลิตภาพต่ำ ซึ่งอาจเชื่อมโยงกับข้อเท็จจริงที่ว่าพวกเขาไม่มีช่องทางปัจจัยเข้าถึงการพัฒนาประสิทธิภาพการทำงานผ่านการฝึกอบรมทักษะ การศึกษาวิจัยทุกระดับเชิงลึกเรื่องการยกระดับทักษะซึ่งส่งผลกระทบต่อระดับประสิทธิภาพทักษะการทำงานของแรงงานนอกระบบฉบับนี้ทำการศึกษาข้อมูลจากกลุ่มแรงงานในบริการด้านเส้นผมและความงามในอำเภอหาดใหญ่ จังหวัดสงขลา ประเทศไทย เพื่อสำรวจค้นคว้าความตระหนักของแรงงาน ลูกค้า ผู้ประกอบการ และผู้จัดฝึกอบรม งานวิจัยฉบับนี้ใช้รูปแบบการวิจัยแบบผสม โดยใช้แบบสำรวจและการสัมภาษณ์บุคคลในหลายระดับ การสังเกตการณ์ ข้อมูลทุติยภูมิ รวมไปถึงการใช้การสุ่มตัวอย่างแบบผสมผสานอย่างมีวัตถุประสงค์ งานวิจัยฉบับนี้มุ่งเน้นที่จะทำความเข้าใจถึงความตระหนักของกลุ่มตัวอย่างทุกกลุ่มที่ได้รับผลกระทบจากการยกระดับทักษะและประสิทธิภาพการทำงาน กระบวนการพัฒนาทักษะในปัจจุบันและระดับทักษะของแรงงาน ความจำเป็นในการยกระดับทักษะและผลที่เกิดขึ้นตามมา ระดับประสิทธิภาพในการใช้ทักษะ รวมถึงอุปสรรคที่แรงงานประสบเมื่อเข้ารับการยกระดับทักษะและข้อเสนอแนะที่สำคัญบางประการ จากการวิจัยครั้งนี้พบว่ามีการจัดฝึกอบรมทักษะและทักษะของพนักงานอยู่ในระดับพื้นฐาน พนักงานจำนวนน้อยที่ได้เรียนรู้ฝึกฝนทักษะจากวิทยาลัยวิชาชีพ ขณะที่ส่วนมากเรียนรู้ฝึกฝนทักษะผ่านสื่อสังคมออนไลน์ อาทิ Facebook และ YouTube นอกจากนี้ยังพบว่าเพียง 1 กลุ่มทักษะจาก 6 กลุ่มทักษะ (การดูแลเส้นผม) ที่ไม่ปรากฏ ทักษะส่วนมากและกลุ่มทักษะอื่นๆ ทั้งหมดที่อยู่ในระดับผู้เริ่มต้น ยกเว้นทักษะพื้นฐาน (General Skills) ซึ่งเกี่ยวข้องกับแนวคิดเบื้องต้นที่ว่าแรงงานนอกระบบมีทักษะน้อยและผลิตภาพอยู่ในระดับต่ำ โดยสรุป ช่องว่างทางทักษะในภาพรวม ขณะที่ทักษะถึง 52 ทักษะจากทั้งหมด 85 ทักษะ

กลับมีช่องว่างทางทักษะสูง การค้นพบนี้ยังแสดงให้เห็นว่าโดยทั่วไปผู้คน (71%) ตระหนักว่าการยกระดับทักษะส่งผลกระทบต่อประสิทธิภาพการทำงานและระดับทักษะสำหรับ แรงงานนอกระบบจำเป็นต้องได้รับการยกระดับทักษะเพื่อเพิ่มประสิทธิภาพการทำงาน ด้วยเหตุนี้ การยกระดับทักษะควรเป็นส่วนหนึ่งในกลวิธีการฝึกทักษะ เราเสนอแนะว่านโยบายและหลักสูตรการพัฒนาทักษะเหล่านี้จำเป็นต้องมุ่งให้ตรงกับความต้องการในการฝึกฝนของแรงงานในบริการด้านนี้ ความรู้ในงานวิจัยฉบับนี้จะช่วยให้ผู้จัดทำนโยบาย ผู้ฝึกอบรม และผู้จัดการหลักสูตรการฝึกอบรมการพัฒนาทักษะให้กับแรงงานนอกระบบสามารถระบุทักษะที่จะให้ความสำคัญในการฝึกอบรมและแนวทางการปรับปรุงการออกแบบการฝึกอบรม รวมไปถึงการส่งเสริมการศึกษาคุณภาพ/ความต้องการทางทักษะสำหรับผู้ประกอบอาชีพในสายงานดังกล่าว

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

Abbreviations/Symbols	Meaning
ADB	Asian Development Bank
DFID	Department For International Development
DSD	Department of Skill Development
DVT	Dual-Vocational-Training
EC	European Communities
EU	European Union
FE	Formal Economy
FWs	Formal Workers
GEM	Global Education Monitoring
GMR	Global Monitoring Report
HCT	Human Capital Theory
IE	Informal Economy
IEWs	Informal Economy Workers
IHBSs	Informal Hair and Beauty Services
IHBSWs	Informal Hair and Beauty Services Workers
ILO	International Labor Organization
IMT-GT	Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle
ISCO-08	International Standard Classification of Occupations 2008
IWs	Informal Workers
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoLSW	Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare
MPL	Master Plan of Labor
NEA	National Education Act
NEP	National Education Plan
NESDP	National Economic and Social Development Plan
NESPAP	National Education Systems and Policies in Asia-Pacific
NORRAG	Network for International Policies and Cooperation in Education and Training

NSDPs	National Skill Development Policies
NSO	National Statistics Office
NVQs	National Vocational Qualifications
NVTCC	National Vocational Training Coordination Committee
OEC	Office of the Educational Council
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
ONESDB	Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board
ONIEC	Office of the National Education Commission
OVEC	Office of the Vocational Education Commission
OVES	Office of the Vocational Education System
PNFIEA	Promotion of Non-Formal and Informal Education Act
PRE	Perceptual Rating Estimation
PPRE	Paired Perceptual Rating Estimation
PVTCC	Provincial Vocational Training Coordination Committee
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDPA	Skill Development Promotion Act
SKAQPRO	Skill Acquisition Process
TDRI	Thailand Development Research Institute
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TVSD	Technical and Vocational Skill Development
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UN	United Nations
VEA	Vocational Education Act

LIST OF PUBLISHED PAPERS AND PROCEEDINGS

- | S/NO | List of Published Papers and Proceedings |
|-------------|---|
| 1 | Skills Upgrading for Performance Improvement of Informal Economy Workers in Thailand (Manuscript submitted for publication to Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences [KJSS]). Elsevier Platform and indexed in Scopus and Thai Citation Index (TCI) |
| 2 | Reaping just what is sown: Low-Skills and Low-- Productivity of Informal Economy Workers and the Skill Acquisition Process in Developing Countries. (Manuscript submitted for publication to International Journal of Educational Development [IJED]). Elsevier Platform and indexed in Scopus and Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) |
| 3 | Skills Upgrading Needs of Informal Hair & Beauty Services Workers in Hat Yai Municipality, Thailand. Paper presented at the 40 th National Graduate Research Conference 20 – 21 October 2016_Ref 4051. Organized by Graduate School, Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai, Thailand |

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Improving the economic and productive capacity of informal economy workers (IEWs) in developing countries has been a major priority globally (OECD 2015; ILO 2015a,b, 2014, 2013a,b, 2002; World Bank 2014; Adams, de Silva and Razmara 2013; Langer 2013; UNESCO 2012; Pina, Kotin, Hausman and Macharia 2012; Cano-Urbina 2012; ADB 2011; Palmer 2008; Adams 2008; Johanson and Adams 2004; Liimatainen 2002; Chen 2002; Haan 2002; Chen, Jhabvala and Lun 2001; Birchall 2001; Leach 1995; McLaughlin 1989; Fluitman 1989). This is probably based on the recognition that decent work and productive employment alone cannot transit people out of poverty, low income and low self-esteem (World Bank 2014; UNESCO 2012; Adams 2011; King and Palmer 2007; ILO 2003; Haan 2002; Khan 2001), especially since the majority of new work opportunities in recent times are found in self-employment and work in the informal economy (IE) (ILO 2013a,b, 2012a; Adams et al 2013). As a matter of fact, informal employment seems to be rising like a tidal wave above formal employment - over 80% of the workforce in developing nations and 20% of those in developed nations are in the IE (ILO 2014, 2013a,b; EC 2009a; Becker 2004). However, focus of most deliberations that target IWs have been on formalizing the IE while overlooking the consideration that formality may not always fit and some IWs and enterprises may never desire to enter the formal economy (FE) (ILO 2009). Perhaps, this is related to past presumptions that the IE must transit into the FE to be acceptable and effectively supported by the system (ILO 2014, 2013a; Adams et al 2013; Palmer 2008a,b), but it might be futile to pursue formality for all aspects of the IE.

Studies have revealed that informal workers (IW) general are plagued with low skills, low income and low productivity (ILO 2013a,b, 2010, 2008; Adams et al 2013; Palmer 2008; King & Palmer 2008; Silva 2008; Pavcnik, 2002) because they lack access or funding for training to upgrade their skills (Langer 2013; Adams et al 2013; Johanson and Adams 2004; Palmer 2008; Liimatainen 2002). This argument could tie to the fact that

they do not have the requisite means to improve their performance quality in order to improve their productivity (Klay 2016; Ali, Yousof, Khan and Masood 2011; Gupta and Upadhyay 2012). It is clearly evident that IWs need to improve their skills performance levels to be able to function properly and profitably in their economic activities (Langer 2013; Adams et al 2013; Pina et al 2012; ILO, 2012a, 2010; ADB, 2011), particularly those directly in the IE (IEWs) that will not transit to the FE. It makes sense, then, to develop programs and activities that support skills upgrading for IEWs and they are the main focus of this paper (Langer 2013; Adams et al 2013; Palmer 2008; Johanson and Adams 2004).

The way the IE is emerging and its influence on economies and lives of people (Langer 2013; Adams et al 2013) requires that skills of IWs are strengthened to improve their productivity, income and socioeconomic contributions (Pina et al 2012). According to Johanson and Adams (2004), in their study of the sub-Saharan African IE, skills training for IWs are centered on improving their productivity, products and services quality and personal income. Others have also added that it predicated on the exponential growth of the labor force over the years (over 80% of the workforce in developing nations and 20% in developed nations (ILO 2013a,b; OECD 2009; EC 2009; Becker 2004; Schneider 2002)) and the need to create more jobs since the IE seems expansive enough to assimilate the teeming global workforce population (Langer 2013; Adams et al 2013; Becker 2004) as well as its effect on poverty reduction and national economy (Palmer 2008; ILO 2013a). This is probably based on the recognition that decent work and productive employment alone cannot transit people out of poverty, low income and low self-esteem (World Bank 2014; UNESCO 2012; Adams 2011; King and Palmer 2007; World Bank 2004a,b; ILO 2003; Haan 2002; Khan 2001), especially since the majority of new work opportunities in recent times are found in self-employment and work in the IE (ILO 2013a,b, 2012a; Adams et al 2013).

Many people in developing countries enter the IE with just basic skills acquired from short formal courses and/or apprenticeships (ILO 2013a,b, 2012a; Adams et al 2013) with governments supporting their training in order to improve employment and income potential (Palmer 2007b). The role of skills in employment have been majorly built

on the human capital theory that more skills will lead to more productive and equipped workforce, which will in turn increase employment and income opportunities as well as national economy (Kwon 2009; Olaniyan and Okemakinde 2008; Bildirici et al 2005; Texeira 2002). This was useful some time ago, but eventually resulted in stunted growth and decline in economic progression because these skills can only guarantee minimal income and productivity without provisions for upgrading of skills. Building up their skills has being a cause of great concern for national governments and development organizations (Darvas and Palmer 2014; Palmer 2008; ILO 2008, 2013b; King and Palmer 2008, 2007) for decades, but, IEWs continue to lack adequate skills to progressively grow their trade and/or craft. Studies have shown overwhelming evidence that skills can strengthen the IEWs self-reliance and their communities (ILO 2013a,b, 2011, 2010, 2008; Adams et al 2013; R4D 2012; EC 2010; Palmer 2008, 2007c; King & Palmer 2008; Silva 2008; Pavcnik, 2002), but lack of access and funding for quality skills upgrading training (Langer 2013; Adams et al 2013; Johanson and Adams 2004; OECD 2012) affects their productive capacity (Palmer 2008).

However, the focus of most skill development programs in developing countries is based on the provision of entry-level-training for the unemployed/underemployed to prepare them for the job market. But, this is not enough to produce the desired outcomes of productivity, performance, income and total wellbeing, but quality and higher-level training, learner-support and enabling conditions are also necessary (Mayombe and Lombard 2015; King and Palmer 2006b; Palmer 2007b). Acquired skills need to be of good quality and within appropriate contextual conditions (World Bank 2004) to be effective and productive because poorly acquired skills with no or inadequate provisions to upgrade will not result in increased productive capacity (King and Palmer 2006a). This indicates the need to reconsider the skill development paradigm from just equipping the unemployed/underemployed with basic skills for employment to a shift that includes, at a higher degree, assisting the low-skilled IEWs to improve their skills and productivityⁱ (Brewer et al 2012; BIS 2010; Brisbois and Saunders 2005; Peter-Cookey and Janyam 2015).

The need for skills upgrading for IWs is strengthened by the recognition that they face challenges like limited opportunities, low income/financing, inadequate time to spend on training away from work, and limited access to public support, which hinder their ability to invest in skills that could boost their performance, productivity, income and vulnerabilities (Adams et al 2013; ILO, 2013a,b, 2010; Palmer 2008). Richard Walther argues that building skills of informal workers is one of the best ways to move from subsistence living and gradually progress towards growth and added value, and this can enable them access better job opportunities and establish new businesses that can generate greater income and additional jobs (R4D, 2012). To this regard, helping people improve their labor prospects must go beyond helping the unemployed find jobs; but must include helping low-skilled incumbent workers enhance their skills levels (Brewer et. al., 2012; BIS, 2010; Brisbois & Saunders, 2005). Therefore, research into how to support incumbent IEWs upgrade their skills to improve their performance, productivity, income and total wellbeing is practical and important for policy development and training programs design. This will require strong support for skills and entrepreneurship training (Pina et al. 2012; ILO, 2010). The implication garnered here is that skills upgrading for IWs will require a systematic approach involving the people, governments, training providers, private organizations and other non-state actors, especially since even in present times majority of IWs are still low-skilled (ILO 2015a,b) – and still find it difficult to access skills training they need (Langer 2013; Adams et al 2013). Research investigations into this phenomenon are scarce, and mostly focus on the IWs in the FE or industrialized sector and not on those working directly in the IE like street vendors, dressmakers, shoemakers, hairdressers/barbers, etc.

Skills upgrading, on the other hand, involves expanding, extending or building upon existing skills in order to succeed in a preferred occupational domain, and the ultimate aim is to build better skilled and oriented individuals (EC 2009a; Wilhelm and Mueller 2003) as well as keep skills up-to-date on a continuous basis in order to remain competitive. A large proportion of the working population requires upgraded skills (ILO 2010; EC 2010a,b, 2009) and the capacity to learn new skills is essential in a globalized

economy (World Bank 2014). Skills upgrading (SU) is targeted at incumbent workers who are already practicing their profession with some skills. The EC (2009b) recognized the need for skills upgrading and the OECD (2006) insists that SU for low-skilled workers should become a strategic objective of governments with special provisions in policy and institutional frameworks. However, most existing training provisions and studies almost exclusively target pre-employment candidates for the wage economy rather than the large population of incumbent workers in the IE who need SU (Johanson and Adams 2004), and most of these trainings are designed for industrial establishments (Adams et al 2013). The workers primarily in the IE (i.e. the IEWs) have not been captured in policy and training designs for skill development, nationally and globally (King 2012; ILO 2014, 2011; Chen 2012; Chen et al 2002; La Porta and Shleifer 2009). This will require an integral, systematic, comprehensive and holistic gradual process that involves all stakeholders, and is short/long term, with global perspectives and a focus on the wellbeing of the IWs as well as economic competitiveness of nations (World Bank 2014; OECD 2013, 2012; ILO 2008).

It has been noted that skills upgrading in most countries suffer from both a marketing and governance failure (OECD 2006) and lack coordination between public employment services and vocational training systems, which hamper the ability of governments to provide any assistance to skills upgrading (OECD 2002). Oftentimes, policies are ill-adopted and the governance framework inadequate to fit the needs of improving skills, especially since skills have to be nurtured and renewed constantly for living standards to be maintained and/or increased (OECD, 2006). Several studies on building skills in the IE have pointed out the need to have clear, specific and comprehensive approach towards upgrading the skills of informal workers (Adams et al 2013; Pina et al 2012; Johanson and Adams 2004). To achieve this, requires a better understanding of how they grow their skills, especially after apprenticeship as well as the challenges of skills upgrading. It has been recognized that it will take not just more jobs, but more productivity, to lift people out of poverty and low living standards (ILO 2013b; World Bank 2014; 2010). Since skills are an essential ingredient for productivity (ILO 2013b, 2012a, 2008; Palmer 2008), upgrading them in IEWs makes more sense. The focus of this research is the IWs

in the IE, whether wage workers or self-employed, to understand how they grow their skills and improve performance.

Moreso, skill upgrading for IEWs has hardly been studied (King 2012), but only mentioned in few studies (Pina et al 2012) that focused more on pre-employment preparation for work in the FE (Adams et al 2013; King and Palmer 2013; ADB 2013; Pina et al 2012; Chen 2012; Palmer 2007, 2006; Liimatainen 2002; Chen et al 2002). Furthermore, studies on skill development for IWs hardly approach the issue from the perspectives of the IWs and/or the users of their services. Therefore, the purpose of this work is to explore the perceptions of IEWs and the users of their services on the need for skill upgrading and determine the skill performance levels of these workers. This will contribute to understanding how the workers and customers view SU as well as enable policymakers and training-providers to plan and design specific programs that fit effectively and practically to the needs of the IEWs and customers. Thus, this study was particularly looking at IEWs of the personal care services subsector (informal hair and beauty services workers [IHBSWs]) in Hat Yai Municipality, Songkhla, Thailand as well as to investigate their perspectives as skill owners and their customers on the need for skill upgrading and its impact on IEWs skill performance to provide evidence and guidance for policy and training programs development.

Skills have essentially become the global currency of the 21st century (EC 2009), and without proper investment in skills, people, society and countries cannot be competitive, and the long-term economic performance of nations can be impaired (OECD 2012; EC 2009). They impact peoples' lives beyond their income – personal health, family, job satisfaction, motivation, creativity, innovativeness, citizenship as well as civic and social behavior are impacted; and can also affect inequality, while promoting social mobility (World Bank 2014; OECD 2013, 2012; EC 2009). They provide workers with a defense against unemployment and a route towards personal development and active citizenship, and are required to get the kind of jobs that will improve livelihood, economic growth and development, productivity, wellbeing and self-dignity (World Bank 2014; ILO 2014). Upgrading the skills of informal workers has been an issue for development

communities and national governments (ILO 2015a,b; ILO 2013b; Adams et al 2013; Langer 2013; Liimatainen 2002; Palmer 2008; OECD 20016; Johanson and Adams 2004; Haan 2002, 2001).

In 2006, the governments of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) member countries acknowledged the importance of upgrading skills of those low-skilled and low-paid workers with informal jobs so that they can take on more qualified jobs and contribute to national economic growth (OECD, 2006). This has also been supported as an effective means to improve productivity and income of informal workers (ILO, 2012a, 2010, 2009; ADB, 2011). However, skills upgrading for IEWs have not received adequate attention in developing countries despite the fact that 70% of the workforce are in the IE and this is the main focus of this study. Building skills of IWs is one of the best ways to move from subsistence living and gradually progress towards growth and added value, and this can enable them access better job opportunities and establish new businesses that can generate greater income and additional jobs (R4D, 2012; Walther 2011). This will require highly effective, market-driven education and training programs, supporting informal means of developing skills, as well as combining vocational pathways, the complexity of skills identifications and training methods (Pina et al 2012; OECD 2006; ILO, 2010). Adams et al (2013) offers a comprehensive strategy to resolve the challenges IEWs face in skills upgrading, which include: (i) promoting private investments in skills, (ii) improving the quality of training offered by master craftspersons in apprenticeship, (iii) providing second-chances for education, (iv) exposing small firms in the IE to the benefits of training, (v) introducing training funds for the IE, (vi) strengthening the capacities of small industry associations, (vii) encouraging private providers for skills development in the IE, (viii) improving market efficiency, (ix) more involvement of government and private organizations, (x) expanding training supply, and (xi) building a knowledge base. Johanson and Adams (2004) had also suggested other measures that could enhance the skills of IWs and they are (i) put in place policy documents specifically for IWs training, (ii) recognize that the IE has come to stay, (iii)

consider training for small workshop employment and self-employment, and (iv) improving the traditional apprenticeship training.

The IE has been described as diverse, divergent and complex in nature with a huge influence on nations' economies and people's lives (Langer 2013), and is described as 'all activities that are, in law or practice, not covered or insufficiently covered by formal arrangements (ILO 2013b). IEWs, on the other hand, are simply those incumbent workers who are employed or do business directly in the IE (Darvas and Palmer 2014; ILO 2013a,b; Chen 2012; Bacchetta, 2009; Hussmanns 2004; Bangasser, 2000) as waged or self-employed (Chen 2012; ILO 2013b, 2003b). They are involved in work that are heterogeneous, in a wide variety of intermediate categories and diverse fields of economic activities ranging from petty trading, personal care services (e.g. repairs, tailoring, haircare), making and/or selling of crafts or food and others (Pina et al 2012; ILO, 2002a,c).

The process of planning skills development programs (acquisition and upgrading) for IEWs should be a systemic and comprehensive cycle in which investigative exploration of current skill acquisition process (SKAQPRO), skills levels and performance ratings are carried out to ascertain gaps and saturation, IEWs involving the people, governments, training providers, private organizations and other non-state actors (Peter-Cookey and Janyam 2015; OECD 2012; Pina et al 2012; dvv 2013, 2011; ILO 2010). The SKAQPRO involves every step from planning, design, delivery and certification of IEWs' skills training programs. Inevitably, skills policies in the IE need to be clear, specific and comprehensive and address issues of pre-employment and skill acquisition as well as how they should be upgraded (Adams et al 2013; Pina et al 2012; Johanson and Adams 2004; Peter-Cookey and Janyam 2015).

Further research on the understanding of skill upgrading is needed, particularly for IEWs, to make meaningful contributions to sustainable and effective national skills upgrading development policies and training programs (Azoh, Weyer & Carton 2015, 2015; King and Palmer 2014; Norrag 2012). This is needed to fill the gap since multilateral agencies like the ILO, UNESCO and the World Bank and national governments encourage national skill policies that are focused on pre-employment training

designed for the acquisition of foundational skills of literacy and numeracy with less emphasis on technical and vocational skills, which could address skill upgrading needs. In addition, not much attention has been given to skills development of workers in the IE in national programs and planning (King 2012) in spite of the fact, it has been recognized that quality education, pre-employment training and continuous learning (i.e. skill upgrading) are solid pillars for sustaining individual employability essential for promoting people, enterprise, economic and societal development (ILO 2006, 2004; UNESCO 2012).

Therefore, addressing the core issues this research will require the use perceptions of IEWs and users of hair and beauty services on skill upgrading, its importance to them and how it can affect skill performance were explored quantitatively and qualitatively. Perception implies personal understanding, views, opinions of certain phenomena and its related issues, which determines individual, group or even community actions, commitment, acceptance and involvement (Bagheri et al. 2008). Rigby and Sanchis (2006) observed that all skills are socially constructed (Wood 1981) and so evaluating, identifying and developing them should very much be within a process of social construction. He argues that workers are more likely to define their skills differently from the perspective of employers. If this is taken further, then workers and employers may have different perceptions of workers' skills, also different from customers and trainers' perceptions. He also pointed out that some skills, especially in the service sector and small firms (like sub-services in the IE) tend to be undervalued and given low-status due to low social recognition. This leads to the conclusion that social construction of skill requires the assessment of the different ways skill upgrading is viewed by the skill-owners and the users of their services like customers and employers as well as trainers because understanding the perceptions of key stakeholders can increase the success rate of skills development interventions for IEWs. To this effect, the perceptions of informal hair and beauty services workers (IHSBWs) and their skilled services' users (customers) as well as business-owners and training-providers were considered in a survey and series of interviews and were used in data analysis to generate the results of this work and arrive at the study's conclusions.

1.2 Research Problem

Skills development for IWs is in two categories: pre-employment (i.e. providing skills training to prepare individuals for the informal job market) and upgrading (i.e. providing skills training for incumbent workers to improve their skills) (Langer 2013; Adams et al 2013; Johanson and Adams 2004). However, most existing training provisions are almost exclusively targeting pre-employment candidates for the wage economy rather than the large population of incumbent workers in the IE who need skills upgrading (Johanson and Adams 2004), and most of these trainings are designed for the industrial environment (Adams et al 2013). This means that most skills development programs for IWs are either focused on the unemployed or underemployed as a means to initiate them into the workforce, and/or skills upgrading for those in the industrialized sector of the formal or informal economy. Skills upgrading for the IWs who are primarily in the IE are often not given much deserved attention.

Although, several studies on building skills in the IE have pointed out the need to have clear, specific and comprehensive approaches towards upgrading the skills of informal workers (Adams et al 2013; Pina et al 2012; Johanson and Adams 2004), research still mainly focus on pre-employment provisions for the unemployed (e.g. traditional informal trainings like apprenticeship and formal training programs) (Tumen, 2015; Mayombe and Lombard 2015; Chan 2013; Adams 2008; Palmer 2006a,b; Unluhisarcikli 2001; Singh 2000) rather than incumbent workers and certainly not on the skill quality and the impact on income and enterprise growth. Also, studies and reports have pointed out the need to improve and upgrade the skills of Thai IEWs generally, especially in the services subsector (like the IHBSWs) (ILO 2013a-c, 2012c, 2004; ONESDB 2012; OECD 2012; World Bank 2012; Thai Health 2010; Thanachaisethavut and Charoenlert 2006; Richtigter 2001; Silpa-Archa 2010; Huesler and Heal 2014; Wailersak 2013). There is scanty research on TVSD for IEWs (Azoh, Weyer & Carton 2012) and further research on the governance of TVSD, particularly for IEWs, is required to contribute to sustainable and effective national skills development policies (NSDPs) (King & Palmer 2014; Norrag 2012; Azoh et al 2015). Few academic researches on TVSD generally exist, and most of

those available focuses more on policies and programs of particular agencies and the major approach is macroeconomics (Norrag 2012).

Studies have identified skill quality as one of the major sources of customer satisfaction in hair and beauty care services (Shahbazi and Akareem 2010; Cohen 2010; Konishi 2010), but none have focused on the skills status of the IEWs that work in the subsector preferring to study relationships, entrepreneurship, marketing mix, customer satisfaction and the likes (Kagone and Namusonge 2014; Mpye 2013; Kamau and Bwisa 2013; Kuyram 2013; Shahbazi and Akareem 2013; Thongplean 2012; Khan and Tabassum 2011; Kass 2011; Konishi 2010; Essah 2008; Parveen 2006; Lee et al 2007; Schwer and Daneshvary 2000). Most studies on the IHBSWs in Thailand have been on service quality and marketing mix, and none on their skills quality (Kuyram 2013; Thongplean 2012). However, Peter-Cookey and Janyam (2016c) noted that majority of IHBSWs in Hat Yai are working with only basic skills, while training available to them are also mainly at basic level. They also revealed that the workers are challenged by time, training costs and availability as constraints and so cannot easily access skill upgrading training; and this has affected their customer-base and income. In addition, most of the customers in the study complained that there are too many IHBS operations in the city with workers who only have basic skills that they have acquired from trainings as short as six weeks only. It was evident that these IHBSWs need to upgrade their skills, which could improve their income and self-esteem (UNCHR 2010; ILO 2012). But, most researches on IHBSWs do not even address their skills levels and the challenges they face accessing skills upgrading that they need to improve their performance (Kagone and Namusonge 2014; Mpye 2013; Kamau and Bwisa 2013; Kuyram 2013; Shahbazi and Akareem 2013; Thongplean 2012; Khan and Tabassum 2011). Studies on the skill set required for this target group is globally sparse and almost non-existent, and this is one area this thesis aspires to fill.

The IEWs have not been captured in policy and training designs for skill development, nationally and globally. In essence, only those areas that can possibly transit from informal to formal or the modern day industrialized/capitalist sector receive attention, perhaps due to the fact that research investigations into skill development are scarce, and

where available, mostly focus on the IWs in the FE or industrialized sector and not on IEWs (ILO 2014; Chen 2012; Chen et al 2002; La Porta and Shleifer 2009). But, some studies have argued that formalization may not be feasible or even desirable for all informal enterprises and workers, since many will voluntarily choose to continue to remain informal and semi-formal for a long time and the IE and FE seem to successfully coexist in some countries (ILO 2014; Chen 2012; La Porta and Shleifer 2009).

Furthermore, the skill acquisition process (SKAQPRO) in developing countries' IE and its impact on the IEWs and their performance, especially in work that has to do with trade and craft outside the formal and industrial economy have never really being studied. Available studies also mainly focus on pre-employment provisions (e.g. traditional informal trainings like apprenticeship and formal training programs) and not on the skill quality and the impact on income and enterprise growth (Tumen, 2015; Mayombe and Lombard 2015; Chan 2013; Adams 2008; Palmer 2007a,c; Unluhisarcikli 2001; Singh 2000). Moreso, skill upgrading for IEWs has hardly been studied. A rigorous search for related literature was carried out, but only mentions in few studies about skill development for IWs were found. In addition, these studies focused more on the usual pre-employment preparation for work in the FE and were commissioned by multilateral or regional organizations (Adams et al 2013; King and Palmer 2013; ADB 2013; Pina et al 2012; Chen 2012; Palmer 2007, 2006; Liimatainen 2002; Chen et al 2002). None of these studies approached the issue from the perspectives of the IEWs and/or the users of their services. Skills upgrading is targeted at incumbent workers who already have some form of skills and so in order to improve their skills, it is expedient to find out where the deficiencies are in availability and performance generally and provide focused skills policies and training; and this is the area of focus that this study aims to explore.

Considering that it can be assumed that IEWs need access to upgrade their skills in order to improve performance quality based on the premises of the human capital theory (Cueto et al 2014; Popovic 2011; Unger et al 2011; Cornachione 2010; Olaniyan and Okemakinde 2008; Matanda 2008; Reimer-Hild et al 2007; Bildirici et al 2005; Little 2002; Teixeira 2002; Becker 1993; Schultz 1971), it then prompts the research question

‘how can skill upgrading be used to improve skill performance of IEWs?’ In other words, what are the current skills levels, acquisition process and upgrading needs (i.e. gaps)? What are the consequences of these upgrading needs? What are the skill performance levels? What are some of the factors challenging skills upgrading for the IHBSWs in this regard? And what are some key recommendations? The answers to these questions can help policy-makers and training-designers to formulate programs, direction and support to assist IEWs in their vocational and livelihood pursuits.

1.3 Significance

This research is significant to policy, practice and research of skills upgrading for IEWs. Many studies have attempted to understand the issues surrounding skill development in the IE, but very few have looked at skill upgrading in particular and the challenge for IEWs in the informal non-industrial sector and none have explored the perceptions of these workers, their customers as well as the business-owners and training-providers towards skill development provisions.

- (i) **Policy:** This study contributes to policy designs and development into skills upgrading for IEWs. It attempts to fill the gap linking the quality of skill acquisition systems to the quality of skill levels and skill performance and did this by investigating the IHBSWs in Hat-Yai, Thailand. It highlights the need for policy instruments that specifically target skills upgrading for IEWs to improve performance, productivity, income and wellbeing of the workers.
- (ii) **Practice:** This study also contributes to training design and development as it provides the perceptions of the workers and other stakeholders on what is required and demanded. It also makes suggestions on strategies that could improve, training availability, delivery quality and performance quality of workers.
- (iii) **Research:** It also contributes to research into skills upgrading for IEWs by highlighting the need for information, data and solutions into the impact

upgrading skills can have on productivity in the IE and national growth and economy. Considering that research can provide significant data and information for policy-makers and skill development providers for policy and training designs as well as determining gaps and areas of focus, more research on skills upgrading for IEWs is a necessity.

1.4 Contributions

This thesis makes significant contributions to policy, practice and research of skills upgrading for workers in informal enterprises and its impact on performance, productivity, income and total wellbeing. Some of the main contributions are outlined below:

1. The urgent need for more research on skills upgrading for IEWs. This was revealed in the sparse information and studies on this subject matter and the evidence of the impact it can have on performance, productivity, income and total wellbeing.
2. The dividends of multilevel surveys in assessing skills development, especially in the informal economy.
3. A procedure was developed for the analysis of multilevel surveys, perceptual surveys and performance assessments. The Paired Perceptual Rating Estimation (PPRE) is a method that uses addition and subtraction as well as frequency counts and percentage range to analyze combined scores of all groups of respondents to arrive at a single conclusion. The measure of agreement statistical calculation was used to verify the results.
4. The research also identified the current skill upgrading needs of IHBSWs in Hat Yai as well as the need for reforming the training programs, design and availability.

5. Also, IEWs skills acquisition and upgrading training programs should be systematic and all-inclusive with classroom instructions, professional workshops and courses, apprenticeships, on-the-job training, self-directed/informal learning through experience, practice and all other forms that do not include an external instructor like social media and DVDs and social activities like skill contests. This also requires further research as to how best to create a synergistic learning/training system.
6. The research further revealed the challenge of affordability, access and time-constraints that IHBSWs face in their attempts to upgrade their skills. Recommendations were made to provide incentives, financial and otherwise, to the IEWs and informal enterprise owners to encourage them to invest in skill upgrading training.
7. Furthermore, the study highlighted the need for a national apprenticeship scheme for IEWs because apprenticeship is not covered in any of the technical/vocational and related informal workers policy instruments that particularly and traditionally work with apprentices.
8. In addition, the research highlighted the need for specific policy instruments targeting skills upgrading for IEWs, nationally and globally.
9. The research also revealed the need for licensing and certification, especially for trainers, for IEWs that will not be beyond their capacity to attain.
10. The need for related industry to participate in the skills upgrading training for IEWs as well as support training providers and curricula development.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS/OBJECTIVES

The research objectives and questions of this thesis study were based on the assumptions that to understand the skills upgrading situation of IEWs like the IHBSWs will require investigations into their current skill acquisition process, skill levels, skill upgrading needs (i.e. skill areas that need upgrading) and their consequences, communal skill performance levels, which determines quality as well as the challenges they face and some recommendations they have.

The research objectives and questions are as follows:

2.1 Central Objective/Question

Objective: To determine if skill upgrading is perceived to be able to improve performance quality of informal economy workers

Question: How can skill upgrading be used to improve skill performance of informal economy workers?

2.2 Sub-Objectives/Questions

- 1 *Objective:* To identify the skills acquisition process and determine the current skills levels of informal hair and beauty services workers in Hat Yai city

Question: How do informal hair and beauty services workers in Hat Yai city go about skills acquisition and what are their current skills levels?

- 2 *Objective:* To assess the skill performance levels of informal hair and beauty services workers in Hat Yai city

Question: What are the current skills performance levels of these informal workers?

- 3 *Objective:* To determine the skills upgrading needs of informal hair and beauty services workers in Hat Yai city

Question: What are the current skills upgrading needs of informal hair and beauty services workers in Hat Yai city and what are the consequences?

- 4 *Objective:* To identify some challenges to accessing skills upgrading and make recommendations towards improving the skills of informal hair and beauty services workers in Hat Yai city

Question: What are some of the factors challenging skills upgrading for the informal hair and beauty services workers in Hat Yai city and what are some suggestions to remedy these challenges?

The research objectives and questions were matched to methods and instruments from the research design that was used to address them (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 Matching Objectives/Questions to Methods

S/N	Research Objectives	Research Questions	Methods/ Instruments	Analysis Method	Validation	Related Paper
1	Central Objective To determine if skill upgrading is perceived to be able to improve performance quality of informal economy workers	Central Question How can skill upgrading be used to improve skill performance of informal economy workers?	Survey Questionnaire Interview	Mean/Standard Deviation Frequency Count/Percentage PPRE Agreement	Data Triangulation Multilevel Survey Multilevel Interviews Observations Secondary Data Review	Paper 1
2	To identify the skills acquisition process of informal hair and beauty services workers in Hat Yai city To determine the current skills levels of informal hair and beauty services workers in Hat Yai city	How do informal hair and beauty services workers in Hat Yai city go about skills acquisition? What are the current skills levels of the informal hair and beauty services workers in Hat Yai city?	Survey Questionnaire Interview Observations Secondary data	Mean/Standard Deviation Frequency Count/Percentage	Inter/Intramethods Peer/Member Examination External Auditing Pilot Study Questionnaires were verified by three-member-panels for each level	Paper 2
3	To assess the skill performance levels of informal hair and beauty services workers in Hat Yai city	What are the current skills performance levels of these informal workers?	Survey Questionnaire Interview	Mean/Standard Deviation Frequency Count/Percentage PPRE Agreement		Paper 1
4	To determine the skills upgrading needs of informal hair and beauty services workers in Hat Yai city	What are the current skills upgrading needs of informal hair and beauty services workers in Hat Yai city? What are the consequences?	Survey Questionnaire Interview Observations Secondary data	Mean/Standard Deviation Frequency Count/Percentage PPRE T-test		Paper 3
5	To identify some challenges to accessing skills upgrading and make recommendations towards improving the skills of informal hair and beauty services workers in Hat Yai city	What are some of the factors challenging skills upgrading for the informal hair and beauty services workers in Hat Yai city? What are some suggestions to remedy these challenges?	Survey Questionnaire Interview Observations	Mean/Standard Deviation Frequency Count/Percentage PPRE		Paper 3

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

3.1 Background

The concept of skill upgrading is drawn from the ILO international labor standard which recommends people-centered education, training and lifelong learning that promote people employability that contributes to personal, cultural and citizen development (ILO 2004). The recommendations call for member states to develop policies and programs that address the challenges in the IE, but the challenge is in the fact that the IE is still not considered as an entity on its own, but as temporal and undesirable status which denies the IEWs the needed institutional framework and policy support for skill upgrading (ILO 2004, 2006). Therefore, the scope of skills upgrading (lifelong learning) in the specific context of vocational and professional education should be designed to enhance an individual's capacity to secure and retain decent work, grow within occupation and cope with change (ILO 2004, 2006). IEWs' productive capacity cannot be simplified into ability to read, write and count (UN 5015b; GEM 2016; King 2012; King and Palmer 2012, 2015), but more on their skill performance quality, which is dependent on the quality of skill upgrading opportunities available in technical, vocational and skill development (TVSD) systems (King 2012; King and Palmer 2012, 2015).

Norrag (2012) suggested that the concepts of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) as well as skills development should be combined as Technical and Vocational Skill Development (TVSD); and could act as the foundation of skill upgrading. TVSD, which could be a platform for skill upgrading, is increasingly losing ground to foundation and transferable skills as global and national agencies continue to preach that the key to employability, productivity and competitiveness for individuals and national economies is rooted in literacy and numeracy skills as well as life skills (GMR 2012; UNESCO 2012; WDR 2007; WTR 2012; King & Palmer 2012). TVSD is often relegated to the background, as perhaps an afterthought, during debates on skills development. King and Palmer (2013) noted that there is a surprisingly low profile of skills development in post-2015 debates on education and training. Much focus has been placed

on foundation and transferable skills (GMR 2012, 2015; OECD 2012) and little attention on technical and vocational skills development (TVSD) (King and Palmer 2012).

This has greatly affected national policies on skill development in the IE, making the capturing of information on IEWs in countries' labor survey difficult. Meanwhile, efforts to formalize some aspects of the IE have proven difficult as national policies on employment and enterprise continue to hinder entry (ILO 2014). This has also greatly affected SD for IEs as most training programs are designed for workers to transit to formal employment and/or for pre-employment for the FE. However, employment in the IE is no longer a journey, but a destination (Sparks & Barnett 2010; Adams 2008), therefore, if the aim is to create jobs and reduce poverty, then informal employment must be given equal focus as formal employment, as evidence shows that informal workforce has concretely overshadowed the formal workforce in many countries (UN 2015; ILO 2014, 2002; Chen 2012; Schneider 2007). They must be included in the debate and treated as strong contributors to national and economic development. Governments need to find ways to encourage growth in the IE rather than trying to obliterate it (Sparks & Barnett 2010) because time has proven that the IE is not going away and provides jobs and sustenance for more people than the FE ever can (Schneider 2007; Adams 2008; Becker 2004; Johansson & Adams 2004).

Many countries have provisions for skills development policies (NSDP) based on the ILO's recommendations and guidelines over the years. But, these policies are still inadequate for the benefit of the millions of incumbent workers in the IE. Most multilateral agencies like the ILO, UNESCO and the World Bank encourage national skill policies that are focused on pre-employment training and acquiring foundation skills of literacy and numeracy while making technical and vocational skills not so important for an individual's work life, which impacts negatively on skills upgrading. In addition, not much attention has been given to skills development of workers in the IE in national programs and planning (King 2012). However, the attention given to the IE is skewed and inadequate. Even though the policy calls for member states to develop policies and programs that address the challenges in the IE, the focus is to assist employers and workers to move into

the FE and so only makes education, training and lifelong learning (ETLL) available for transiting to formalization (ILO 2004, 2006).

The ILO's Recommendation 195 (2004) concerning human resources development rolled out guidelines for education, training and lifelong learning strategies for member states. The Recommendation advocates for integrative policies because education and training alone will not translate to better equipped and productive workforce, but the right and enabling environment should be a part of any sound national education and training policy. The document claims to be a comprehensive and dynamic international labor standard that could help governments, employers and workers articulate and implement people-centered education, training and lifelong learning policies that promote people's employability for a lifetime. It also recognizes that quality education, pre-employment training and continuous learning are solid pillars for sustaining individual employability essential for promoting people, enterprise, economic and societal development. It further suggests that the principle of lifelong learning (from which the concept of skill upgrading is drawn) contributes to personal, cultural and citizen development and social partners (like employers and employees) should support and contribute to lifelong learning. The scope here can be said to cover skills upgrading (i.e. lifelong learning) in specific contexts of vocational and professional abilities of a worker, and are recognized internationally, nationally and sectorally, which enhances an individual's capacity to secure and retain decent work, grow within occupation and cope with change (ILO 2004, 2006). But, as long as policy direction and objectives are focused on formalization, the IEWs will not receive the support they need, even though the promotion of access to lifelong learning for low-skilled people and IWs is advocated.

UNESCO's Global Monitoring Report (GMR) (2012, 2015) and the OECD (2012) put emphasis on foundation and transferable skills as well as education and pre-employment training ground with little focus on TVSD (King and Palmer 2013). It seems that the Global Education Monitoring (GEM) (2016) has followed the same path, with incumbent IEWs still receiving little attention. Particularly, the GMR (2012) argues that foundation skills are ultimately vital for the future of work and suggest that transferable

and technical/vocational skills are only support. This is based on the assumption that many of the unemployed in developing countries have weak or no foundation skills because most employers require more transferable skills. However, no study has shown what proportion of those unemployed are without jobs because they are not literate or numerate. Many unemployed in developing countries have graduated from higher institutions of learning where high levels of literacy and numeracy are mandatory requirements, while a whole lot of others are employed even with limited literacy and numeracy (King 2012; King & Palmer 2013; King 1995). The implication here is that there are some people working with various levels of reading and mathematics competency who still need much professional technical and vocational skills to be employable.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on education are not particularly vocal about TVSD and lifelong learning, but are tilted more towards foundation and transferable skills (UN 5015b; GEM 2016; King 2012; King and Palmer 2012, 2015). The GEM (2016) report subsumed TVSD inside education and hardly addresses it directly. The SDG goals and targets on technical and vocational education (Targets 4.3, 4.4 & 4.5) are primarily for formal education and digital literacy/ICT skills, majorly reviewing proficiency in digital literacy; and no good goals and targets for IEWs. This indicates that incumbent IEWs were not considered in the equation during the deliberations and development of the SDGs. Developing literacy and numeracy skills, sustainable development skills were given priority focus as well as ICT skills and education attainment, and not on upgrading of technical and vocational skills. If most subsequent national policies and guidelines for skill development will follow from the SDGs goals and targets on education (SDG 4), then, national skills development policies (NSDPs) may continue to be inadequate for IEWs. The challenge of IEWs productive capacity cannot be simplified into ability to read, write and count, but more of TVSD. Therefore, the focus of this thesis is on how IEWs can upgrade their skills through the window of skill upgrading in TVSD.

For countries to fully grasp the potential of the IE and benefit from its workforce, it will require filling up the knowledge gaps in employment and skill development (King & Palmer 2012; Adams 2008; Leach 1995), and this could involve exploring the perceptions of those employed (waged/self-employed) directly in the IE concerning skill development strategies, opportunities and importance. It is essential to consider the kind of skills IEWs want, need, utilize and how it reflects on their socioeconomic, cultural, world and livelihood contexts in order to provide effective support through sound policies and effective programs of skill development (King 2015; King & Palmer 2012; Singh 2000). Furthermore, it has been suggested that governments be primarily responsible for pre-employment training and employers for further training, but individuals should find ways to seize available opportunities (ILO 2011, 2004). This is the culminated effect of all the above recommendations and guidelines, but this does not consider the IEWs (wages/self-employed) who may not be able to afford or access opportunities and the quality of the training and trainers available, and so need government intervention to improve their performance, productivity and income levels. Support, acceptance and effectiveness of interventions for IEWs are predicated on positive perceptions of direct stakeholders in the skill training provisions and the importance they attach to it. It is important that perceptions of workers, customers, enterprise owners and trainers on skill upgrading necessity and benefits are examined so that policy formulation and guidelines as well as training design and programming can be properly targeted and presented. Public participation has been widely accepted as a means of ensuring sustainability and efficacy of development plans and interventions; this indicates that assessing the perception of local IEWs about skill development provisions and needs could greatly help policy-makers and training-providers in their intervention and support program planning.

According to the ILO (2011), lack of active participation of employers and workers is a major challenge to NSDP formulation and so key principles like shared responsibility, policy integration, lifelong learning and equal opportunities were advocated to ensure sound NSDPs. This implies that active participation of key stakeholders (workers,

employers, trainers and customers), lifelong learning (i.e. skill upgrading) and equal opportunities (including those engaged in the IE) are essential to planning for any NSDP to be effective (DFID 2002). Consequently, in order for any NSDP to be broadly acceptable with far-reaching effects, there should be a balance of competitive interests from all stakeholders on the basis of broad participation (Bjornavold (1997). For instance, minor involvement of employers and employees in the development of national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in the United Kingdom (UK) affected its acceptability and utility (Rigby and Sanchis 2006; Wolf 1994). In other words, lack of consensus can negatively impact NSDPs and interventions. It is, then, necessary to explore the need for a national intervention for upgrading the skills of IEWs through a multilevel assessment of perceptions.

For NSDPs to be truly inclusive, they need to give attention to upgrading of skills for these incumbent IEWs and how government can support their work and enterprise development. This is related not just to NSDPs but also Lifelong Learning policies, which are sometimes embedded in NSDPs or education policies, since this operates with the major principle of SU. However, weak understanding of the IEWs perception and those who use their services may hamper development and the progress of any policies or interventions directed towards mitigating the challenges they have in improving their skills. However, since the peculiarities of localities differ, it would be more practical for perceptions of local IEWs to be considered to capture what is relevant to them. To develop sound, inclusive and sustainable NSDPs, it is important to evaluate relevant stakeholders' perceptions of the necessity, benefits and process of skill development programs. This thesis presents a multilevel perception survey of informal hair and beauty services workers (IHBSWs) in Hat-Yai, their customers, business-owners and training-providers.

3.2 Thai Skills Development System

The two major line ministries responsible for SD in Thailand are the Ministries of Education (MoE) and Labor and Social Welfare (MoLSW). The MoE's work is focused on vocational education and training while the MoLSW is responsible for developing the workforce for the labor market through pre-employment trainings and upgrading training to improve employability and productivity (OVES, 2012; Rojvithee, 2007; Silpa-Archa, 2010).

The MoE is overseen by the Office of the National Education Council (ONEC) and operates through the office of Vocational Education Commission (OVEC) to administer and manage vocational education nationally. The OVEC formulates policies and plans as well as implements them through partnerships between institutions, the private sector and students. The Commission is responsible for the Dual-Vocational-Training (DVT) program as well as regulation of all vocational education programs and institutions. In addition, the Office of Non-formal and Informal Education Commission (ONIEC) of the MoE is responsible for the promotion of lifelong learning (that is skill upgrading), which could be relevant to IEWs. One major focus of the ONIEC is non-formal vocational and technical training for practical skills and it promotes the support for non-formal and informal education while also coordinating vocational training in this pathway. There is several community skill development centers established in Tambons all over the country to teach practical skills, life skills and other support for community folks (OVEC 2016; NESPAP 2016; ILO 2016; Smiti 2010; OEC 2008; MoE 2008a,b, 2002; KOT 1999; ONEC 2003; Rojvithee 2007).

On the other hand, the MoLSW is responsible for implementing the SDPA (KOT 2002) through the DSD. The DSD is primarily focused on the skill status of the 58 million workforce and aims to train, retrain and upgrade skills of incumbent workers and the unemployed workforce to help them gain employment and increase productivity (DSD 2014b; Smiti 2010; Rojvithee 2007). The Department delivers trainings through provincial centers like the Songkhla International Institute for Skill Development based in Songkhla Province of Southern Thailand, an initiative under the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand

Growth Triangle (IMT-GT) cooperation supported by the German government. The Institute works to improve skills capacity of the people based on specific skills competency standards, and to ensure the people of the Province have the requisite skills relevant to the Province (DSD, 2014a,b; Rojvithee, 2007). Most participants to the DSD's trade and career trainings are IEWs, and majority of them are self-employed looking to expand their business activities (Silpa-Archa 2010).

A National Vocational Training Coordination Committee (NVTCC) and Provincial Vocational Training Coordination Committee (PVTCC) were established by the DSD to coordinate trainings at national and provincial levels as well as issue policies and guidelines relating to skill development for the nation's workforce (Smiti 2010; Rojvithee 2007; KOT 2002). The Department administers the National Skills Standards and Testing System and the three industrial areas of focus are manufacturing, services and commercial (DSD, 2014b; Smiti, 2010; Rojvithee, 2007) as well as the workplace skill upgrading program. In as much as the DSD targets SU for incumbent workers, even IWs, the direction is still towards the formal/industrial economy. Those workers employed in informal enterprises can only access skill upgrading through the informal training programs of the skill development centers, which mostly offer basic courses that may not be relevant to the IEWs (Peter-Cookey and Janyam 2016a-c).

3.2.1 Thai National Skill Development Policy Framework for Informal Economy Workers (IEWs)

The policy framework of Thailand's skill development for IEWs can be drawn from various policy documents and other regulations and standards related to education and training for workers. but, the policy documents guiding workforce development are primarily the 1997 and 2007 Constitutions and the National Economic and Social Development Plans (NESDPs) (precisely the 7th [1992-1996]; 8th [1997-2001]; 10th [2007-2011]; and 11th [2012-2016]). Others are the National Education Act (1999) and its amendments (2002), National Education Plan (2002-2016), Vocational Education Act (2008), Promotion of Non-Formal and Informal Education Act (2008), Master Plan of

Labor (2007-2011) and the Skill Development Promotion Act (2002) (Jantawan and Tsai 2013; ONESDB 2012, 2007, 1997, 1992; ILO 2016; Thanachaisethavut 2011; Smiti 2010; OEC 2008; MoE 2008a,b, 2002; KOT 2008a,b, 2007, 2002a,b, 1999; MoLSW 2007; Rojvithee 2007; ONEC 2003).

The 1997 Constitution declares that it is the role of government to improve education to match up with economic and social changes as well as encourage people to obtain employment (KOT 1997). Subsequently, the 2007 Constitution mandates that the government support education and training for vulnerable people and promote informal education as well as lifelong learning, improve standards of education, learning and management to comply with economic and social changes (KOT 2007). It is expedient to recognize that a new constitution is currently being reviewed for ratification, which may overturn some of things from previous constitutions. However, current policy documents still derive their backing from these two documents and their related legislations. The Thailand policy direction for education and training is derived from the International Labor Organization's (ILO) Recommendation 195 concerning human resource development (ILO 2004).

The NESDPs are key policy documents that drive, direct and guide the administration, governance, and development process in Thailand. The skill development provisions are particularly found in the 7th, 8th, 10th and 11th NESDPs, which took a people-centered approach to development issues. These Plans also gave some attention to IWs.

For instance, the 7th Plan (1992-1996) was most equivocal about skill development and IWs. It had objectives to encourage lifelong learning (i.e. skill upgrading) at all levels with targets to improve basic livelihood and upgrade the skills, employability and productivity of underprivileged and challenged workers like IWs. It also advocates for education and skill training to upgrade the capacities of these workers and for government to increase support for their training to improve their total wellbeing and viability as self-employed workers. It also aimed to facilitate cooperation for skill and educational training among academic and skill training centers as well as enterprises, while also providing appropriate incentives for business-owners to willingly and efficiently provide skill

upgrading training in their enterprises (ONESDB 1992). The 8th NESDP, along the same vein, aimed to foster and develop the potential of the people with vocational skills and abilities to adapt to changing social and economic conditions; and the targets included improving quality education at all levels, upgrade skills and basic knowledge of industrial workers, provide opportunities for underprivileged groups to realize their full potentials and develop approaches of training aimed at increasing productivity. Furthermore, the Plan advocated for reforms for formal and non-formal educational system as well as community learning networks (NESDB 1997).

By the 10th NESDP (2007-2011), the plan was to develop the potential, competency and skills of the people to make them more globally competitive, technology-savvy and productive. More than that, the need to support linkages between government, private sector, academia, workers and communities to improve labor and productivity was emphasized – and to do this through short course, in-plant and workplace trainings as well as external learning centers. The Plan also advocated that government provide skills training for vulnerable people like the waged and self-employed workers in the IE, promote lifelong learning and improve training quality. Government was also to provide support and rewards for individuals who aspire to gain new skills and knowledge and survey learners' needs and demands in order to improve quality of lifelong learning curricula, identify learning and training incentives, amend rules, regulations and laws, and establish/strengthen networks and inter-collaborations in skill development at all levels (ONESDB 2007).

Finally, the 11th Plan (2012-2016), which is almost at its end, put a lot of emphasis on lifelong learning (skill upgrading) towards developing people with appropriate knowledge and skills to efficiently improve products and services, even in the IE, and be globally competitive. The Plan advocates for improving standards and quality of lifelong learning (skill upgrading) provisions as well as promoting other alternative learning systems. Upgrading skills and capacity of workers to improve productivity was also a priority area of the 11th NESDP. It promoted skill trainings that target individuals' and local requirements, providing learners' incentives and raising the value of vocational

skills and self-employment. The Plan is also quite equivocal about improving the skills and productive capacity of workers in the service and manufacturing sector as these sectors have exhibited skill shortages in the past. It also reiterates the target of previous Plans on linkages and networks between industry (enterprises), government and the academia for skill development training provisions and delivery (ONESDB 2012). However, these NESDPs do not give priority attention to IWs in general and IEWs in particular, nor to upgrading their skills, even though they have been recognized as vital to the nation's economy (TDRI 2013; Warunsiri 2011; Thanachaisethavut 2011; Thanachaisethavut, Charoen and Saeng-ging 2008) and mostly in need of skill upgrading training.

The constitutions and NESDPs gave birth to some governance instruments with which the education and workforce development sector is administered in Thailand. The MoE and the MoLSW are the major arbiters of education and skill development-related policy documents. The MoE's National Education Act (1999) and its amendments (2002) provides for the administrative structure and provision of education and training – and it mandates the Office of Vocational Education Commission (OVEC) to propose policies, develop plans, standards and core curricula for all levels of vocational education as well as coordinate vocational education delivery by public and private organizations, resource mobilization and ensuring efficiency and quality. It also provides for the promotion of non-formal and informal education through the Office of the Non-Formal and Informal Education Commission (ONIEC). These provisions are backed by the governance instruments of the Vocational Education Act (VEA) (2008) and the Promotion of Non-Formal and Informal Education Act (PNFIEA) (2008) (KOT 2008a,b). The VEA (2008) provides directives for managing and coordinating vocational education in accordance with the NESDPs and the National Education Plan (NEP) (2002-2016) for skill development and improving vocational education quality and standards. On the other hand, the PNFIEA (2008) directs the management and provision of non-formal and informal education for lifelong learning to vulnerable groups – such as street-children, prisoners, elderly, workers, and about anyone who missed or cannot afford formal education (but IWs

are not considered here) (OVEC 2016; NESPAP 2016; ILO 2016; KOT 2008a,b; OEC 2008; MoE 2008a,b, 2002; ONEC 2003).

The National Education Plan (NEP) (2002-2016) is the policy instrument that has driven educational development in Thailand for the past 15 years. The NEP was demanded for by the National Education Act (NEA) (1999) and prepared by the Office of the National Education Council (ONEC) to replace the former National Scheme of Education (ONEC 2003; KOT 2002, 1999; MoE 2002). It guarantees equal access to lifelong learning and training for all citizens to ensure employability, income and national development. Its objectives include building a knowledge-based society, promoting continuous learning and involving citizens in decision-making. It also provides policy directives for the development of vocational education and institutions and provided guidelines for accessibility to learning opportunities for all citizens, reforms in learning provisions to benefit learners, manpower development and developing appropriate education technologies and systems (NESPAP 2016; ILO 2016; MoE 2008b; ONEC 2003; KOT 2002).

The MoLSW, on the other hand, is mandated by two major policy documents to direct and oversee the management and coordination of skill development for the entire Thai workforce, whether employed or not. The Master Plan of Labor (MPL) (2007-2011) is the major policy document that directs governance of labor development in Thailand. The MPL addresses the issue of skill development by proposing a strategy to promote and supports labor development and ensure adequate and appropriate skill quality and quantity in order to improve productivity and competitiveness. It advocated for skill upgrading for workers so as to continuously keep pace with global trends and technology, while also calling for public and private partnerships in skill development (Thanachaisethavut 2011; Smiti 2010; Thanachaisethavut et al 2008; KOT 2002). The Skills Development Promotion Act (SDPA) (2002) is the policy instrument that directs skill development of workers, especially as it concerns skill upgrading. The government considers that the best place to develop the country's workforce is in the workplace (Rojvithee 2007) and so the SDPA is primarily designed for workplace training. It

encourages and provides guidance and incentives for enterprises to organize and deliver trainings and skill upgrading to their employees and even non-employees. This Act empowers the DSD to monitor, manage and coordinate as well as provide standards for skill development training provisions to international standards. It also stipulates guidelines for the National Skills Standard Testing program and the establishment of the National Vocational Training Coordination Committee (NVTCC) and Provincial Vocational Training Coordination Committee (PVTCC) (ILO 2016; Smiti 2010; Rojvithee 2007; KOT 2002).

In addition, all ministries are involved in one way or the other in informal training, which could sometimes clash with the main line ministries (ONEC 2003). All key policy instruments require citizen participation in decision-making and planning as it concerns them (ONESDB 2012, 2007, 1997, 1992; KOT 2007, 1997; NEA 1999; NEP 2002). But they are primarily focused on the FE and pre-employment training to enter work in the FE; and informal enterprises are not considered for incentives to train their employees. Moreover, training options like apprenticeship have no policy coverage. Consequently, since skill upgrading for IEWs is obviously silent in the rich TVSD governance framework of education and training of the country in spite of their recognized contributions to national economy, it can be quite challenging to plan for improving the productivity and efficiency of IEWs. This thesis, therefore, contributes to this by exploring the perceptions of IEWs and their customers to serve as a guide for policy-makers.

There is also the National Professional Qualification Institute (NPQI) under the Office of the Prime Minister, which develops professional qualifications system and competency standards for occupations to international best practices. The Institute also assesses professionals and awards qualifications and certifications at vocational and professional levels (TPQI 2014b). However, TPQI has only attempted to develop certifications and standards for hairdressing (professionals, trainers and training institutions) (TPQI 2014a) and these are not yet available.

3.2.2 Thailand Skill Development Arena for Informal Economy Workers (IEWs)

There is an urgent need for skills upgrading for IEWs in Thailand and access to trainings need to be intensified (Huang 2012), but, skill development for IEWs are not pronounced in NSDPs. This is not surprising since they are not significantly captured in national labor surveys. The national Skill Development Promotion Act (SDPA) is an example of NSDPs that have no priority focus for IWs. Skills upgrading is primarily for those who work in the FE. The ILO recommends that NSDP formulation should be target at specific conditions peculiar to local settings and skill challenges of countries and localities (ILO 2011), but Thailand's large informal workforce is not given any targeted attention in the SDPA or other related policy documents (ONESDB 2012, 2008, 1998; KOT 2002). IWs are officially described as wage or self-employed persons wage or self-employed persons of at least 15 years whose employment is not protected or regulated (NSO 2015, 2014; Thanachaisethavut 2011). They make up 55.9% of the labor force and majority of them (32.9%) work in trade and services sector (NSO 2015), but there is no data showing the differential of those working in the FE and the IE. The number of IWs has continued to be above the formal workers (FWs) (16.1%) (NSO 2015) in Thailand for decades (Warunsiri 2011; Sauwalak & Chettha 2000; ILO 2016) although formal employment is on the increase while informal employment is on the decrease (NSO 2015). Meanwhile, trade and services in the IE such as shop and sales of goods, repairs, massage, haircare, car wash, laundry, street-vending among others, grew especially in the urban centers (NSO 2015; Warunsiri 2011; Phongiaichit & Baker 2000).

On the other hand, skills and productivity of Thailand's well over 70% informal workforce (NSO, 2016, 2014) has remained low (ONESDB, 2012). Improving skills to increase prospects for better jobs, and specialized strategies for skills training for small and medium enterprises would help their growth and increase the prospects of the IWs (Maclean et. al, 2013; ADB 2013; ADB/TWS 2013; Chen et al, 2002). The skill shortage in Thailand creates a disturbing challenge for informal workers (World Bank, 2012). There is an expedient need to improve their skills, especially those in the services subsector, as they are a major contributor to income generation and national development

(NSO, 2014; ILO, 2013a,b; ONESDB, 2012; World Bank, 2012; Thanachaisethavut and Charoenlert 2006; ILO, 2004; Thai Health, 2010; KOT, 2007, 2002) as well as the country's growing economy, competitiveness and employment rate (ILO, 2013c; World Bank, 2012; ONESDB, 2012; Thai Health, 2010; Richtigter, 2006).

3.2.3 Thai TVSD Pathways

Skill development is accessed in three ways in Thailand: formal (vocational education and training), non-formal (dual-vocational-training [DVT] and workplace training) and informal (skill development training and apprenticeship) (NESPAP 2016; ILO 2013; World Bank 2012; ILO 2016; Rojvithee 2007). The formal vocational education is offered in three levels, which could lead up to a university degree. The first is the 'Por Wor Chor' that is Certificate in Vocational Education taken from upper-secondary level; followed by the 'Por Wor Sor' that is Diploma or Associate degree in Vocational Education, which is post-secondary level; and then the Higher Diploma at a vocational college, after which a university bachelor can be pursued (Huang 2012; OEC 2008; MoE 2008a,b, 2002; KOT 1999; ONEC 2003).

Vocational education starts at the upper-secondary level. Students can choose to proceed from lower-secondary directly to vocational studies in upper-secondary or remain in the general education program. For those in the upper-secondary vocational program, a vocational certificate is awarded after successful completion of the 3-year program. The certificate can then be used to train for a vocational and technical diploma for another 3 years in post-upper-secondary level (in a vocational college), which is also open to upper-secondary graduates of the general education program. A further 2-year program leads to a Higher Diploma or bachelor degree (NESPAP 2016; ILO 2016; OEC 2008; MoE 2008a,b, 2002; KOT 1999; ONEC 2003). Some IEWs acquire their initial skills from the Por Wor Chor and the Por Wor Sor, but few from vocational colleges. This is understandable as many of them complete their secondary education, but the cost of any more formal education deters them from going any further (Peter-Cookey and Janyam

2016a-c). Besides, the formal vocational education pathway is primarily directed towards pre-employment in the FE and not skill upgrading in the IE.

The non-formal vocational education and training on the other hand, primarily takes place in workplace settings. On the one hand, there is the DVT program that involves partnerships between vocational colleges, students and private enterprises. The aim is for students to learn the theoretical aspects of their training in school and transfer this knowledge to practical demonstration in industry to hone their skills. The system covers upper-secondary to university levels. Certificates are awarded based on the level of education the student is engaged upon (NESPAP 2016; ILO 2016; Vocational Education Act [VEA] 2008; OEC 2008; MoE 2008a,b, 2002; KOT 1999; ONEC 2003). This also targets pre-employment for the formal sector, and not SU, and so may not be relevant for IEWs who work in informal enterprises that cannot participate in the DVT program due to stringent requirements (VEA 2008).

Another form of non-formal vocational training that is clearly linked to skill upgrading is the ‘workplace training’ for company employees. Employers are encouraged and mandated to train their employees in the acquisition of new skills or improving old ones; as stated in the Thai Skill Development Act (KOT 2002). The government offers incentives to the enterprises to train more than half of their employees annually and some non-employees. For instance, income tax exemptions on the percentage of training expenses; import duty and value-added-tax (VAT) exemptions on training equipment and expatriate personnel; and deductions on water and electricity bills up to double training expenses (KOT 2002; Smiti 2010). In this regard, the company management is the training-provider and the workplace setting is the training center. This opportunity is available to enterprises with at least 100 employees. The non-formal vocational education system also appears to primarily aim at providing a better skilled workforce for the FE and larger enterprises. IEWs, which could benefit from such trainings, are left out because they work for informal enterprises that only employ a maximum of ten employees and these enterprises have no incentives to train their workers.

The third pathway for vocational skill development is the informal training, which is most appropriate for upgrading the skills of IEWs. The informal vocational education/training system consists of short and medium term courses in skill development centers and some vocational colleges (public and private). These courses range from 6-280 hours and are either pre-employment or SU focused; and sometimes, particularly designed for the self-employed and IEWs. Certificates are awarded after successfully passing a skill standard test administered by the Department of Skill Development (DSD) of the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare (DSD 2016; NESPAP 2016; ILO 2016; OVES 2012; Silpa-Archa 2010; Rojvithee 2007). There is no formal program or policy for apprenticeship, which falls under the informal pathway and is the training type for most IEWs, although there are many routes of non-formal and informal education in the system.

The current skill acquisition process (SKAQPRO) for IHBSWs in Hat-Yai as deduced from this research is represented in Figure 3.1. There are three strands of trainings available for the IEWs: formal, informal and self-learning. Each strand has different types of instructional methods available to trainees as well as different categories of training providers. For example, the self-teaching strand (which the workers use to learn emerging trends) has Facebook/YouTube, fashion and beauty magazines/books and practice as instructional methods while training providers include the internet, colleagues/employers and family/friends. Certification is currently by the DSD (for training of IWs) through pre-employment and upgrading training; and the OVEC, which is responsible for formal vocational training certifications (OVES, 2012; Rojvithee, 2007; Silpa-Archa, 2010). The DSD is also responsible for the development and administration of the National Skills Standards and Testing System as stipulated in the Act for anyone who wants to have their skills standard certified (KOT, 2002).

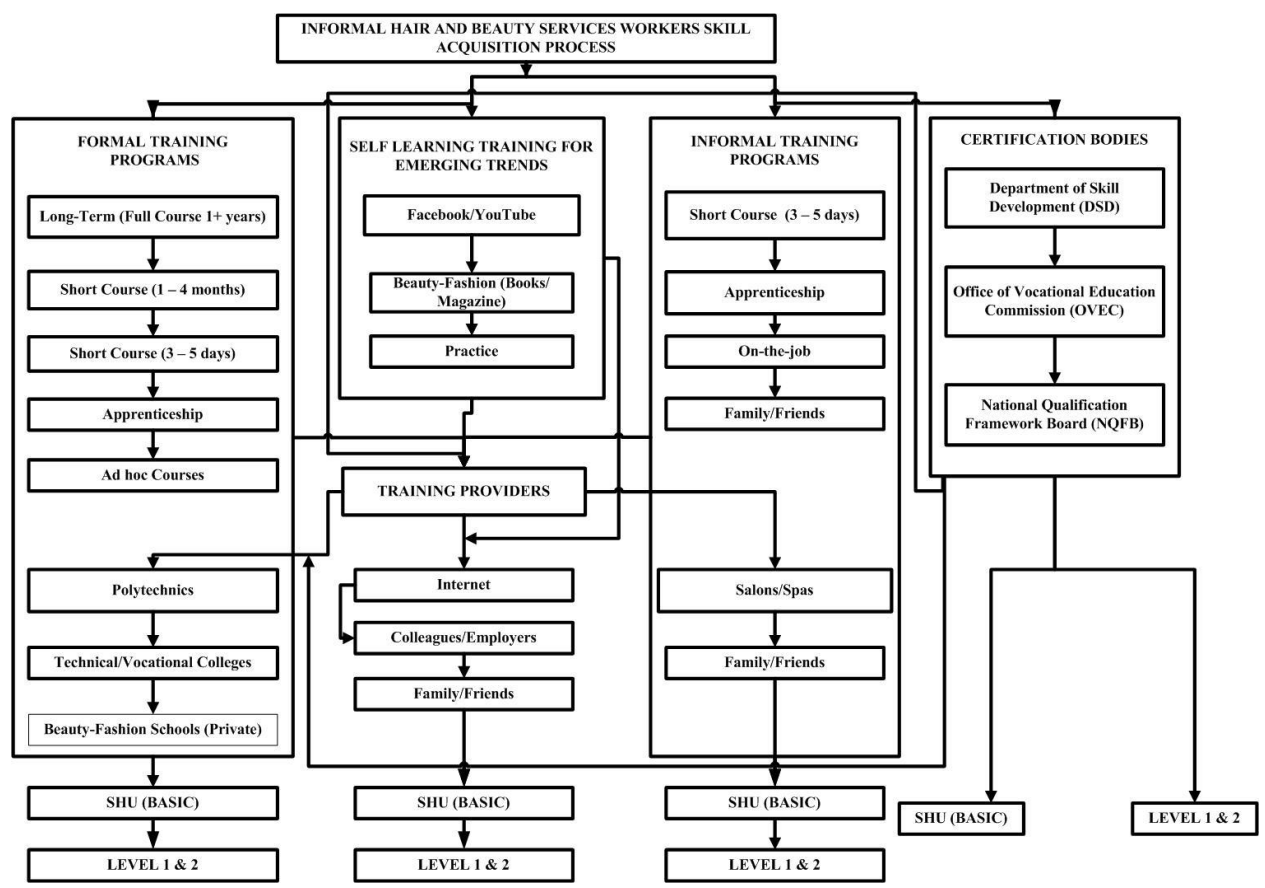


Figure 3.1: Current Skill Acquisition Process (SKAQPRO) of IHBSWs in Hat Yai, Thailand

The main goal is to improve productivity, employability and promote self-employment as most participants to the DSD trainings were self-employed IEWs; and focus is on manufacturing, services and commercial (DSD, 2014a,b; Puntrik, 2010; Silpa-Archa 2010; Rojvithee, 2007), which indicates that IHBSWs will not be adequately served. The DSD also administers the Skills Development Fund provided for in the Act to disburse loans to trainees and trainers and fund training activities/promotion. The aim of the DSD trainings is to produce multi-skilled workers and improve existing skills development system to make the Thailand workforce globally competitive (Huelser & Heal, 2014; KOT, 2013; Wailerdsak, 2013).

Assessment of the process and its impact on the skill levels of the workers is that all strands of available training are at basic level of Shu and the IEWs skill levels were 1 and 2 (see Table 3.1 & 3.2 for implication). The certifications are also only available for Shu as well as levels 1 and 2. One training provider organizes special ad-hoc training demonstrations for primary school pupils (Figure 3.2).



Figure 3.2: Showing Songkhla Polytechnic College ad-hoc training session demonstrations with primary school pupils: (I) Nail Art (II) Herbal Face Treatment (III) Hair Weaving

3.2.4 Informal Economy Workers (IEWs) in Thailand Workforce and the Informal Hair and Beauty Services Workers (IHBSWs)

National Skill Development Policies (NSDPs) in Thailand follow the ILO's Recommendation 195 (ILO 2004) and are primarily focused on the FE and industry (KOT 2002; VEA 2008; PNIEA 2008; NESPAP 2016). The country has a rich and robust system that thrives for inclusiveness and a wide reach in the delivery of education and skills training. However, much focus is on formal education, pre-employment training, foundation and ICT skills than on trainings for vocational skill in the informal service sector. Skill upgrading for incumbent workers in the IE as it regards vocational skills are not covered. It has been recognized that there is an urgent need for skills upgrading for IEWs in Thailand and access to trainings need to be intensified (ILO 2016) due to low-skills and productivity (ONESDB, 2012; Maclean et. al, 2013; ADB 2013a/b; ADB/TWS 2013; Chen et al, 2002).

The national Skill Development Promotion Act (SDPA) did not make provision for skill upgrading for IWs, but primarily targets those who work in the FE, and not Thailand's large IE workforce (ONESDB 2012, 2008, 1998; KOT 2002). The Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board (ONESDB) placed high premium on human capital investment as the key factor for economic growth in the Eleventh National Economic and Social Development Plan (2012-2016). The Plan holds the views that skills development should be supported by a conducive and enabling environment, policies, institutions and collaboration from all stakeholders (ONESDB, 2012; World Bank, 2012). The Plan proposed to upgrade the capacity of the workforce, especially as it regards to the level of quality of goods and services. The Plan also promoted the need to support self-employed workers, entrepreneurs, SMEs and the informal sector as well as develop people with relevant skills (ONESDB, 2012). The World Bank (2012) supports this by encouraging that future investments be geared towards promoting quality and coverage in skills development for improved productivity and recommends that quality of skills must be a part of any skills agenda.

IWs are officially described as wage or self-employed persons wage or self-employed persons of at least 15 years whose employment is not protected or regulated in the country's labor policies (NSO 2015, 2014; Thanachaisethavut 2011). They make up 55.9% of the labor force and majority of them (32.9%) work in trade and services sector (NSO 2015), but there is no data showing the differential of those working in the FE and the IE. The number of IWs has continued to be above the formal workers (FWs) (16.1%) (NSO 2015) in Thailand (Warunsiri 2011; Sauwalak & Chettha 2000; ILO 2016) even though formal employment is on the increase while informal employment is on the decrease (NSO 2015). However, trade and services in the IE such as shop and sales of goods, repairs, massage, haircare, car wash, laundry, street-vending among others, have continued to grow, especially in the urban centers (NSO 2015; Warunsiri 2011; Phongiaichit & Baker 2000). The skill shortage in Thailand impacts negatively on IWs (World Bank, 2012). There is an expedient need to improve their skills, especially those in the services subsector, as they are a major contributor to income generation and national

development (NSO, 2014; ILO, 2013b/c, 2004, 2002b; ONESDB, 2012; World Bank, 2012; OECD 2009; Thanachaisethavut et. al, 2008; Thai Health, 2010; KOT, 2007, 2002). This is aimed at growing the national economy, competitiveness and employment rate (ILO, 2013c, 2012b; World Bank, 2012; ONESDB, 2012; Thai Health, 2010; Richtigter, 2006).

On the other hand, skills and productivity of Thailand's informal workforce (NSO, 2016, 2014) has remained low (ONESDB, 2012), which creates a disturbing challenge for IWs (World Bank, 2012). Improving skills to increase prospects for better jobs, and specialized strategies for skills training for small and medium enterprises would help the growth and increase the prospects of IWs (Maclean et. al, 2013; ADB 2013a,b; ADB/TWS 2013; Chen et al, 2002). There is an expedient need to improve their skills, especially those in the services subsector, as they are a major contributor to income generation and national development (NSO, 2014; ILO, 2013a,b; ONESDB, 2012; World Bank, 2012; Thanachaisethavut and Charoenlert 2006; ILO, 2004; Thai Health, 2010; KOT, 2007, 2002) as well as the country's growing economy, competitiveness and employment rate (ILO, 2013c; ADB 2011; World Bank, 2012; ONESDB, 2012; Thai Health, 2010; Richtigter, 2006).

The informal hair and beauty services workers (IHBSWs) are IEWs in the trade and craft sector providing creative services in hair and beauty care and make up the non-manufacturing subsector in the IE. They consist of hairdressers/stylists, barbers, makeup artists, body artists, masseuse, nail/foot care and face/skin care providers. They are called informal because they work in the IE, especially in developing countries, have all the features of IWs, are mostly self-employed and owner-account workers (with operations of very few employees, if any) or work for micro-businesses and have no social or legal protection (ILO 1999, 2003, 2013; dvv 2013, 2011). These category of workers were chosen because they work in an occupation area that is quite popular with women, youth and vulnerable groups, and is also vibrant, timeless, intrinsically embedded into society (Allen et al 2011; Kass 2011; Bennie et al 2010; Lerkpollakarn and Khemarangsan 2009; Twigg 2009; Solomon and Rabolt 2002), very common in developing nations and

can be found literally on most urban center streets (Kagone and Namusonge 2014; Kamau and Bwisa 2013; Mpye 2013). This research focuses on them because of the potential for job creation in the IE; and because they are most likely not going to succumb to formalization (Chen 2012; Chen et al 2002; La Porta and Shleifer 2009). But informal hair and beauty services (IHBSs) increasingly require high-skills and the use of high-tech equipment that need more than basic skills (PBA 2011); skills that are often lacking in the IHBSWs of developing nations.

Building the skills of IEWs is a key to move them to higher income and a better life and reduce poverty and unemployment (Pina et al 2012; King and Palmer 2008). The importance of skills upgrading for this category of workers has been globally recognized with regards to how studies had shown that these workers were plagued with low-skills, low-productivity, low-income, low-self-esteem and low access to funding and required training (ILO 2012b, 2008; EC 2009; OECD 2009, 2006; Palmer 2008; King and Palmer 2008; Adams et al 2013; Langer 2013; Johanson and Adams 2004; Adams 2011; Pavcnik 2002; Liimatainen 2002).

Thailand's IHBSWs can be grouped under the National Statistics Office (NSO) occupational classifications like service workers, shop and market sales workers, and craft and related trade workers using the ILO International Standards of Classifications for Occupations-2008 (ISCO-08) classification (NSO 2016, 2014; ILO 2012b) and based on this, they can be hypothetically assumed to number up to five million in the labor force of Thailand (ILO, 2012c; NSO 2016, 2014, 2013, 2012, 2010). But, most trainings available for the IHBSWs in Thailand (like other developing countries) almost exclusively target pre-employment candidates at basic level rather than the large population of IEWs (Peter-Cookey and Janyam 2016a-c; IBISWorld 2014a,b; RAPS 2014; SAS 2011; Johanson and Adams 2004; Adams et al 2013; Peter-Cookey and Janyam 2015). Also, even though they make up a good chunk of the Thai creative industry (ILO 2013c; NSO 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015) in their extensive capabilities and potentialities, and they are not properly and adequately captured in relevant national plans hence almost invisible to policy-makers (NSO 2014; ILO 2012a). In 2008, approximately 50, 856 of the unemployed

desired to develop these skills and 1, 932, 834 of the population 15 years and above desired these skills (NSO 2008).

However, the IHBSWs in Hat Yai are mainly operating on basic skills and even the training available to them, are exclusively basic level skills (Peter-Cookey and Janyam 2016b). It is essential to help these IEWs grow their skills so that they can earn more income and improve their self-esteem. Some argue that there are so many of them scattered everywhere in the city, but only a handful of them have beyond basic skills, which could be a result of the fact that only basic skills training of very short duration are available to most of them. This inevitably affects their performance, skill level, income and self-esteem (Peter-Cookey and Janyam 2016a-c). To this effect, it becomes evident to seek ways to help these IEWs to acquire the required skills to function equitably (ILO, 2012a, 2010; ADB, 2011), especially since learning new skills can make them relevant in a globalized economy (World Bank 2014).

3.3 Description of Terms

It is important to clarify the key terms used in this research study: skills, skills upgrading, skills levels, skills performance levels, informal economy, informal workers and informal economy workers.

3.3.1 Skills

Defining 'skill' has been quite the challenge with different meanings and interpretations emanating from different disciplines – and distinct lines marking the differences. In general, the ILO-ISCO-08 (ILO 2012b) defines skills as the ability to carry out the tasks and duties of a given job; just as Green (2011) indicates that skills have three distinct features: productivity, expandability and socialability. Meanwhile, the OECD (2012) defined skills (or competences) as the bundle of knowledge, attributes and capacities that can be learned and that enable individuals to successfully and consistently perform an activity or task and can be built up on and extended through learning. Teixeira (2002) argues that skills can mean the ability to perform given tasks or to master various

techniques, or more broadly, a range of attributes. The EC (2009) defines skills as the ability to use knowledge and know-how to complete tasks or solve problems, whether in professional or learning context and in personal and social life. Some have summarily described it as a large behavioral domain, which can be learned and usually involves a combination of cognitive, perceptual and motor processes (Armstrong et al 1998; Adams 1987); and according to Adams et al (2013) they are acquired by learning to perform various tasks with different degrees of proficiency. Some common threads through these notions of skill are that it involves learning; by an individual; and performance can be upgraded from one level to the other (i.e. built up, extended, expandability, master and proficiency). This study defines skills as the ability and knowledge (know-what and know-how) embedded in an individual to carry out or perform tasks and duties of a given job or activity in a productive and sociable manner, which can be built upon and mastered to any given level. Attempt has been made here to marry all relatable aspects in the different definitions to try to capture what we assume is the essence of the term 'skills' – i.e. the ability and the knowledge to perform. Skills and human capital shall be used synonymously.

3.3.2 Skill Acquisition

skill acquisition is a form of prolonged skill learning that leads to routine and automatic responses in performance of tasks and abilities, given the right conditions (Speelman & Kirsner 2008) and attaining abilities to complete tasks from practice (Rosenbaum et al (2001). The process of skill acquisition has been described in three stages (Fitts 1964; Fitts and Posner 1967). The first stage is the cognitive (learning and understanding) and then the associative (practice and experience) followed by the autonomous stage (automatic and intuitive); much like moving from 'conscious, slow and error-prone to unconscious, fast and error-free (Taatgen 2002). According to Anderson (1982), the cognitive stage leads to declarative knowledge acquired through interpretation, the associative leads to knowledge compilation, which transits from declarative-to-

procedural, and autonomous leads to procedural knowledge, which is the application of the compiled knowledge in skilled performance.

3.3.3 Skills level

Skills level is the progressive placement (high, average and low) of an individual(s) based on ability and performance as well as certifications attained. This study assesses skills collectively rather than individually, therefore, we are referring to the ability of a group of heterogeneous individuals in an occupational group of the economy and their skills per task (ILO 2012b). This is based on the ISCO-08 (ILO 2012b) definition of skills levels as a function of the complexity and range of tasks and duties to be performed in an occupation, measured operationally by the nature of the work performed, level of education attained, and amount of informal on-the-job training as well as previous experience in a related occupation required for competent performance of these tasks and duties. Also, taking into cognizance the description of skills per task and not per occupation, this research defines skills levels as the progressive placement of an individual based on certifications/qualifications attained, while skills performance levels is based on individual performance levels in given tasks and duties. Adams et al (2013) recognized that raising skills levels is one way to achieve this. They identified three types of skills: cognitive (mental capacities), non-cognitive (emotive/social capacities) and technical (specialized) skills. They point out that technical skills combine cognitive and non-cognitive skills in performance of tasks that require 'specialized knowledge or expertise to achieve a specific outcome'. This is relative to the new conception of the informal economy which focuses on the workers rather than on enterprises (Chen 2012; ILO 2013).

3.3.4 Skill Performance

Performance, however, is to do something up to a standard (Schechner 2013) and produce valued results through applying skills and abilities to any given task. It is like a journey and not a destination and the stops along the way are called performance levels where each level represents efficiency and quality of the performance (Elger 2008).

3.3.5 Skills Upgrading

Skills upgrading is generally about expanding, extending or building upon skills in order to succeed in a preferred career choice, and the ultimate aim is to build better skilled and oriented individuals (EC 2009a; Wilhelm and Mueller 2003). According to the OECD (2006), the concept of skills upgrading refers to both a process of upgrading skills (which involves training and practice) and the policy of government on the skills upgrading process. Skills upgrading is targeted at incumbent workers who already have some form of skills. The EC (2009b) recognized the need for skills upgrading to ensure short term recovery, long term growth and productivity for jobs and capacity to adapt to change as well as for economies to remain competitive. Responsively, the OECD (2006) recognizes the importance of skills upgrading and the challenges of a market and governance failure – insisting that skills upgrading for low-skilled workers should become a strategic objective of governments. This study describes skills upgrading defines as a process whereby individual capacities of incumbent workers to deliver jobs and tasks are kept up-to-date, expanded and built upon on a continuous basis in order to remain competitive through the mechanisms of policy instruments and training programs. This is not just about adding skills (new or old), but training incumbent workers with low and basic levels of skills to build upon, expand and extend those particular skills from novice to master level so they can produce optimally and at a quality level with less supervision, more creativity, spontaneity and ingenuity. Individuals' skills are assessed not just on the tasks and duties performed, but also on how well they perform, and when/if they are ready to learn additional skills.

3.3.6 Informal Economy (IE)

The IE has received much attention globally in recent times as governments seek to understand and embrace a phenomenon that had erroneously been considered temporal and soon to be swallowed up by industrialization (ILO 2014, 2013a,b, 2012a, 2010, 2006, 2002a; Adams et al 2013; Langer 2013; Chen 2012, 2007); and is expansive enough to assimilate the teeming unemployed population of the nations of the world as

well as extensively contribute to national growth and economies. It is said to be diverse, divergent and complex in nature with a huge influence on nations' economies and people's lives (Langer 2013), and is said to be 'all activities that are, in law or practice, not covered or insufficiently covered by formal arrangements (ILO 2013b). In general, it refers to the production and employment that takes place in unincorporated small or unregistered enterprises, any employment without legal and social protection, enterprises with no legal identity distinct from the households upon which they depend, and all units, activities and workers so defined and the output from them (Adams et al 2013; Langer 2013; Chen 2012; ILO 2002a-c). It is an economic reality made up of micro and small activities and generates up to 95% of global employment and most of the world's wealth, even up to 60% of GDP in some countries (Langer 2013); and it promises to remain economically relevant for a long time (Adams et al 2013; Fox and Sohnesen 2012) even as there are signs of increasing informalization in the formal economy resulting from globalization and competition (Adams et al 2013). The size and demographics as well as the explosive potential and capacity for growth, job creation and poverty reduction makes it quite expedient for governments to pay more attention to the informal economy and seek ways to improve productivity and income of those working therein.

3.3.7 Informal Workers (IWs)

Informal workers are simply those incumbent workers who work or do business in the informal economy, or are in informal employment in the formal economy (Darvas and Palmer 2014; ILO 2013a,b, 2012a,b, 2008b; Chen 2012; Bacchetta, 2009; Hussmannns 2004; Bangasser, 2000). They can be divided into two distinct categories: self-employed in the informal economy or wage earners in the formal or informal economy (Chen 2012). However, they are typically self-employed persons, either alone or in partnerships, for the primary purpose of generating their own employment and income through production or distribution of goods and/or provision of services; and may employ a few wage earners in their enterprises (Langer 2013; Adams et al 2013; ILO 2013, 1993; Johanson and Adams 2004); and they may work in their own enterprises or be

freelance/mobile workers, marketing their services and skills for a fee (Langer 2013; ILO 2012a; Pina et al 2012). The 17th International Conference of Labor Statisticians of 2003 (ILO 2003b) identified six categories of informal workers: own-account workers, self-employed workers, family workers, producers' cooperatives workers, employees holding formal jobs, and own-account workers producing for their own consumption (with own-account workers and self-employed workers being those who own and work in their own informal enterprises, or market their services or skills (ILO 2013b, 2012a,b, 2003b, 2002c; Liimatainen, 2002; Hussmans, 2004; Haan 2002). They may include migrants from rural areas, persons with low education and skills levels, women and youth, persons with disabilities, indigenous and tribal peoples, those with HIV/AIDS as well as some highly skilled and educated persons (ILO, 2013a,b 2012a,b; Langer 2013; Adams et al 2013; Johanson and Adams 2004; Liimatainen, 2002; Fluitman, 1989). They are involved in work that are heterogeneous, which may be low skills subsistence activities or fairly skilled and remunerative activities, in a wide variety of intermediate categories, with diverse fields of economic activities ranging from petty trading, personal services, repairs, tailoring, hairdressing, making and/or selling of crafts or food and others (Pina et al 2012; ILO, 2002a,c, 1992).

3.3.8 Informal Economy Workers (IEWs)

IEWs in this research are those self-employed and wage workers who work directly in the IE, with enterprises of less than 10 employees, but do not include those in the industrialized sector (Darvas and Palmer 2014; ILO 2013a,b; Chen 2012; Bacchetta, 2009; Hussmanns 2004; Bangasser, 2000; ILO 2003). They work in heterogeneous and diverse fields such as petty trading, personal services, repairs, tailoring, hairdressing, making and/or selling of crafts or food, etc (Pina et al 2012; ILO, 2002a,c). The growing influence of the IE in developing countries requires that IEWs are equipped with skills to improve their productivity, income and socioeconomic contributions (ILO 2015a,b; Langer 2013; Adams et al 2013; R4D 2012; Johanson and Adams 2004; Chen, Jhabvala and Lund 2002; Haan 2002; Liimatainen 2002)

3.3.9 Informal Hair and Beauty Services Workers (IHBSWs)

The IHBSWs are IEWs in the trade and craft sector providing creative services in hair and beauty care. They are called informal because they work in the IE, especially in developing countries, have all the features of IWs, are mostly self-employed and own-account workers (with operations of very few employees, if any) or work for micro-businesses and have no social or legal protection. They provide services in haircare, facecare, nailcare, bodycare and massage in micro-enterprises.

METHODS

4.1 Theories and Concepts

4.1.1 Theories

The study's theoretical framework is drawn from the concept of human capital, which views people as valuable assets and their skills their highest bargaining tools (Becker 2002, 1993, 1975, 1964; Schultz 1971; Kwon 2009; Cueto et al 2014; Popovic 2011; Unger et al 2011; Matanda 2008; Reimer-Hild et al 2007; Olaniyan and Okemakinde 2008; Bildirici et al 2005; Teixeira 2002, Cornachione 2010; Little 2002; Mincer 1974) and the system theory ((Lazlo and Krippner 1989; Bishop 2008; Scoones et al 2007).

Human capital has been referred to as knowledge, skills, attributes, aptitudes, attributes, acquired traits, abilities, education, competency, behavior, experience, training, intelligence, energy, work habits, trustworthiness, initiative and even investment and productive capacities – all geared towards improved productivity, earning and total wellbeing (Flesichhaeur 2007; Rodriguez and Loomis 2007; Franke and Bemancke 2007; Bildirici et al 2005; Beach 2005; Youndt et al 2004; Rastogi 2002; Ishikawa and Ryan 2002; Baptiste 2001; Fitzsimmons 1999; Rosen 1999; Romer 1989; Schultz 1961). A common denominator is the fact that human capital is embedded in the individual. Schultz (1958) called the study of these human capital investments to improve workers' quality and productivity and related matters the 'human capital theory' (HCT). The key propositions from the HCT are that the knowledge and skills acquired by individuals through education and training are a form of capital (i.e. human capital) gotten through deliberate investment in education/training, and that these skills do contribute to economic production, and labor earnings are rewards of labor productivity (Cornachione 2010; Little 2002; Schultz 1993, 1971, 1961; Becker, 1993, 1992). Becker (1962) described human capital investment as those activities that influence future real income through the embedding of resources in people; and that many workers increase their productivity by learning new skills and perfecting old ones while on the job (Becker 1975) – totally related to skills upgrading.

All HCT theorists agree that investment in education and training develop skills and knowledge (skills=human capital (Texeira 2002; Green et al 1996) that make workers productive and earn more (Olaniyan and Okemakinde 2008; Bildirici et al 2005; Texeira 2002; Laroche 2001). Studies have also revealed that human capital investments will result in increased income, returns and success on self-employment (Cueto et al 2014; Cope 2011; Popovic 2011; Unger et al 2011; Slius et al 2007; Baptista et al 2007; Davidson and Benson 2003; Hitt et al 2001). But, critics of the HCT argue that it fails to capture the social context of labor productivity and focuses only on technical relations. Furthermore, centering on education alone is inadequate because investments on health and other areas are equal contributors to human capital, adding that schooling does not really have much impact on earning (Reed and Wolniack 2005; Bildirici et al 2005; Woodhall 2001; Bowles and Gintis 1976). Meanwhile, indications have shown, through research investigations that increasing the human capital (skills) of IEs can improve their productivity, performance and income as implied by the HCT. To balance out the HCT and the need for a holistic and comprehensive approach, the system theory shall be applied. The system theory focusses on the complex inter-relationships among constituents of a whole (Stirling 2014; Fusella 2013; Fogel 2011; Bishop 2008; Scoones 2007; Thelen and Smith 2006; Thelen 2005; Chan 2001; Holland 1995; Eidelson 1997) and every entity is a system that consists of parts (i.e. sub-systems) and is also a part of a larger system, whereby every other system is connected, at least indirectly (Bishop 2008). Scoones et al (2007) affirm that all organizations (and processes) that deal with the complex and dynamic challenges of sustainable development are complex systems. The intention is to build a conceptual direction that elaborates on the relationship between skill levels, acquisition and performance of IEs for assessment.

This theoretical background indicates that effective skills development requires a synergy between all forces, processes and connections to be able to address the complex dynamics of the IEs' socioeconomic environment with adaptable solutions relevant to individuals and communities. This, we believe, shall lead to improved productivity (performance) and income through the cyclical flow of learning and relearning

(Tough 1971) from systematic interventions and training programs to improve skills acquisition and performance.

4.1.2 Concepts

Three concepts were adapted to build the conceptual foundation for this study and they include (i) ISCO-08 Skill Levels (ILO 2012b) for skill levels assessment; (ii) Shu-Ha-Ri skill acquisition concept (Galen, 2011; Miller, 2008; Digenti, 1993) in conjunction with the three stages of skill acquisition (Fitts and Posner 1967; Anderson 1982; Taatgen 2002) for skill acquisition assessment; and (iii) Dreyfus Novice-to-Expert skill performance model for performance assessment (Dreyfus, 2004; Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986, 1982, 1980, 1977, 1979).

4.1.2.1 ISCO-08 Skill Levels Concept

Skills levels was determined by adopting the ILO's ISCO-08 (ILO, 2012b), a concept that provides a system for classifying and aggregating information about occupations based on the principles of job and skill with four skill levels (ILO, 2012b). Table 4.1 shows an adaptation of the four skill levels in this study to provide a hierarchical placement for the IHBSWs.

Table 4.1: Skills Levels for IHBSWs

Skills Levels Scale	Tasks	Task Examples
1: Entry Level Skills	Simple routine physical/manual	Safety procedures, social interaction, cleaning, hair-washing, assembling equipment, identifying colors and skin tone, identifying materials/tools, identifying skin condition, foot/nail preparation, etc
2: Entry Level Skills/Apprenticeship	Machine & electronic equipment operation	Hairdressing, safety practices, haircutting, client management, hair trimming, massage posture, preparations, foot massaging, nail cleaning/coating, skin preparation, etc
3: Further Training (SU) (Informal/Formal)	Complex technical & practical (specialization)	Hairstyling, hair treatment, nail treatment, nail art/fixing, face/foot care, massage therapy, haircut designing, hair fixing and braiding, skin treatment, equipment maintenance, etc
4: Further Training/Formal Education (SU)	Complex problem-solving, decision-making, innovation & creativity	Shop management, customer relations, training, hair design, make-up design, beauty therapy, counselling, consultancy, etc

Source: Peter-Cookey & Janyam 2016b

4.1.2.2 Shu-Ha-Ri Skill Acquisition/Stages of Skill Acquisition Concept

The Shu-Ha-Ri skill acquisition Japanese model has three stages: the shu (obey and observe), ha (break away from) and ri (let go or detach from) the master. Considered highly in Japanese learning development, but not widely used in research, it resembles the three stages above. It describes the skill learning process up to mastery and owning of the skills (Galen, 2011; Miller, 2008; Digenti, 1993) and the steps that students go through when climbing the skill ladder from beginner-to-master level in acquiring specific skills in many of Japan's traditional arts and education (Miller 2008, Galen, 2011; Yokota, Narita and Hamada 2014; Asai, Hayashi and Minazaki 2011; Khampa 2011). The three steps of Shu-Ha-Ri were matched with the popular three stages of skill acquisition (Galen, 2011; Miller, 2008; Digenti, 1993; Fitts and Posner 1967; Anderson 1982; Taatgen 2002) (Table 4.2 which makes it a unique style to base a skill level and acquisition assessment on. The Shu (cognitive) is where most fundamental and basic instructions that need to be memorized and rationalized are taught as declarative knowledge when the learner is trying to understand the skill. The Ha (associative) is where the rules and instructions learned in the Shu as declarative knowledge are slowly compiled and translated into procedural knowledge through experience, practice and personalizing them. Ri (autonomous) is the stage where procedural knowledge is produced intuitively, creatively and spontaneously by submerging oneself into the process in order to gain mastery of the skill. At this point, the process then begins afresh again as skills are upgraded.

Table 4.2: Shu Ha Ri Skill Acquisition for IHBSWs (Peter-Cookey & Janyam 2016a)

Level	Meaning	Description
<i>Shu-Basic</i> Cognitive-Declarative	to protect, obey or observe	Only fundamentals and basics are taught through study and imitation to learn and gain confidence. E.g. sanitation/sterilization; hygiene/safety; psychology of beauty; science of hair and beauty care; tools and equipment; understanding hair texture, skintone/skintype; human anatomy; etc.
<i>Ha-Intermediate</i> Associative-Knowledge- Compilation	to collapse, break from or break down	Follows the rules learned in the Shu stage, and then diversifies the lessons, naturally moving to the next level, applying what was learned to different situations and arriving at a unique personal understanding. E.g. understanding face/body structure/system in hair and beauty therapy; apply face/body art; apply anatomy/nerves/muscles knowledge to massage therapy; hairstyling/cutting/color management; nail art/acrylic/gel application; apply make-up and facial treatment; eyelash/eyebrow management; etc.
<i>Ri-Advanced</i> Autonomous-Procedural	to let go, detach, submerged or be far removed	The final stage, where creativity, innovation and spontaneity replace imitation. Ability to draw on personal experiences and adapt intuitively to changing circumstances and conditions. E.g. hair/scalp treatment; face/skin treatment; nail/foot treatment; hair/make-up design; face/body art design; develop massage therapy plans; hair and make-up management; personal make-overs; consultation/counselling; salon management; etc.

At final mastery, the rules are applied unconsciously from a freedom perspective rather than a slavish imitation through inherent understanding and wisdom (Digenti, 1993). The process is iterative and cyclical, where completion leads to a new beginning and overall mastery per skill through a lifetime (Figure 4.1).

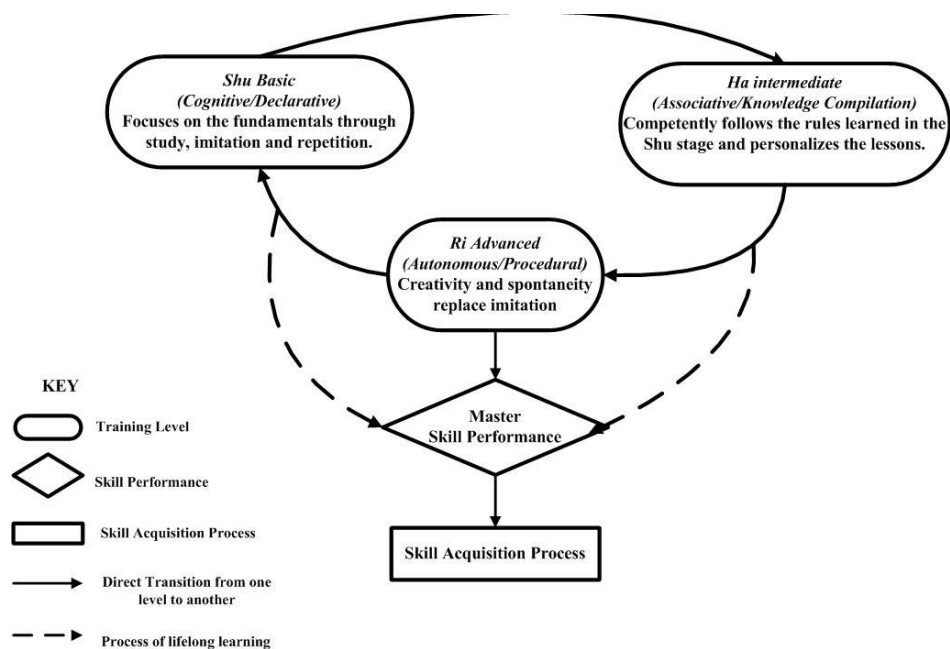


Figure 4.1: The Shu-Ha-Ri/Stages of Skill Acquisition Concept (Peter-Cookey & Janyam 2016a)

4.1.2.3 Dreyfus Novice-to-Expert Skill Performance Concept

The Dreyfus Novice-to-Expert skill performance concept emphasizes the learning from experience or learning by doing theoretical framework required for practical sets (Kinchin & Cabot, 2010) and the stages of skills levels reflect changes in the general aspects of skill performance (Kinchin & Cabot, 2010; Benner, 1982). According to the Dreyfus brothers (1980), the Model traces the journey of skills performance of the novice to the master stage, and of the expert facing unfamiliar situations. The brothers argued that “a detailed understanding of the stages through which skillful performance develops is essential if one is to design training programs and training materials to facilitate the acquisition of high order skills” (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1980) because identifying the capacities acquired at each level, and also what further capacities are required to move to the next level is essential in planning any training program (Carraccio et al, 2008; Benner 2004a, Dreyfus, 2004; Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986, 1982, 1980, 1977, 1979).

They described six stages or levels of skills performance an individual should ascend in order to reach the level of mastery: *novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient, expert and master* (Dreyfus, 2004, 2002, 2001; Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986, 1982, 1980, 1977, 1979). It has been used in several researches in education, engineering, medicine, nursing, sports, language, science, psychology, librarians, etc (Honken, 2013; Rushbrooke, 2013; Gentile, 2012; Carraccio et al, 2008; Simpson, 2007; Bridges & Lau, 2006; Dreyfus, 2005; Benner, 2004a,b, 1996, 1982, 1984; Benner et al, 1996; Hall-Ellis & Greal, 2008). The implication is that an individual must begin at a lower point to progress to the higher skill level, drawing on their problem-solving experiences along the way. Each time, they start at the novice stage indicating a systematic cycle that shows a progressive need for skill upgrading at every stage in work life. Therefore, skill acquisition from novice to expert is progressive. It is based on learning a skill and not a profession, and unlike other skills assessment models, does not rate individual’s total human capital, but is applicable per skill (Honken 2013; Hunt, 2008; Dreyfus, 2004, 1986; Eraut, 2009, 2000, 1994). Figure 4.2 shows a simple generic progression of the process.

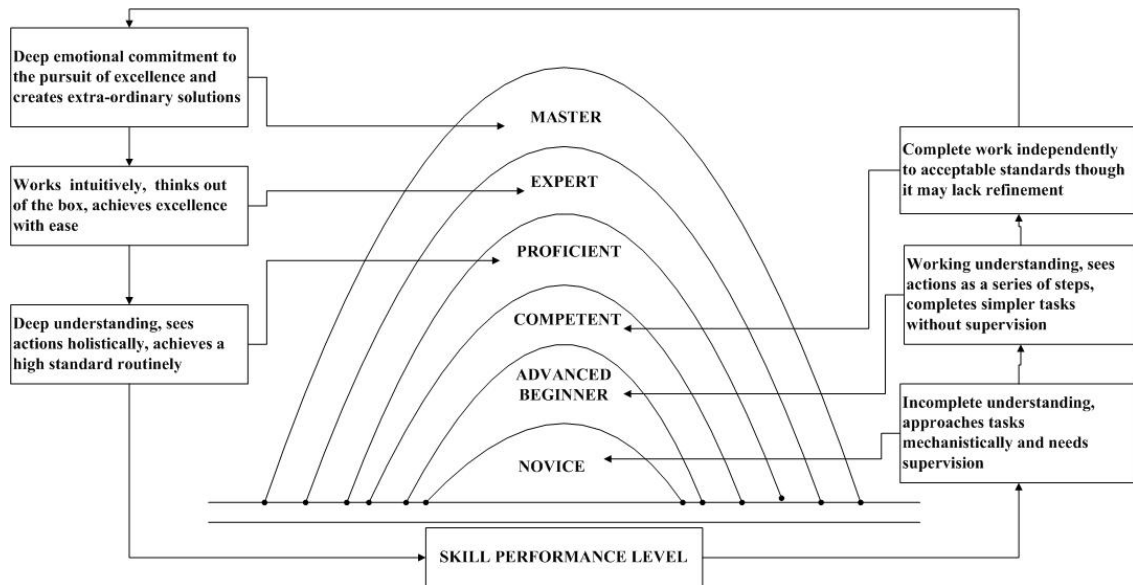


Figure 4.2: The Dreyfus Novice-to-Master Model Adaptation (Peter-Cookey & Janyam 2016c)

4.1.5 Study Conceptual Foundation

The conceptual foundation for this study assumes that human capital management (i.e. skill development) should be viewed as a complex and dynamic system with different parts that must be given equal attention in order to achieve a strong whole. This is based on the proposition that learning new skills and perfecting old ones while on the job can improve performance and then productivity, ultimately affecting income and total wellbeing of the individual positively and the pathway to this outcome will involve a systematic process. The aim is to show how skills upgrading of IEWs can improve their performance quality from novice to master through a systematic flow of policy reforms, training provision, delivery and evaluation, as well as cooperation between the IEWs, policy-makers, industry/enterprises and training-providers. This indicates a systemic cycle from skill learning to relearning (Tough 1971), upgrading, performance and then improvement in income, total-wellbeing and societal contributions; which works through synergistic linkages between all forces, processes and connections in order to provide adaptable solutions for IEWs socioeconomic situations and their contributions to local/national economies (Peter-Cookey and Janyam 2016a,b,c). Figure 4.3 shows the conceptual lens of the study drawn from the theories and concepts described in this section.

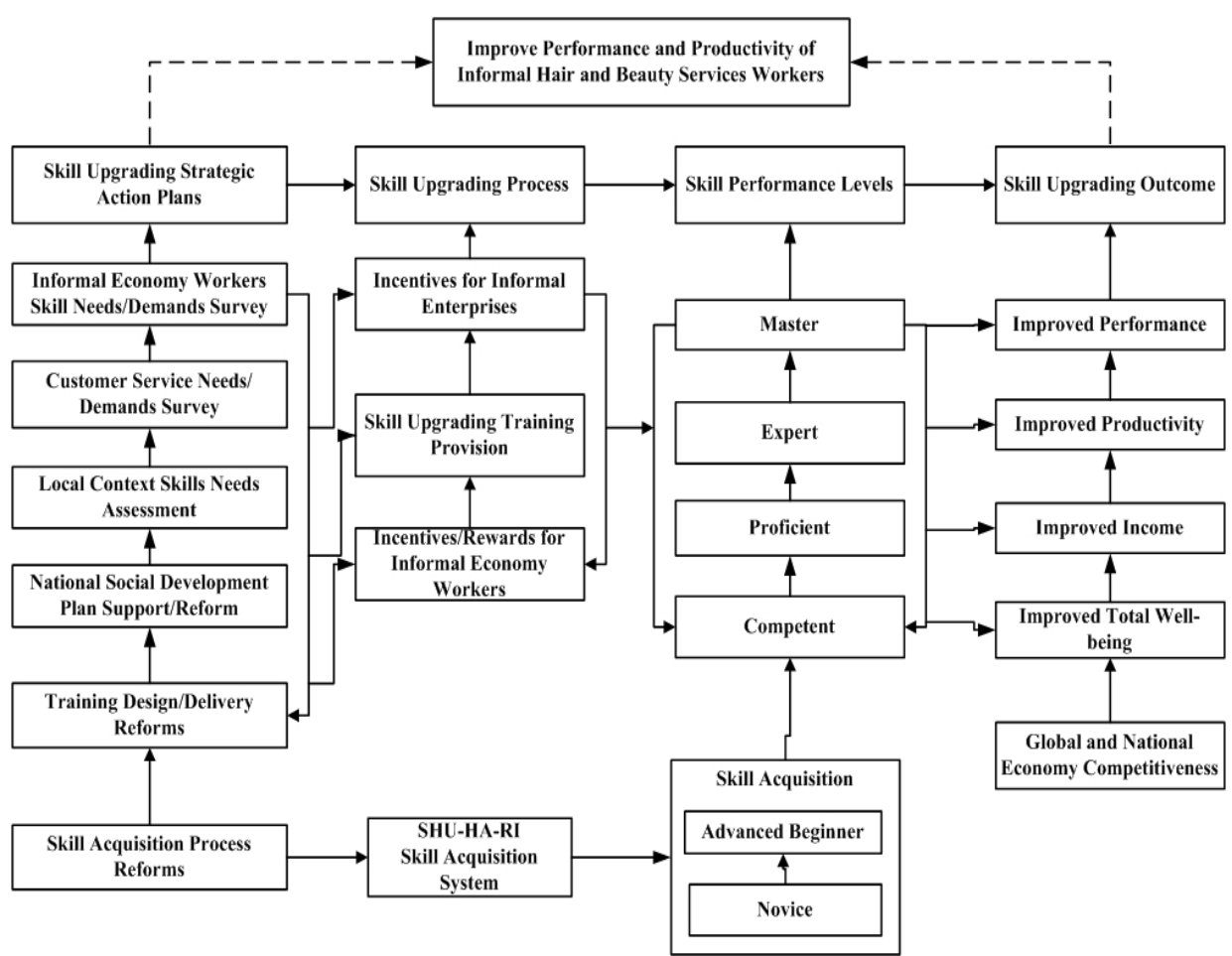


Figure 4.3: Conceptual Foundation for Improving the Performance of IHBSWs through Skills Upgrading (Peter-Cookey & Janyam 2016c)

4.2 The Study Area

The study area, Hat-Yai (Figure 4.4), is heterogeneous and the business and commercial center of the south of Thailand, the largest metropolitan area in the South and third largest in the country (Kuncharin & Mohamed, 2014, 2013). It is also the largest municipality in the Songkhla Province, located near the border of Malaysia, with a population of 158, 128 (HYC 2011). It is estimated that about 356, 917 foreigners live, study and work in southern Thailand and considering the number of foreign students and staff in Hat-Yai’s universities, it can be safely assumed that a good number of these foreigners are in Hat Yai (Sciortino & Punpuing, 2009; IOM, 2011). This does not include

annual population of tourists. It is referred to as the southern center for commerce, business, entertainment, transportation, tourism and healthcare (Tepsing 2014; Jariyachamsit, Sakul & Wongleedee, 2012; Kuncharin & Mohamed, 2014, 2013). Aside from being a major city in southern Thailand, Hat Yai is also the top tourist attraction for ASEAN tourists, especially those from Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia. More than 400,000-600,000 Malaysians come to Hat Yai on weekend visits annually mainly for shopping, sight-seeing, thai-massage and other personal services. The city center and its commercial hub hosts most of the shops and malls, which probably explains the overflow of Thais and visitors alike ([TAT 2014](#)) (Figure 4.5).

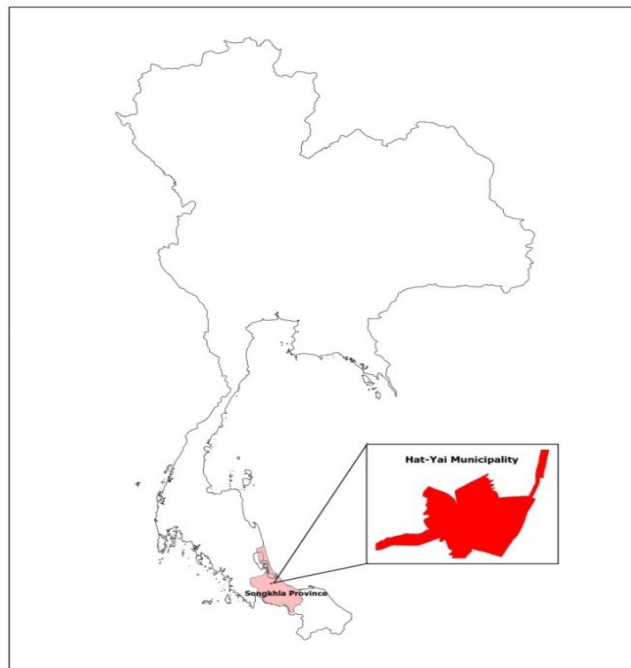


Figure 4.4 Showing Hat Yai Municipality in Thailand

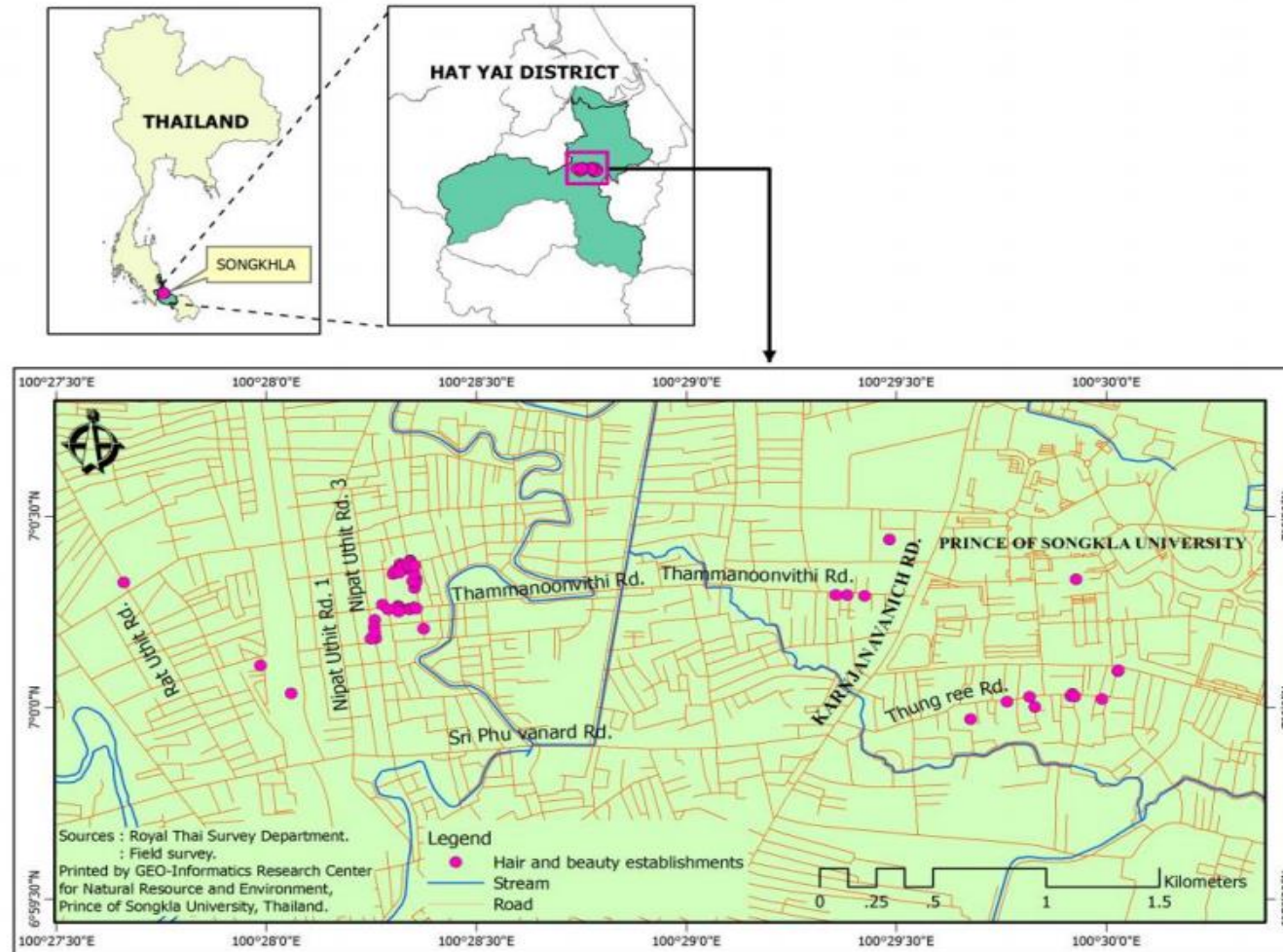


Figure 4.5: Map of Hat Yai also showing City Center as well as IHBSs survey locations

4.3 Research Design

The research study employed the concurrent mixed methods design with the QUAN+qual paradigm where the qualitative was used to confirm and strengthen the quantitative (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003a,b; Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Cresswell, 2009; Cresswell et al 2003) in order to explore and understand the skills situation of IHBSWs in Hat Yai and how this impacts their skill performance levels, income and total wellbeing in order to make empirically based recommendations for change. The design was also mixed in data collection and sampling as well as the interpretation, which allowed for flexibility and multiple evidences and data sources enabling diverse interpretations for triangulation and in-depth assessments (Cresswell, 2009, 2007, 2003; Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2009, 2003; Stake, 2005, 1995; Gillham, 2000). A pilot study was conducted (Peter-Cookey and Janyam 2015) about the skills of IHBSWs in Hat Yai, which identified skill acquisition and performance levels as areas of concern. The findings and experience of the pilot study were used to further explore the IHBSWs perceptions on the skill acquisition process, skill upgrading needs, consequences, performance, challenges and recommendations. An in-depth study, which built on the findings of the pilot study were then conducted to explore skill acquisition, upgrade and perception of skills performance on income and total wellbeing, the skill upgrading needs of the IHBSWs in Hat Yai, the consequences of these gaps and challenges to skill upgrading. Details of the instrument for the research and the design are described in Papers 1-3 and samples of the instruments are found in Appendices 1-4).

4.4 Data Collection

Mixed data collection was carried out simultaneously from October 2015 – February 2016 (Bernard, 2000; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003a/b). Closed/open ended were questions were used in survey instruments (intramethod) and several methods were used concurrently like survey, interview and observation (intermethod) (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003a/b; Cresswell, 2009; Cresswell et al, 2003), in this single investigation. Data collection was primarily a mixed and multilevel questionnaire survey, as well as

interviews, observations and documents/records (i.e. secondary data) to maintain depth of understanding, inference quality and representation (Kemper et al, 2003; Yin, 2003).

The pilot study spanned over a period of two months (October – December 2014). The study used surveys, interviews and observation to explore the status of skills, acquisition and performance of the workers and how they upgrade their skills and access trainings as well as they willingness of users to pay for upgrade services. The study also sought to find out if the respondents expected that skills level upgrade will improve their services and total well-being. Data were collected by the use of questionnaires, interviews and direct and participant observations. In all cases consent of all respondents was sought through a consent letter approved by the Faculty Advisor. This consent letter was written in Thai and signed by all respondents before the survey and interviews; and duly returned to the researcher. The questionnaires for the IEWs were all in Thai while the customers' questionnaires were in English for non-Thai and Thai for local respondents.

4.4.1 Multilevel Mixed Sampling

A sampling frame could not be determined for the study due to unavailable data; therefore mixed purposeful sampling was used. Multilevel and identical mixed methods sampling was done by collecting data from IHBSWs, customers, business owners and training-providers. This was to improve inference quality and to ensure that participants were drawn from the same sample for quantitative and qualitative investigations (Kemper et al, 2003; Onwugbuezie & Collins, 2007; Teddlie & Yu, 2007; Kuzel 1999). This means that we used self-administered survey instruments containing both closed and open ended questions to collect quantitative and qualitative data from IHBSWs (first level), their customers (second level), business owners (third level) and training institutions (fourth level). Closed and open ended questions were also used for interviews in the same manner. The pilot study revealed that there were large number of hair and beauty services operations in the city center hugely patronized by locals and tourist. Therefore, in order to make sampling easier, the sampling field was narrowed down to the city center (Bernard 2000) to reduce bias and increase representation (see Figure 2).

The mixed purposeful sampling technique (Onwugbuezie and Collins 2007; Teddlie and Yu 2007) was used to select information-rich samples, that is, only those strictly connected to hair and beauty service in Hat Yai to enable in-depth study and a convergence of results (Palinkas et al 2013, 2011; Patton, 1990, 2002; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Haircare, facecare, nailcare, body/skincare and massage were considered as hair and beauty services for the purpose of the study and skills were assessed based on global requirements (EU 2013; MES 2007; ONET 2010a/b/c/d/e; BLS 2015a/b/c/d; ServiceSkillsSA 2008; ASCP 2010; IBISWorld 2014a,b; RAPS 2014; Peter-Cookey and Janyam 2016a-c).

4.4.2 Multilevel Survey Questionnaire

A multi-level survey was conducted concurrently with questionnaires containing open and close-ended questions. The surveys covered 71 HBSs-establishments, 120 IHBSWs, 120 customers, 20 business-owners and four vocational skill training institutions. HBSWs were selected from service operations along the city center as well as some selected salons in other areas based on suggestions from customers surveyed and interviewed while customers were selected from the salons around the cluster, tourist groups, non-Thai groups and university students. Business-owners were selected based on suggestions from customers, survey visits and willingness to participate, while the training institutions were selected based on the workers suggestions and being government registered.

Self-administered semi-structured questionnaires with both open and closed questions for the workers, customers, business-owners and training-providers were conducted. The questionnaires were developed by the researcher to obtain the socioeconomic demographics of the respondents' perceptions on skills acquisition/levels, skills upgrading, its impact on skill performance and performance rating in Hat Yai as well as skill upgrading needs, consequences, challenges and recommendations. They were developed based on the pilot study, literature review and the theoretical/conceptual framework. All questionnaires were presented in Thai and English formats, however, only 50 were completed in English by non-Thai customers. Different sets of questionnaires were

designed for each level of respondents. The questionnaires were structured around interest in upgrading skills, skills they would like to upgrade, would upgrading skills improve their income and productivity, when they last upgraded a skill (for informal worker) and how much they spend on fashion and beauty service monthly, skills services they need but do not get, their level of satisfaction with the services they get in Hat Yai and if they will pay for upgrade services (for users) (See Papers 1-3 for details).

Six skill sets were surveyed namely general, haircare, facecare, nailcare, bodycare and massage with 85 individual skills in all (Table 4.1).

Table 4.3 Selected informal hair and beauty services skills assessed

General Skills (17)	Haircare skills (13)	Facecare skills (17)	Nailcare skills (9)	Bodycare skills (13)	Massage skills (17)
English language	Hairdressing	Cutting edge facial hair removal	Nail/foot/hand treatment	Evaluate skin type/condition to determine treatment	Evaluate clients' physical mental & emotional condition
Teaching/training	Hair styling	Movie/theatre make-up	Evaluate hand/feet/nail condition	Skin treatment	Determine massage therapy based on individual conditions
Customer handling/management	Hair cutting/barbering	Bridal make up	Determine treatment/products based on condition	Skin waxing/Peels/scrubbing	Design/plan/administer massage therapy for clients
Analysis/counselling	Multi-cultural hair management	Correctional makeup	Determine nail polish/ design based on individual skin condition, tone & personality	Skin exfoliation/ Extraction	Pre-natal massage
Creativity/originality	Hair pieces fixing/Wig making	Personality make-up	Nail art and design	Tanning	Thai massage
ICT	Hair perming/straightening	Multi-cultural make up	Artificial nail fixing/maintenance	Tattooing	Chinese/Japanese massage
Consultation/Advice	Hair coloring/, bleaching, tinting	Facial treatment	Manicure & Pedicure	Cleansing/ Scrubbing	Swedish massage
Therapy	Hair weaving/braiding	Event/Party make-up	French/American	Steaming/ Wrapping	Deep tissue massage
Cutting edge personal styling	Hair/scalp treatment	Facial hair removal (male/female)	Manicure/Pedicure	Apply Body/Face art	Vibro-massage
Business management	Cutting edge hairstyling	Modelling/celebrity make-up	Global manicure & pedicure	Create/design body/face art	Hydrotherapy & aroma therapy/hot stone massage
Communication	Cutting edge hair cutting/ barbering	Face wrinkle removal		Fixing body accessories	Orthopedic/Sport massage
Listening/speaking	Hair waxing/curling/waving	Eyebrow/eyelash management		Laser treatment	Foot/Face/neck/head massage
Safety & health procedures & practices	Managing long hair	Evaluate facial condition		Plan & manage treatment/therapy	Cutting edge massage
Art & design		Determine treatment/product based on individual condition			Acupuncture/Acupressure
Chemistry/biology		Design makeup style & product based on skin type/tone facial feature & personality			Manual/physical massage
Maintaining workstation		Color management & design			Electronic massage
Cleaning & sterilizing work tools		Create & design make-up styles			

Note: These skills were selected based on the findings of the pilot study and verified by a three-man panel of experts. These were supported from literature review as well (EU 2013; MES 2007; ONET 2010a/b/c/d/e; BLS 2015a/b/c/d; ServiceSkillsSA 2008; ASCP 2010; IBISWorld 2014a,b; RAPS 2014)

4.4.3 Multilevel Interviews

15 customers and 15 workers as well as 5 business-owners and 2 training providers were interviewed. Interviews followed a guide with exploratory, in-depth open and closed ended questions designed to allow probing and full exploration of the subject matter as well as to ensure descriptive and interpretive validity, credibility and reliability (Bernard, 2000; Johnson & Turner, 2003; Onwugbuezie & Collins, 2007; Patton, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Denzin & Guba, 2005). The idea was to dig deeper to find out their perception about the impact of skill upgrading on skill performance and the performance levels of the IHBSWs in the study area as well as what they believe are their challenges and suggest some solutions. Questions covered perceptions and expectations on need for skill upgrading, willingness to upgrade, willingness to pay, impact of SU on skill performance as well as challenges and suggestions. Five workers' interviews were selected out of all those interviewed and two were male, all Thai; and five customers' interviews, two were male and one of them was non-Thai, were selected. They were chosen because they summed up all other responses. All respondents were interviewed in their preferred language and interviews were audio-recorded where possible and note-taking. All those interviewed gave their written consent. Also, only those interviews that had a translator present to directly translate were used for this section. Each interview lasted approximately 25-40 minutes. The quotes are made up of original responses as well as responses to follow-up questions. All interviewees gave written and verbal consent. Pseudo-names were used in order to protect the privacy of the interviewees and ensure confidentiality. All interviewees gave written and verbal consent. Contents and translation of the interview were confirmed with the interviewees before the interview was concluded. The researcher conducted all interviews personally with the aid of Thai native translators where necessary. All those interviewed gave their written consent (See Papers 1-3 for details).

4.4.4 Observations and Secondary Data Reviews

Personal observations of the researcher added more insight to the investigations. The researcher acquired data as a customer on several instance [with permission to record textually and audiovisually] and as an observer sitting-in [also with permission]. These observations took place concurrently with some interviews and questionnaire administration which reduced time, increased validity and depth of understanding. Also, secondary data were perused to maintain credence, validation and corroboration of our data and acquire more information. They include websites, policy documents, training brochures, curricula, reports and other documents; and they were used to support descriptive/interpretive validity, credibility, reliability and transferability (Onwugbuezie & Collins, 2007; Johnson & Turner, 2003). Four salons were observed (two hair and beauty salons, one barber salon and one spa/massage).

Observations were direct and participant to some level. Permission was gotten from the salon owners and managers to sit-in during the day for two weeks with two-week interval. Workers and customers were informed of the purpose of the sit-in. The interactions between the workers and their customers were quietly observed and questions asked for clarification sometimes. Types of services offered, nationality of customers, type of services not available and the number of customers that came in were also observed. There were two time periods of observation during each week divided into three sections per day (weekdays (Monday-Thursday) and weekends (Friday-Sunday)). Observations lasted from morning till evening with breaks for lunch and interviews. The researcher also participated as a customer in order to get a firsthand experience of the situation. A translator (an IHBSW) was present to directly translate interactions as well as explain some activities. Written and verbal consent had already being gotten as these were the same location for survey and interview samples. Pseudo-names were used in order to protect the privacy of the salons and ensure confidentiality; and pictures do not show faces. Field notes and audio-visuals were used to record observations. Observations were translated and presented to the salon workers and some customers to verify observed activities and for validation (See Papers 1-3 for details).

4.5 Mixed Data Analysis

We utilized mean, frequency and percentage for descriptive analysis of the quantitative data for the results. Thematic analysis was used for interviews, observations and other qualitative data to find common themes and sub-themes, which were then matched and triangulated with the findings of the quantitative analysis (Onwugbuezie & Teddlie 2003; Onwugbuezie & Collins, 2007; Yin, 2003; Gillham, 2000; Erzberger & Kelle, 2003; Cresswell 2009; Bernard, 2000). Themes were selected based on the research questions, objectives, conceptual lens as well as emerging themes from the results and then presented under the following headings: respondents' profiles, skill acquisition process, skill levels rating and customer satisfaction. Some qualitative data were quantitized through frequency counts based on subthemes. Themes were selected based on the research questions, objectives, and emerging themes from the study. Basic statistics including mean, frequency and percentages were computed for the results (See Papers 1-3) with the help of Excel Statistical packages. Qualitative data generated were analyzed using thematic approach (Yin 2003, 2009; Creswell 2009).

Perceptual rating estimations (PRE) analysis was developed to determine results for the different aspects of this research using percentage range. Perceptual rating estimations (PRE) refer to combined scores of more than one sample group. The equations used for the estimation were developed from the researchers' analysis in order to give a mathematical explanation for the analytical process for replication.

4.5.1 Impact of skill upgrading on skill performance

4.5.1.1 Paired perceptual rating estimation (PPRE) of impact of skill upgrading on performance

Paired perceptual ratings were used to determine respondents' perception towards the need for skill upgrading, willingness of workers to upgrade skill, desire of customers to have upgraded services, willingness of customers to pay for upgraded services, impact of skill upgrading on improving skill performance/productivity,

income/clientele and total wellbeing. A three-point Likert scale of yes, no and maybe was used. First, the perception of respondents' concerning each of the options was computed by pairing the results of both groups and divide by total number of respondents, then multiply by 100 (equation I). The highest percentage is considered the overriding perception of the survey respondents.

$$ISUSP = WP(im1) + CP(im1) = \frac{\Sigma(WP(im1)+CP(im1))}{TNR (240)} \times 100 \quad (I)$$

Where *ISUSP* represents impact of skill upgrading on skill performance, *WP* = workers' perception, *CP* = customers' perception, *TNR* = total number of respondents and *im1* = impact 1 (need for skill upgrading), *im2* = impact 2 (willingness to upgrade skills), *im3* = impact 3 (desire to receive upgraded services), *im4* = impact 4 (willingness to pay for upgraded services), *im5* = impact 5 (SU improves performance and productivity), *im6* = impact 6 (SU improves income and clientele) and *im7* = impact 7 (SU improves total wellbeing of workers)

Second, the overall perception percentage range was determined by calculating the paired ratings per scale and divide by total number of scores across the three choices, then multiply by 100 (equation II).

$$OISUSP = WoP + CoP = \frac{\Sigma(WoP+CoP)}{TNS (1004)} \times 100 \quad (II)$$

Where *OISUSP* represents impact of skill upgrading on skill performance, *WoP* = workers' overall perception, *CoP* = customers' overall perception, *TNS* = total number of scores

A total response above 70% range of total respondents indicated the perception of the survey respondents about the level of impact skill upgrading has on skill performance.

4.5.1.2 Skill acquisition process/levels assessment

Mean, frequency and percentage were used to analyze for skill acquisition process and customer satisfaction. Thematic analysis was used for interviews and observations with workers, customers, business-owners and training-providers as well as other secondary data to find common themes and sub-themes. Multilevel perceptual rating estimations were used to determine workers, customers and business-owners perceptions towards the skill levels of IHBSWs as well as available and desired skills in Hat Yai. The

mean of responses from each group of respondents were collated separately for the variable on the survey instruments asking about the skill levels of the workers on three scale (basic, intermediate and advanced).

The overall estimation for skill levels was determined by adding the percentages of all three groups and dividing by the total number of groups and multiplied by 100 (equation III). The highest percentage was considered the overriding perception of the survey respondents on skill levels.

$$SL = WsP + CsP + BOsP = \frac{\Sigma(WsP+CsP+BOsP)}{TNG (3)} \times 100 \quad (III)$$

Where SL represents skill level, Ws = workers' perception, CsP = customers' perception, BOsP = business-owners' perception, TNG = total number of groups

The mean of responses from each group of respondents were collated separately for the two variables on the survey instruments (Section 4) titled 'available skills (i.e. skills the respondents perceive the workers have) and 'desired skills (i.e. skills the respondents desired the workers to have). The overall estimation for skills available and skills desired were determined by adding the percentages of all three groups and dividing by the total number of groups and multiply by 100 (equation IV and V).

$$AS = WoP + CoP + BOoP = \frac{\Sigma(WoP+CoP+BOoP)}{TNG (3)} \times 100$$

(IV)

$$DS = WsP + CsP + BOsP = \frac{\Sigma(WsP+CsP+BOsP)}{TNG (3)} \times 100 \quad (V)$$

Where AS represents impact of available skills, DS= desired skills, Ws = workers' overall perception, CoP = customers' overall perception, BOoP = business-owners' overall perception, TNG = total number of groups

Themes were selected for qualitative analysis of interviews and observations based on the research questions and objectives as well as emerging themes from the results and then presented under the following headings: respondents' profiles, skill acquisition process, skill levels rating, skills available and desired and customer satisfaction.

4.5.2 Skill upgrading needs and their consequences

4.5.2.1 Skill Upgrading Need per Skill

To determine skill upgrading needs of the IHBSWs in Hat Yai we used the paired perceptual rating estimation (PPRE) and took differences of means per skill between workers' and customers' responses to survey questions on skills that are available and skills that are desired. This is based on matching IHBSWs self-assessment with customers' assessment of skills. First we work out for individual skills and then for each skill set.

Sum mean and standard deviation for each skill per skill set were computed for workers and customers' assessment. Results of IHBSWs' responses were matched to customers' responses on available skills and desired skills on four different levels and the differences were computed. Matching was done in four levels ([1]-W.AS – C.AS; [2]-W.AS - W.DS; [3]-W.AS – C.DS; [4]-C.DS – W.DS) where mean of responses from workers and customers on the two variables (AS and DS) were subtracted from each other and in order to ensure that the results were not biased, the same process was done on four levels and the results used together.

To determine skill upgrading need (gaps), differentials of each match were added to derive a final score per skill (equation VI and VII).

$$W.AS^{G1} - C.AS^{G1} = \Delta \bar{x} \quad (VI)$$

Where Δ = difference, \bar{x} = mean, $W.AS^{G1}$ = Workers.Available-Skills, $C.AS^{G1}$ = Customers.Available-Skills, G = General Skill and ¹ indicates the first skill in the skill set, ² the second skill, etc

$$W.DS^{G1} - C.DS^{G1} = \Delta \bar{x} \quad (VII)$$

Where Δ = difference, \bar{x} = mean, $W.DS^{G1}$ = Workers.Desired-Skills, $C.DS^{G1}$ = Customers.Desired-Skills, G is for General Skill and ¹ indicates the first skill in the skill set, ² the second skill, etc

To determine skill upgrading needs, differentials of each match were added to derive a final score per skill (equation VIII).

$$(W.AS^{G1} - C.AS^{G1}) + (W.DS^{G1} - C.DS^{G1}) = \sum \Delta \bar{x} \quad (VIII)$$

We then assumed that a score from -0.75 (75%) indicated need for skill upgrading.

4.5.2.2 Skill Upgrading Need per Skill Set

Now to determine skill upgrading need (gap) per skill set, first, sum mean per skill set were computed (for workers and customers' assessment) by summing up all scores for skills. Sum mean of both samples per skill set (for workers and customers' assessments) were subtracted from each other to determine difference per *skill set* (equation IX and X).

$$W.AS^G - C.AS^G = \Delta \bar{x} \quad (IX)$$

Where Δ = difference, \bar{x} = mean, W.AS = Workers.Available-Skills, C.AS = Customers. Available -Skills, G=General, H=Haircare, F=Facecare, N=Nailcare, B=Bodycare, M=Massage.

$$W.DS^G - C.DS^G = \Delta \bar{x} \quad (X)$$

Where Δ = difference, \bar{x} = mean, W.AS = Workers.Desired-Skills, C.AS = Customers.Desired-Skills, G=General, H=Haircare, F=Facecare, N=Nailcare, B=Bodycare, M=Massage.

Workers results were subtracted from customers' results for available skills and then added to workers results for available skills minus workers results for desired skills and subsequently compared to workers results to available skills subtracted from customers results for desired skills added to customers results for desired skills minus workers results for desired skills. To determine the skill set with the highest gap, sum mean of both samples were added on these separate levels and added together again (equation XI and XII).

$$(W.AS - C.AS) + (W.AS - W.DS) = \sum \Delta \bar{x} \text{ (per skill set)} \quad (XI)$$

$$(W.AS - C.DS) + (C.DS - W.DS) = \sum \Delta \bar{x} \text{ (per skill set)} \quad (XII)$$

We assumed that a final score of -0.6/0.6 (60%) indicates a high gap for that skill set.

Qualitative data was used to support the above results by asking respondents in the survey and during interviews to state the skill areas that most need upgrading according to urgency. The results were then thematized and quantitized by frequency count to produce a form of ranking.

4.5.2.3 Consequences

To identify some consequences based on direct interpretation, respondents were asked probing questions during interviews and then used themes and frequency counts to place them in ranking order. Also, during observations of 4 different operations in two separate weeks covering 7 skills drawn from the survey, a total of 275 customers visited for different services. Status and number of customers visiting these salons as well as the number of those who were satisfied and dissatisfied, who got and did not get the services required and the number of specialized/personal services that were delivered. This was computed using frequency counts as well as conversations with the customers to create themes.

4.5.3 Skill performance levels

4.5.3.1 Paired perceptual rating estimation (PPRE) of skill performance level

This refers to paired perceptual rating estimation of performance level for each skill in a skill set, which determines the number of individuals who perceive workers performance of skill to be at a particular level. It measures the performance level of each skill in each skill set using data from both workers' and customers' assessments, while estimating the performance level of specific skills based on the sum of workers' and customers' perceptual ratings.

To determine performance level per skill, the number of workers and customers that rated the performance of a specific skill at a particular level was computed separately and their percentages derived. Then, the two separate sums were added; the total sum derived was then divided by the total number of respondents (i.e. workers and customers)

and multiplied by 100 to get the percentage score for that performance level (equation XIII). The level with the highest percentage score is considered the performance level for that skill.

$$SPL = Ws1 + Cs1 = \frac{\sum(Ws1+Cs1)}{TNR (240)} \times 100 \quad (XIII)$$

Where *Ws* represents workers' rating per skill, *Cs* represents customers rating per skill, *TNR* is Total Number of Respondents and *SPL* is skill performance level: while ₁=Novice/Very Poor; ₂=Advanced-Beginner/Poor; ₃=Competent/Fair; ₄=Proficient/Good; ₅=Expert/Very Good; ₆=Master/Excellent

4.5.3.2 Paired perceptual rating estimation (PPRE) of skill set performance level

To determine performance level per skill set, the total score for each performance level was computed for workers and customers separately. The two sums (workers and customers) were added together, divided by total number of scores in that skill set and multiplied by 100 to get a percentage score (equation XIV) for that performance level. The performance level with the highest score was considered the estimated performance level for that skill set.

$$SSPL = \sum W_{ssA1} + \sum C_{ssA1} = \frac{\sum(\sum W_{ssA1} + \sum C_{ssA1})}{TNSSS (General)} \times 100 \quad (XIV)$$

Where *W_{ss}* represents workers' rating per skill set, *C_{ss}* represents customers rating per skill, *TNSSS* is total number of scores in skill set and *SSPL* is skill set performance level: while ₁=Novice/Very Poor; ₂=Advanced-Beginner/Poor; ₃=Competent/Fair; ₄=Proficient/Good; ₅=Expert/Very Good; ₆=Master/Excellent; *A*=General Skills; *B*=Haircare Skills; *C*=Facecare Skills; *D*=Nailcare Skills; *E*=Bodycare Skills; *F*=Massage Skills

4.5.3.3 Overall paired perceptual rating estimation (OPPRE) of skill set performance level

To determine overall skill performance level for the informal hair and beauty services workers in Hat Yai, the total score for each performance level was computed for workers and customers separately as above. The two sums (workers and customers) were added together, divided by total number of scores in that performance level across all skill sets and multiplied by 100 to get a percentage score (equation XV) for that performance

level. The final skill performance level was then determined as the level with the highest score.

$$OSPL = x_1 + x_2 + x_3 + x_4 + x_5 + x_6 = \frac{\sum(pSS)}{\sum(TNSSSs)} \times 100 \quad (XV)$$

Where x represents skill sets, $TNSSSs$ is total number of scores in all skill sets, pSS is per skill set and $OSPL$ stands for Overall Skill Performance Level; $_1=Novice/Very Poor$; $_2=Advanced-Beginner/Poor$; $_3=Competent/Fair$; $_4=Proficient/Good$; $_5=Expert/Very Good$; $_6=Master/Excellent$

4.5.3.4 Degree of agreement between workers' and customers' ratings

The degree of agreement measure was used to determine the degree of agreement between the ratings of both groups in order to show whether the two ratings could be statistically matched to derive a single rating (McCray G 2013; Barnhart, Haber and Lin 2008; Stemler 2005; Schouten 1985; Robinson 1957). This was adapted from the simple-percent-agreement consensus estimate for interrater reliability (Stemler 2005; Barnhart, Haber and Lin 2008; Robinson 1957). This serves to ensure a reduction in researcher bias and rater bias.

To determine degree of agreement, all the scores from each performance level across skill sets were added for workers and a total sum was derived. Thereafter, the sum number per skill performance level for workers was divided by the total sum of all levels and multiplied by 100 (equation XVI) to get a percentage score for each level.

$$WSPLR = WssA_1 + WssB_1 + WssC_1 + WssD_1 + WssE_1 + WssF_1 = \frac{\sum(pSPL)}{\sum(SPLs)} \times 100 \quad (XVI)$$

Where $WSPLR$ = Workers' Skill Performance Level Rating, $WssA_1$ = Workers' Skill Set for General Skills at Novice Level (and so on with other performance levels), $T\Sigma SPLs$ = total sum of all levels; $_1=Novice/Very Poor$; $_2=Advanced-Beginner/Poor$; $_3=Competent/Fair$; $_4=Proficient/Good$; $_5=Expert/Very Good$; $_6=Master/Excellent$; $A=General Skills$; $B=Haircare Skills$; $C=Facecare Skills$; $D=Nailcare Skills$; $E=Bodycare Skills$; $F=Massage Skills$

The same was done for the scores of customers. All the scores from each performance level across skill sets were added for customers and a total sum was derived. Thereafter, the sum number per skill performance level was divided by the total sum of all levels and multiplied by 100 (equation 17) to get a percentage score for each level.

$$CSPLR = C_{ssA1} + C_{ssB1} + C_{ssC1} + C_{ssD1} + C_{ssE1} + C_{ssF1} = \frac{\sum(pSPL)}{\sum(SPLs)} \times 100 \quad (XVII)$$

Where CSPLR = Customers' Skill Performance Rating, C_{ssA1} = Customers' Skill Set for General Skills at Novice Level (and so on with other performance levels), $\sum SPLs$ = total sum of all levels; $_1$ =Novice/Very Poor; $_2$ =Advanced-Beginner/Poor; $_3$ =Competent/Fair; $_4$ =Proficient/Good; $_5$ =Expert/Very Good; $_6$ =Master/Excellent; A=General Skills; B=Haircare Skills; C=Facecare Skills; D=Nailcare Skills; E=Bodycare Skills; F=Massage Skills

Therefore, to estimate the degree of agreement, the percentage score of workers was subtracted from that of customers per level to get a difference (equation XVIII).

$$DoA = WSPLR_1 - CSPLR_1 = \Delta\% \quad (XVIII)$$

Where DoA represents Degree of Agreement; $\Delta\%$ = percentage difference

The percentage difference score indicated the degree of agreement between the two groups' ratings. A percentage difference of 25% and above is considered strong disagreement, 15%-20% is weak disagreement, 10% - 14% is weak agreement, while 0% - 9% is strong agreement.

4.5.4 Challenges and recommendations

4.5.4.1 Paired perceptual rating estimation (PPRE) of challenges IHBSWs face in assessing skill upgrading and suggestions

The results were drawn from interviews and qualitative aspects of questionnaire and quantitized based on common themes then combined to make a ranked list of challenges and suggestions from paired response rate. Based on the survey and interview responses, themes were derived and then the number of workers and customers who selected each theme were counted separately and then summed up. The themes with a number higher than 60% of the respondents were selected and there were eight of them. Afterwards, the way each theme was ranked by all respondents was counted and the ranking with the highest score was assigned to that theme and then the challenges were presented according to their ranks. The same was done with the suggestions to ameliorate the challenges.

4.6 Validation

Validation was through data triangulation, multilevel survey and interviews, observations and secondary data review, inter/intramethods, peer/member examination, external auditing and a pilot study (Peter-Cookey and Janyam 2016; Cresswell 2009; Cresswell and Plano Clark 2007; Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009). The questionnaires were designed based on the results of the pilot study and verified by three-member-panels for each level; corrections were made and confirmed before being administered in the major study. The multilevel survey provided comparable data, which enhanced credibility, trustworthiness and reliability (Bernard, 2000; Johnson & Turner, 2003; Onwugbuezie & Collins, 2007; Patton, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Denzin & Guba, 2005) (See Papers 1-3).

Table 4.4 shows a summary of the methods as they were used to answer the research questions.

Table 4.4 Summary Methods: in Table Format

Research Questions	Sampling	Data Collection	Research Instruments	Data Analysis	Validity	Ethics
How can skills upgrading be used to improve skill performance of informal economy workers (IEWs)? Paper 1	Mixed Purposeful Sampling Multilevel Sampling -IHBSWs -Customers	Field Survey Interviews In-depth Literature Review	Self-administered Questionnaires In-depth Face-to-Face Interviews	Descriptive -Mean -Frequency -Percentage -Standard Deviation Inferential Measure of Agreement	Triangulation Peer debriefing Expert reviews External Auditing Detailed narratives	Consent letter Confidentiality Participants' review
How do informal hair and beauty services workers in Hat Yai go about skills acquisition? Paper 2	Mixed Purposeful Sampling Multilevel Sampling -IHBSWs -Customers -Business-Owners -Training-Providers	Field Survey Interviews Observation/Secondary Data In-depth Literature Review	Self-administered Questionnaires In-depth Face-to-Face Interviews Observation Protocol	Descriptive -Mean -Frequency -Percentage -Standard Deviation		
What are the current and expected skills levels of these informal economy workers? Paper 2						
What are the current skills performance levels of these informal economy workers? Paper 1	Mixed Purposeful Sampling Multilevel Sampling -IHBSWs -Customers	Field Survey Interviews In-depth Literature Review	Self-administered Questionnaires In-depth Face-to-Face Interviews	Descriptive -Mean -Frequency -Percentage -Standard Deviation Inferential Measure of Agreement		
What are the current skills gaps and what are their consequences? Paper 3	Mixed Purposeful Sampling Multilevel Sampling -IHBSWs -Customers -Business-Owners -Training-Providers	Field Survey Interviews Observation In-depth Literature Review	Self-administered Questionnaires In-depth Face-to-Face Interviews Observation Protocol	Descriptive -Mean -Frequency -Percentage -Standard Deviation Inferential T test		
What are some of the factors challenging skills upgrading for these informal economy workers? Paper 1	Mixed Purposeful Sampling Multilevel Sampling -IHBSWs -Customers -Business-Owners -Training-Providers	Field Survey Interviews Observation In-depth Literature Review	Self-administered Questionnaires In-depth Face-to-Face Interviews Observation Protocol	Descriptive -Mean -Frequency -Percentage -Standard Deviation		

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Respondents' Background

The respondents for this study were drawn from the informal hair and beauty services workers, customers, business-owners and training-providers in Hat Yai, Songkhla, Thailand.

5.1.1 Respondents' Profiles (*workers, customers and business-owners*)

Table 5.1 and 5.2 present a summary of the profile of the workers, customers and business-owners respondents. Most of the total respondents were Thai (73%) with a sum mean of 0.73 (SD=0.45, n=240); while the mean of the Thai customers that participated in the study was at 0.63 (SD=0.5, n=120) and the IHBSWs were all Thai. The sample as a whole were predominantly female with a mean of 0.74 (SD=0.44, n=240); for the IHBSWs mean of females was 0.8 (SD=0.42, n=120) and for customers sampled, mean was 0.71 (SD= 0.46, n=120). The sample as a whole were relatively young adults of age-range 20-30 with a mean of 0.28 (SD=0.45, n=240) and 30-40 with mean of 0.36 (SD=0.48, n=240). However, the IHBSWs were predominantly within the age-range of 30-40 with mean of 0.52 (SD=0.5, n=120) while customers were within the age-range of 20-30 and >40 (\bar{x} =0.33, SD=0.47) respectively. The IHBSWs were within the age range of 30-40 (52%) while business owners (31%) and the customers (34%) were within the range of >40. On the other hand, majority entered into work at the age range of 26-30 (33%) while 25% were at the range of 21-25 years. Also, customers are majorly within the age range of 20-30 (32%) and >40 (34%) indicating that most consumers of IHBSs are either young adult or middle-aged females. This was also noted during observation/interviews visits to salons and spas. Sum mean of educational status of the total respondents was majorly secondary level at 34% (\bar{x} =0.34, SD=0.48, n=240). For the IHBSWs, secondary level was also the highest (58%) with a mean of 0.58 (SD=0.5, n=120), however, customers were mainly with university level education (50%) with mean of 0.5 (SD=0.5, n=120). However, only 15% of the workers were university graduates while 35% of business

owners and 51% of customers were university graduates; but, only 30% of business owners and 7% of workers attended vocational/technical/polytechnic colleges. Most of the workers surveyed served in haircare only (18%) and full salons (21%) while 25% (haircare) and 21% (full salon) of the customers visited them.

More than three-quarters of the respondents had lived in Hat Yai for 1-25 years indicating that they had sufficient experience of hair and beauty services in the study area, especially as their age-range shows enough maturity to render in-depth and information-rich observations in the survey. But most of the workers had recently relocated to the city from other parts of the country and most of the non-Thai customers (38%) were tourists, which explain the fact that 26% of them had lived in the city for only 1-5 years. Most of them were just weekend visitors from Malaysia and vacationers from Indonesia, Singapore, Europe, China and America as well as students and teachers from ASEAN countries, Africa and Europe. The survey covered 8 types of informal enterprises (exclusively haircare, facecare, bodycare and massage, full salon, full spa, spa/salon and mobile).

Services are mostly provided in Full Salons (27%) providing all types of services and Haircare only (23%), but most available skills and services demanded are haircare (43%) and massage (33%). Meanwhile, haircare (43%) and massage (33%) services had the highest usage/service in total; however, there are more IHBSWs in massage (38%) than in haircare (32%) while customers use more of haircare (55%) than massage (29%) services. Also, 27% of total respondents either serve in or patronize Full Salons (that provide all services) while 23% are with exclusively haircare salons, 13% exclusively massage and spa respectively, 14% for mobile services, but none for nailcare. But, 27% of IHBSWs practice their skills in Full Salons, 18% in exclusively haircare and mobile services respectively and 16% and 14% in massage and spa services. However, only 27% of customers patronize Full Salons, while 28% go for exclusively haircare salons, 10% for mobile services and 13% for exclusively massage. 18% of workers and 10% of businesses were mobile, and 11% of customers used mobile services. Although, 25% of businesses surveyed were spa/salon, only 14% of workers and 7% of customers worked in

and visited them. Massage (35%) and haircare (32%) were the commonest skills of the IHBSWs while nailcare (9%) was the least acquired skill; but, most of them worked with two or more of the skill sets. Majority of these workers were fulltime (71%) employees (60%) (Table 5.1)

In addition, the survey revealed that the average and lowest-range of monthly income for the IHBSWs was \$280 (38%) and were majority of them fell, while 27% earned \$280-421, 21% (\$421-701), 8% (\$701-981) and 981-1121 and >\$981-1121 (3%) respectively. In total, majority of the respondents had a monthly income of \$280-421 USD (mean: 21%) while only 7% earned a monthly income above \$1121. However, 38% of the workers earned below \$280 and only 3% earned above \$1121, 25% of business owners earned a monthly income of \$281-421 and 10% earned above \$1121 and while 51% of the customers spend on the average below \$71 monthly on hair and beauty services, 7% spend above \$353. However, only 31% of the workers attend to 2-4 customers per day and 18% attend to 1-2 customers per day while 15% attend to 4-6 and 11-15 customers per day; and most workers are paid per service (47%) and hourly (26%). 50% of business owners state that they have more than 10 customers per week and above 15 per weekend and 40% of these customers are tourists. Observations revealed that most of these customers come over the weekend and often times the salons get zero customers during the weekdays. Some of the customers interviewed argued that most people don't feel the need to visit them because they don't think their services are necessary since they (customers) can do it for themselves.

Table 5.1 Respondents Profile for workers and customers

Characteristic	Description	Workers				Customers				Sum of both samples			
		<i>f</i>	\bar{x}	<i>SD</i>	%	<i>f</i>	\bar{x}	<i>SD</i>	%	<i>f</i>	\bar{x}	<i>SD</i>	%
Respondents' nationality	Thai	120	1	0	100	75	0.63	0.5	63	-	-	-	-
	ASEAN	-	-	-	-	16	0.133	0.34	13	-	-	-	-
	Asia	-	-	-	-	7	0.06	0.22	6	-	-	-	-
	Europe	-	-	-	-	5	0.042	0.2	4	-	-	-	-
	America	-	-	-	-	5	0.042	0.2	4	-	-	-	-
	Africa	-	-	-	-	12	0.1	0.3	10	-	-	-	-
Gender	Female	93	0.8	0.42	78	85	0.71	0.46	71	178	0.74	0.44	74
	Male	27	0.23	0.42	23	35	0.3	0.46	29	62	0.26	0.44	26
Age (years)	<18	4	0.033	0.18	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	18-20	24	0.2	0.4	20	16	0.133	0.34	13	40	0.17	0.37	17
	20-30	27	0.23	0.42	23	40	0.33	0.47	33	67	0.28	0.45	28
	30-40	62	0.52	0.5	52	24	0.2	0.4	20	86	0.36	0.48	36
	>40	3	0.03	0.12	3	40	0.33	0.47	33	43	0.18	0.38	18
Work entry age	<16	14	-	-	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	17-20	27	-	-	23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	21-25	30	-	-	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	26-30	39	-	-	33	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	<31	10	-	-	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Educational status	No Formal Education	18	-	-	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Primary	6	-	-	5	14	-	-	12	20	-	-	8
	Secondary	69	-	-	58	13	-	-	11	82	-	-	34
	Technical	4	-	-	5	10	-	-	8	14	-	-	6
	Vocational	8	-	-	7	23	-	-	19	31	-	-	13
	University	15	-	-	15	60	-	-	50	75	-	-	31
Monthly income (USD)	<280	45	-	-	38	10	-	-	8	-	-	-	-
	280-421	32	-	-	27	16	-	-	12	-	-	-	-
	421-701	25	-	-	21	20	-	-	15	-	-	-	-
	701-981	10	-	-	8	32	-	-	25	-	-	-	-
	981-1121	4	-	-	3	41	-	-	32	-	-	-	-
	>981-1121	4	-	-	3	11	-	-	8	-	-	-	-
Monthly spending (USD)	<71	-	-	-	-	67	-	-	51	-	-	-	-
	71-141	-	-	-	-	22	-	-	17	-	-	-	-
	141-212	-	-	-	-	10	-	-	8	-	-	-	-
	212-282	-	-	-	-	12	-	-	9	-	-	-	-
	282-353	-	-	-	-	10	-	-	8	-	-	-	-
	>353	-	-	-	-	9	-	-	7	-	-	-	-
Service establishments available/in-demand	Haircare only	21	0.18	0.38	18	33	0.28	0.45	28	54	0.23	0.42	23
	Bodycare only	4	0.033	0.18	3	8	0.07	0.25	7	12	0.05	0.22	5
	Facerecare only	10	0.083	0.28	8	10	0.083	0.28	8	20	0.083	0.28	8
	Massage only	14	0.12	0.32	12	16	0.13	0.34	13	30	0.13	0.33	13
	Full Salon	33	0.28	0.45	27	32	0.27	0.44	27	65	0.27	0.45	27
	Spa/Salon	17	0.14	0.35	14	9	0.08	0.27	8	26	0.11	0.31	11
	Mobile	21	0.18	0.38	18	12	0.1	0.1	10	33	0.14	0.35	14
Duration of stay (years)	1-5	59	0.5	0.5	49	34	0.28	0.45	26	93	0.39	0.53	39
	6-10	14	0.12	0.32	12	14	0.12	0.32	11	28	0.12	0.32	12
	11-15	14	0.12	0.32	12	15	0.13	0.33	12	29	0.121	0.32	12
	16-20	11	0.09	0.29	9	16	0.133	0.34	12	27	0.112	0.31	11
	21-25	19	0.16	0.37	16	17	0.071	0.35	13	36	0.15	0.36	15
	26-30	9	0.08	0.27	8	18	0.15	0.36	14	27	0.112	0.31	11
	>31	3	0.03	0.12	3	16	0.133	0.34	12	19	0.08	0.28	8
Workers area of	Haircare only	38	0.32	0.47	32	66	0.55	0.5	55	104	0.43	0.49	43

service/customers regular service received	Bodycare only	13	0.11	0.31	11	4	0.033	0.18	3	17	0.071	0.26	7	
	Facecare only	13	0.11	0.31	11	6	0.05	0.22	5	19	0.08	0.28	8	
	Nailcare	11	0.09	0.29	9	9	0.08	0.27	8	20	0.083	0.28	8	
	Massage only	45	0.38	0.49	38	35	0.3	0.46	29	80	0.33	0.47	33	
Workers' Pay Contract	Hourly	31	-	-	26	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Daily	9	-	-	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Weekly	4	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Monthly	20	-	-	17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Per Service	56	-	-	47	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Work contract	Fulltime	85	-	-	71	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Part-time	14	-	-	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Freelance/Mobile	21	-	-	18	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Work status	Employee	72	-	-	60	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Owner-Worker	25	-	-	21	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Owner-Employer	23	-	-	19	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
					Workers: n=120				Customers: n=120				Total Sample size: n=240	

Table 5.2 Respondents Profile for business owners

Characteristic	Description	Business Owners			
		<i>f</i>	\bar{x}	<i>SD</i>	%
Respondents nationality	Thai	20	1.0	4.5	100
Sex	Female	15	0.75	3.4	75
	Male	5	0.25	1.1	25
Age (years)	<18	-	-	-	-
	18-20	1	0.05	0.2	5
	20-30	3	0.15	0.7	15
	30-40	5	0.25	1.1	25
	>40	11	0.25	2.5	55
Educational status	No Formal Education	-	-	-	-
	Primary	-	-	-	-
	Secondary	2	0.1	0.5	10
	Technical	5	0.25	1.1	25
	Vocational	6	0.3	1.3	30
	University	7	0.35	1.6	35
Duration of stay (years)	1-5	2	0.1	0.5	10
	6-10	2	0.1	0.5	10
	11-15	5	0.25	1.1	25
	16-20	5	0.25	1.1	25
	21-25	2	0.1	0.5	10
	26-30	2	0.1	0.5	10
	>31	2	0.1	0.5	10
Monthly income (USD)	<280	2	0.1	0.5	10
	280-421	5	0.25	1.1	25
	421-701	5	0.25	1.1	25
	701-981	4	0.2	0.9	20
	981-1121	2	0.1	0.5	10
	>981-1121	2	0.1	0.5	10
	Service establishment available/in-demand	Haircare only	2	0.1	0.5
Bodycare only		2	0.1	0.5	10
Facecare only		-	-	-	-
Massage only		3	0.15	0.7	15
Full Salon		4	0.2	0.9	18
Spa/Salon		5	0.25	1.1	25
Mobile		2	0.1	0.5	10

5.2 Available Training Programs of Training-Providers

One government skill development center, one polytechnic college, and two vocational colleges were surveyed. They are all registered to provide vocational skills training. All training providers surveyed only delivered basic courses (Table 5.3) for pre-employment with the expectation that the candidates will continue to self-learn through practice, and entry requirements are age 15 and from informal employment. The institutions' managers explain that the training duration is short due to low funding and this means they cannot afford to train for advanced skills and professionalism. They had no plans to include advanced and professional trainings in the near future. The trainees from these programs are not professionally certified; they only need to register and pass the skills standard test to qualify to practice. This is a basic certificate with which they often get employment or open their own enterprise.

Table 5.3 Available Training Programs in the institutions surveyed

Training Provider	Available Training	Duration	Level
Provider A	Hairdressing	1-6 weeks	Basic
	Haircutting/Barbering	1-6 weeks	Basic
	Thai/Foot Massage	6-16 weeks (none in 2016)	Basic
	Make-up	Coming Soon	Basic
Provider B	Hairdressing	150 hours	Basic
	Haircutting/Barbering	150 hours	Basic
	Thai/Foot Massage	6 weeks	Basic
	Make-up/Face Treatment	150 hours	Basic
	Nail coating/fixing	150 hours	Basic
Provider C	Not Available	Not Available	Basic
Provider D	Hairdressing	1-6 weeks	Basic
	Haircutting/Barbering	1-6 weeks	Basic
	Thai/Foot Massage	6-16 weeks	Basic
	Make-up/Face Treatment	1-6 weeks	Basic
	Nail coating/fixing	1-6 weeks	Basic

5.3 Impact of Skill Upgrading on Performance of IHBSWs

<i>Research Objective</i>	<i>Research Question</i>	<i>Result</i>	<i>Related Paper</i>
<i>To determine if skill upgrading is perceived to be able to improve performance quality of informal economy workers</i>	<i>How can skill upgrading be used to improve skill performance of informal economy workers?</i>	<i>Skill upgrading has high impact on skill performance</i>	<i>Paper 1 (Appendix _): Skills Upgrading for Performance Improvement of Informal Economy Workers in Thailand</i>

A total of 71% of survey respondents perceive that skill upgrading has an impact on skill performance, while 62% perceive that skill upgrading will improve performance and productivity, 96% perceive that it will improve income and clientele and 66% perceive that it will improve total wellbeing. However, it seems customers are more inclined to this perception than the workers. This is indicative of the fact that customers desire better or more services than they currently get from the workers and they perceive that skills upgrading can bring the workers performance up to par excellence. Meanwhile, 66% of total respondents agree that IHBSWs in the study area need skill upgrading, even though the workers are more inclined towards this direction than the customers. Interviews reveal that the customers are less enthusiastic because they do not trust the quality of trainings available to the service-providers, while the workers argue that if they could get better training they would be willing to pursue skill upgrading. This is supported by the fact that 72% of the IHBSWs desired to upgrade their skills while 56% of customers desired upgraded services. But, 52% of customers were willing to pay more for upgraded services, while 44% were ambivalent; and interviews revealed that the quality and type of skill service will determine the willingness to pay more. Perceptions of skill upgrading impact on income and clientele were the highest (96%) (Figure 5.1) and this implies that income and clientele-base were seen to be dependent on improved skills performance gained through upgrading skills.

During interviews, respondents argued that skill upgrading will make service quality better, trendier services will be available, customer satisfaction and loyalty will be high, new customers will be attracted and customers will visit more often, which will increase clientele base and then it will add to experience and practice while businesses can stay open, employ more people and afford to pay higher salaries. However, workers were hesitant to go for skills upgrading training because they are often cannot afford the

cost and time required. They further argued that they would have to charge more for their services and since there was no guarantee that customers would be willing to pay for services, then their investment would have been in vain and they would lose customers at the same time. But, all respondents were equivocal in their support for the positive impact upgrading skills have on the workers.

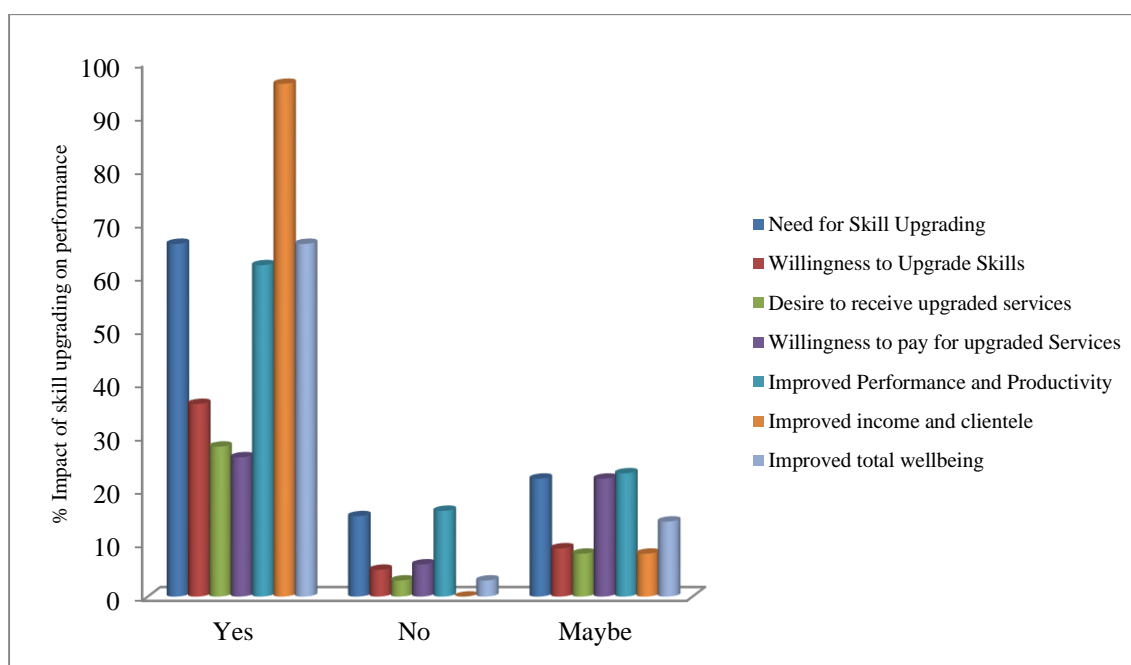


Figure 5.1 Impact of Skills Upgrading on Performance

5.4 Skill Acquisition Process

<i>Research Objective</i>	<i>Research Question</i>	<i>Result</i>	<i>Related Paper</i>
<i>To identify the skills acquisition process of informal hair and beauty services workers in Hat Yai city</i>	<i>How do informal hair and beauty services workers in Hat Yai city go about skills acquisition?</i>	<i>Skill acquisition process of informal hair and beauty services workers in Hat Yai city is primarily basic.</i> <i>Skill training available for informal hair and beauty services workers in Hat Yai city is primarily basic and inadequate.</i>	Paper 1 (Appendix _): <i>Reaping just what is Sown: Low-Skills And Low-Productivity of Informal Economy Workers and the Skill Acquisition Process in Developing Countries</i>

5.4.1 Quality of Skill Acquisition Process

36% of the respondents acquired their work skills through apprenticeship and interviews revealed that these apprenticeships were done within salons and spas. 19% and 17%, however, were trained on-the-job (OJB) and at a fashion and beauty training school, while government skill training centers provided for only 13% of the survey participants. Only a small proportion learnt their skills from technical/polytechnic/vocational colleges; indicating the small role of vocational institutions in this occupational group (Figure 5.2).

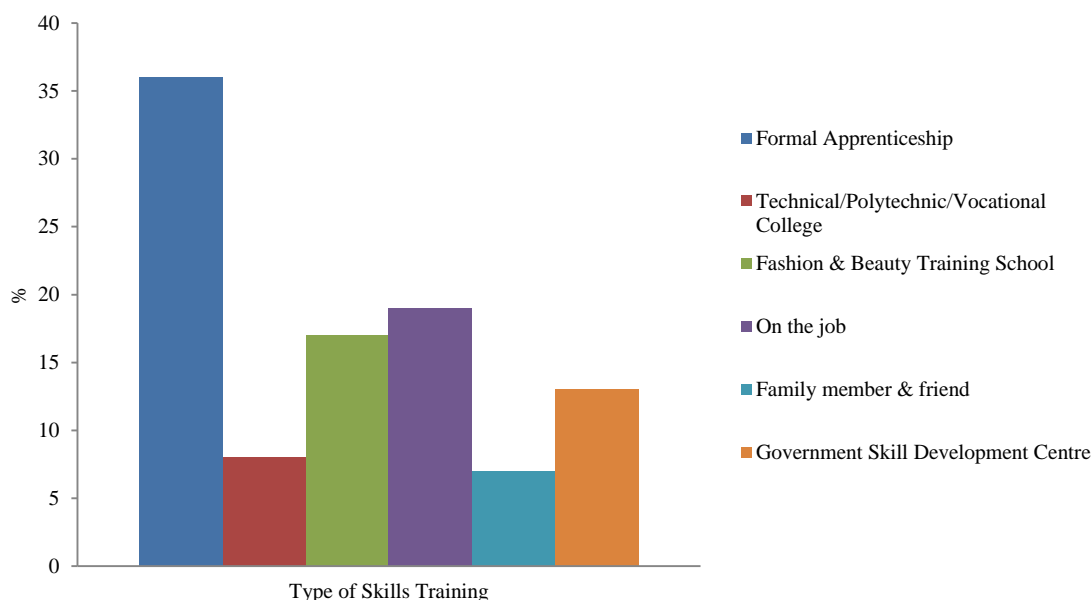


Figure 5.2 Skill Training Providers

Only two out of the four vocational institutions surveyed offered hair and beauty courses (and they were short courses of a maximum of 150hours), and one had plans to introduce a short course in facecare in March 2016 while the fourth did not have any related program and no plans for the future even though their student demonstration hotel provided massage services to the public. Interviews also revealed that some skills are acquired from online media such as Facebook, YouTube as well as fashion and beauty books and magazines, watching other more experienced colleagues and simple regular

practice. These self-learning acquisition processes seem to be more prevalent among the IHBSWs who have practiced longer, while the other options are for learning basic skills. Understandably so, as 61% of the IEWs surveyed only had 1-6 months of cumulative training and 26% had only 18-24 months (Figure 5.3) while 60% of them acquired just basic certified training, 23% had no certification at all and only 8% and 9% had intermediate and advanced certified training respectively and these were for Thai-massage skills (Figure 5.4).

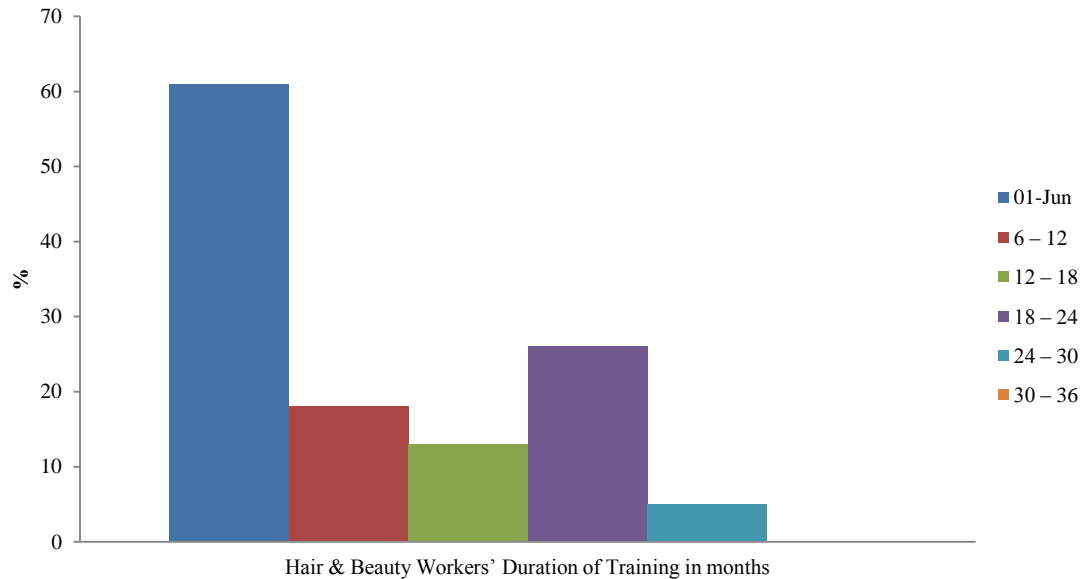


Figure 5.3: Cumulative Training Duration

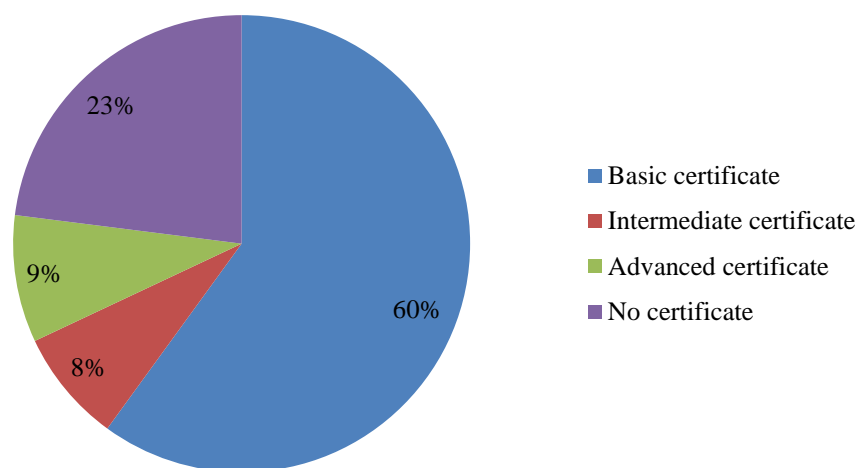


Figure 5.4 Skill Training Certificates

5.4.2 Quality of Available Training

Only three out of the four surveyed government-registered training-providers had programs for hair and beauty services. They were all at basic level with duration of 1-6 weeks. These training programs include hairdressing, haircutting/barbering, makeup/face-treatment, nail-coating/fixing and Thai/foot massage. Meanwhile, interviews with representatives of the institutions revealed that only pre-employment trainings were provided because it was expected that learners will continue to self-learn through experience and practice. They explained that training duration was short due to low funding which makes them unable to train for advanced skills and professionalism, even though they would love to and are quite capable of doing so. They, however, have no intention of including advanced or professional courses in the future. Also, the trainers are not certified to any standard qualification to train, they only need to have passed the standard test of the Department of Skill Development (DSD) to qualify. Training candidates receive a basic certificate with which they go job-hunting or open their own operations.

Below are some quotes from the interviews with two representatives of the Training Providers (we have used pseudo-names for confidentiality).

When asked:

a) Will you be willing to provide advanced and specialized skills for IEWs (IHBSWs)?

Bay: “We will be willing to provide higher level and specialized trainings for the IEWs if we were well-equipped and well-funded. But, the current trainings we have are only for basic courses and we cannot train for professionalism because of inadequate funding.”

Bee: “Yes, of course. We are planning some training for specialized aspects like make-up and hair style skills to suit individual face shapes. ... No, we do not have enough funding so we can only offer a few basic courses. For now the trainees have to find more knowledge and experience through self-learning and practice.”

5.5 Skill Levels Rating

<i>Research Objective</i>	<i>Research Question</i>	<i>Result</i>	<i>Related Paper</i>
<i>To determine the current skills levels of informal hair and beauty services workers in Hat Yai city</i>	<i>What are the current skills levels of the informal hair and beauty services workers in Hat Yai city?</i>	<i>Skill levels of informal hair and beauty services workers in Hat Yai city is primarily basic i.e. Shu level. Customers are not satisfied with service quality of workers in Hat Yai city.</i>	Paper 1 (Appendix _): <i>Reaping just what is Sown: Low-Skills And Low-Productivity of Informal Economy Workers and the Skill Acquisition Process in Developing Countries</i>

The mean average for IHBSWs work skill levels from the survey was 68% for basic, 19% for intermediate and 13% for advanced. 68% of the workers indicated that skill levels were basic and customers (81%) and business owners (56%) agree (Figure 5.5). This can be explained by the scarcity of trainings above basic skill levels and the short duration of most of these courses (Table 5.3). 35% of the IHBSWs have learned new skills within the past 1-2 years and 17% 2-4 years ago while more than 40% have not received any training in the last 4 years.

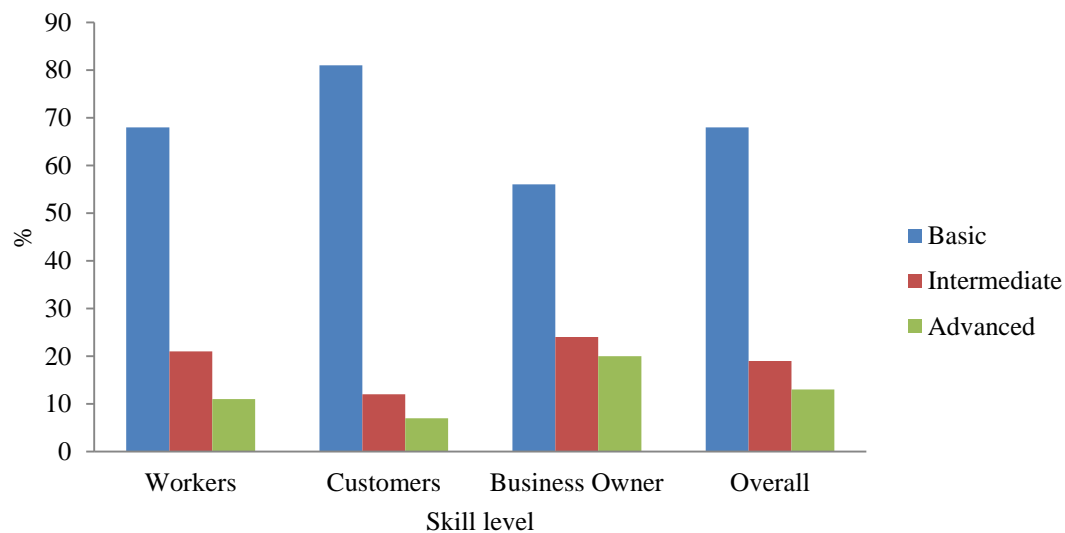


Figure 5.5 Workers Skill Levels Rating

Meanwhile, only 39% have 1-2 years working experience and practice with training while 37% have being working within the same period without training. In fact, 12% have worked without training for 6-8 years while only 22% have being practicing their skills after training for over 10 years. Those with training did so 1-2 years ago (35%) and over 10 years (14%) (Figure 5.6). They also bemoaned the slow economy, which they believe affects their clientele and government expenditure on training.

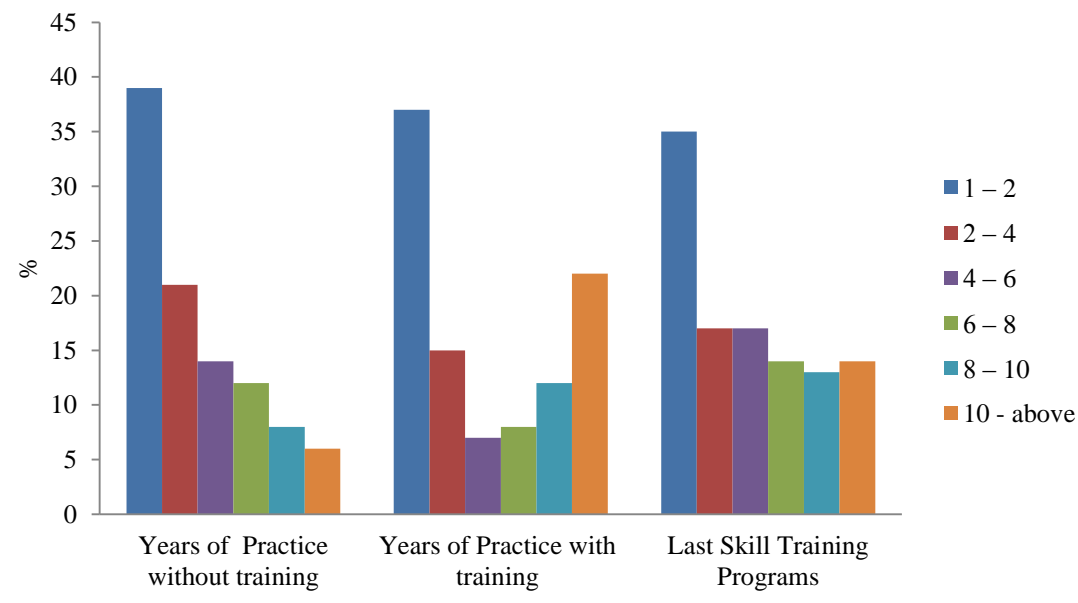


Figure 5.6 Years of practice/training interval

The survey also revealed that the adequacy and availability of skills are weak. For instance, the mean average for available skills, as indicated by the IHBSWs, customers and business-owners, was 44% and 60% desired to gain new skills (Figure 5.7). Interviews and observations support these findings as customers mainly had low expectations and so do not really know what they can demand because the servings are slim.

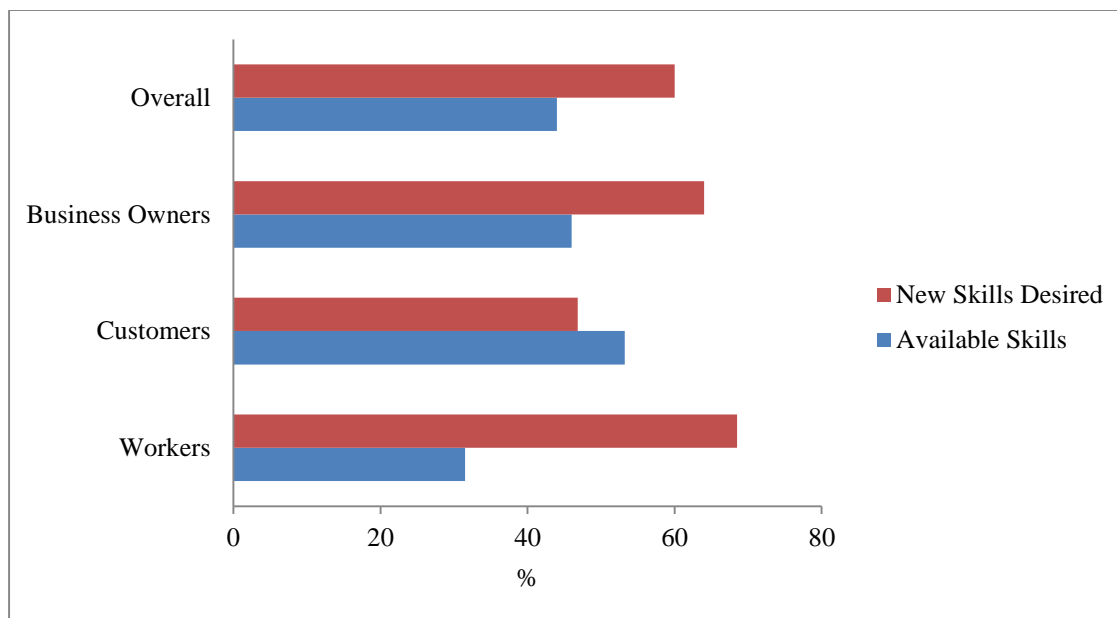


Figure 5.7 Available/Desired Work Skills/Services

5.5.1 Customer Satisfaction with Workers' Skills Levels

During interviews, majority of the customers expressed dissatisfaction with IHBSWs service quality and attention to standards, arguing that most of them are not professional. Some of the customers claimed that there are a few salons, for instance, with highly skilled workers 'who know what they are doing', but these are mostly the franchised salons. In fact, a few of the interviewees were vehement in their protest as they said these IHBSWs just go and get a few days or weeks of training and then open salons/spas without really knowing what they were doing. It was also observed that a lot of foreigners who visited some of these salons left disappointed because they could not receive the service and quality they required. This gives support to the survey results, which indicated that a large number of the customers surveyed sometimes get their hair and beauty services from outside Hat-Yai even though 31% never do. But then, according to 51% of the respondents (customers), Hat-Yai IHBSWs never exceed expectations and 38% believe that their services never match up to global standards while 29% often change their service provider due to dissatisfaction (Figure 5.8).

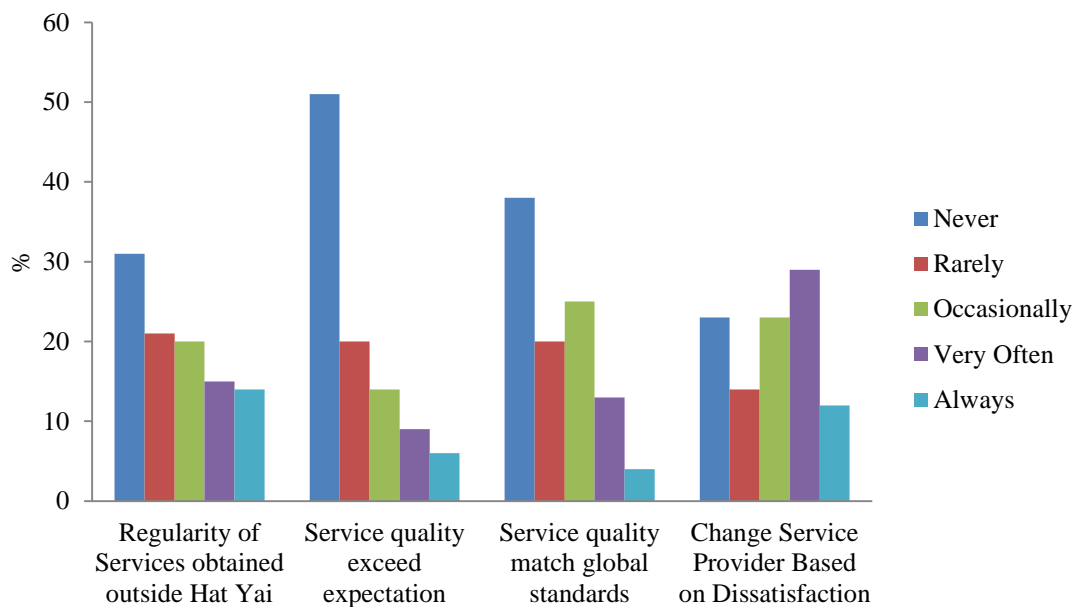


Figure 5.8 Customers Rating of Service Quality

On the issue of rating IHBSWs understanding of service quality and standards, customers were quite equivocal during interviews. They agreed that most of these IEWs do not have an understanding of the intricacies of their work. They also pointed out that these workers use tools and materials as well as chemicals they do not understand. An interviewee explained that matching skin tone to color and treatment as well as determining hair treatment per individual condition is a non-available skill. In fact, all interviewees wished that they could receive hair treatment services in Hat-Yai. These closely match the survey results, which indicated that most of the respondents do not perceive the IHBSWs understand the issues of service quality and standards, but were neutral on overall satisfaction while agreeing that the IHBSWs need more and better training. Interestingly, 17% and 31% of the customers surveyed agree and strongly agree that they would be willing to pay more for higher quality and standard services; only 12% disagreed while 18% were neutral (Figure 5.9). Interviews also revealed that customers were willing to pay more, especially for hair treatment, hand/foot/nail treatment and facecare.

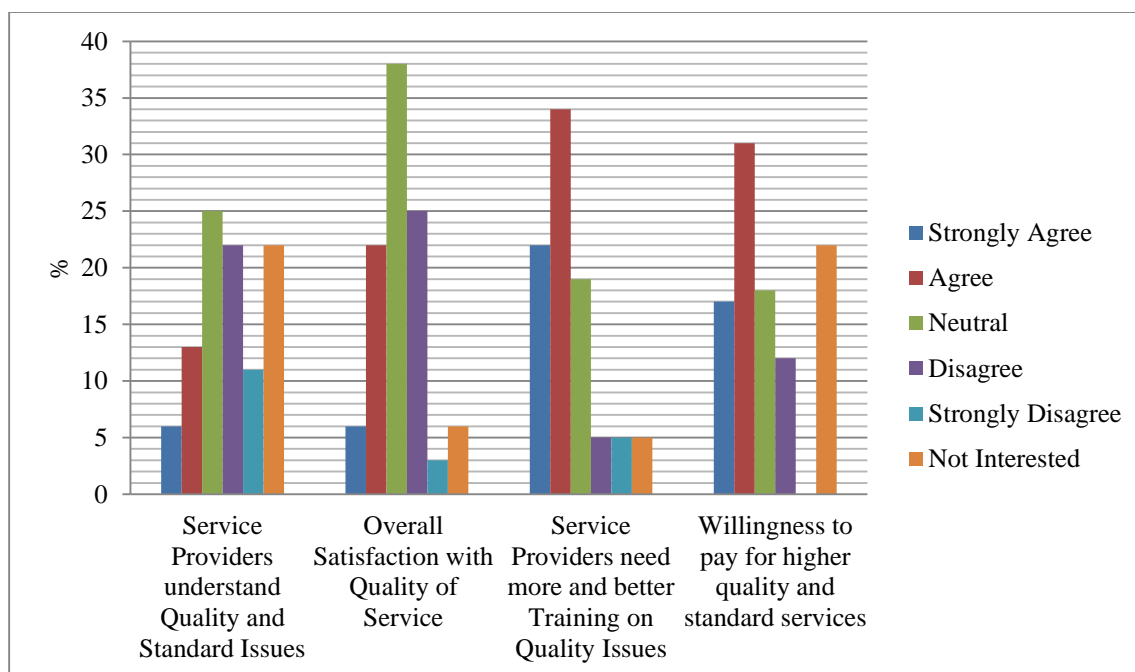


Figure 5.9 Customers' perception of Informal Hair and Beauty Services Workers understanding of quality control and assurance

Also, results from interviews, surveys, observations and documents/archival records revealed that the IHBSWs desire to receive better quality training, but challenges of training cost, provision, quality and time constraints hold them back (See Paper 1/2). Training providers also indicated that they would be willing to deliver advanced and professional trainings if they had the funding to do so (see Paper 2).

5.6 Skill Upgrading Needs and their Consequences

Research Objective

To determine the skills upgrading needs of informal hair and beauty services workers in Hat Yai city

Research Question

What are the current skills upgrading needs of informal hair and beauty services workers in Hat Yai city? What are the consequences?

Result

Most skills and skill sets need upgrading, except the skill set of Haircare; however hair and scalp treatment.

Consequences were viewed particularly as loss of income, customers, confidence and businesses.

Related Paper

Paper 1: Skills Upgrading Needs of Informal Hair & Beauty Services Workers in Hat Yai Municipality, Thailand

5.6.1 Skill Upgrading Need per Skill

Skills like hair-styling (-0.82) and hair-cutting/barbering (-0.23) compared to cutting-edge hair-styling (-1.5) and cutting-edge hair-cutting/barbering (-1.42). Also, facial hair removal was at -0.63 while cutting-edge facial edge removal was -1.37. Meanwhile, evaluate hand/feet/nail condition (-1.14), determine treatment/products based on individual condition (-1.04) and determine nail polish/ design based on individual skin condition, tone & personality (-1.34) all had related final scores. Evaluate skin type & condition to determine treatment (-0.79), Cleansing/Scrubbing (-1.47) and Steaming/Wrapping (-1.37) also had final scores. Design/plan/administer massage therapy for clients (-1.37) and pre-natal massage (-0.68) had final scores. Tanning was at 0.02.

We then assume that a differential from -0.75 (75%) indicates need for skill upgrading (i.e. skill gap). Table 5.4 presents the summary results showing some skills' differential scores and Table 5.5 shows some skills' Final Score.

Table 5.4 Summary results of some Individual Skills Differential Score

S/N	Skill Set	Skill	Final Score
1	General	Creativity/originality	-1.52
		Cutting edge personal styling	-1.61
2	Haircare	Hair/scalp treatment	-2.07
		Hair pieces fixing/Wig making	-1.73
3	Facecare	Multi-cultural make up	-1.23
		Evaluate facial condition	-1.323
4	Nailcare	Nail art and design	-1.7
		Artificial nail fixing/maintenance	-1.61
5	Bodycare	Create/design body/face art	-1.01
		Fixing body accessories	-1.02
6	Massage	Determine massage therapy based on individual conditions	-1.12
		Design/plan/administer massage therapy for clients	-1.41

Related skills like English language (-0.86), communication (-1.07) and listening/speaking (-1) all had high gaps. Analysis/counselling (-1.25), consultation/advice (-1.49) and Therapy (-1.61) also showed high gaps. Safety and health procedures and practices (-0.92) as well as chemistry and biology (1.48) also showed high gaps. Other

related skills were multicultural hair management (-1.56), cutting-edge hair-styling (-1.5) and cutting-edge hair-cutting/barbering (-1.42) with high gaps. Color management and design (-1.09), facial treatment (-0.74) and personality make-up (-0.77) also had high gaps. Determine nail polish/ design based on individual skin condition, tone & personality (-1.34), artificial nail-fixing/maintenance (-1.61) and French/American manicure (1.83) also had high gaps. Other related skills were evaluate skin-type and condition to determine treatment (-0.79), skin waxing/peels (-0.85), cleansing/scrubbing (-1.47) and steaming/wrapping (-1.37). Deep tissue massage (-1.23), hydrotherapy & aroma therapy/hot stone massage (-0.76), orthopedic/sport massage (-1.16) and acupuncture/acupressure (-1.79) also had related high gaps.

Table 5.5 Summary results showing some skills with high Final Score

Skill Set	Individual Skills	Final Score
General	Creativity/originality	-1.51
	Consultation/Advice	-1.49
	Chemistry/biology	1.48
Haircare	Hair/scalp treatment	-2.08
	Hair pieces fixing/Wig making	-1.73
	Hair weaving/braiding	-1.63
Facecare	Correctional makeup	-1.22
	Multi-cultural make up	-1.33
	Cutting edge facial hair removal	-1.37
Nailcare	Evaluate hand/feet/nail condition	-1.14
	Determine treatment/products based on condition	-1.04
	Nail art and design	-1.7
Bodycare	Create/design body/face art	-1.45
	Fixing body accessories	-1.48
	Plan & manage treatment/therapy	-1.28
Massage	Evaluate clients' physical mental & emotional condition	-1.17
	Determine massage therapy based on individual conditions	-1.43
	Cutting edge massage	-1.94

5.6.2 Skill Upgrading Need per Skill Set

We assumed that a final score of -0.6/0.6 (60%) indicates a high gap for that skill set (see Table 5.6). Table 5.7 shows the Overall Scores for all the skill sets.

Table 5.6 Showing differential score for each Skill Set

Skill Set	Differential Score			
	W.AS – C.AS	W.AS - W.DS	W.AS – C.DS	C.DS – W.DS
General	-0.24	0.42	0.3	0.12
Haircare	-0.27	0.23	-0.074	0.304
Facecare	-0.67	-0.74	-0.07	-0.67
Nailcare	-0.53	-0.08	0.33	-0.41
Bodycare	-0.36	-0.683	-0.34	-0.683
Massage	-0.21	-0.81	-0.49	-0.32

Table 5.7 Shows scores of Final Scores of Skill Sets

Skill Set	Final Overall Score
General	0.6
Haircare	0.19
Facecare	-2.15
Nailcare	-0.69
Bodycare	-2.066
Massage	-1.83

5.6.3 Skill areas customers perceive are needed in Hat Yai by order of Most Urgent to Least Urgent (1-15)

Qualitative data was used to support the above results by asking respondents in the survey and during interviews to state the skill areas that most need upgrading according to urgency. The results were then thematized and quantitized by frequency count to produce a form of ranking (Table 5.8).

Table 5.8 Showing results for skill upgrading areas according to urgency

	%	Rank
New styles and cuts		1
Hair treatment for individual hair and condition		2
Nailcare		3
Creativity and originality		4
Understanding hair products, especially for individual hair and condition		5
Multi-racial hair styling and cut		6
Hair color and highlights		7
Facial wrinkle removal		8
Understanding of clients personal and individual styles for hair and make-up		9
Pre-natal massage		10
Orthopedic/sport massage		11
Personal style for make-up		12
Hair waxing and curls		13
Body and facial treatment		14
Professional analysis and advise for individual conditions (i.e. hair, face, body and massage treatment)		15
Note: These were generated from interviews and survey responses to qualitative items on the questionnaires.		

5.6.4 Consequences of Skills Upgrading Needs

To identify some consequences based on direct interpretation, we asked respondents some probing questions during interviews. Below are some quotes from interviews with customers, workers, business-owners and training-providers (Table 5.9).

Table 5.9 Shows Interview responses

Question: What happens when your skills don't match up to customers' demands?		
Interviewees	Name	Responses
IHBSWs	<i>Mia</i>	"We may not want to pay and then we lose our customers. This will make us to lose money."
	<i>Nun</i>	"Customers are not happy and we won't make enough money; and when my customer is not satisfied, I feel terrible."
	<i>Boss</i>	"I feel that the quality of my service is not good enough and I feel bad. My customers may go elsewhere and feel not satisfied and maybe even pay less. If I have more and better skills, then I can ask for more money and this will improve my income because I will also have more customers. ... Yes, it will improve my self-esteem because I like my work and I want to please my customers. "
	<i>Diva</i>	"Customers will go to another place and when there are no customers and money is short, it cannot be good for workers' self-esteem. I don't know how this will be, but I think maybe it can affect attitude."
	<i>James</i>	"It can affect a lot because when I improved my skills and added new styles and services in my salon where I work, I got more customers and they pay more for the new services, so I earn more money, I know that if I learn more new skills that I will get more customers and more money. ... Really, I feel great every time my customers praise my work and when I earn more, I'm happy. ... Self-esteem has to do with confidence, so I think when my skills are improved, I will be more confident and this will improve my self-esteem."
Customers	<i>Charis</i>	"Then the service-provider is unable to provide required services and earn more. I will surely visit less regularly and that is less money."
	<i>Iman</i>	"With improved skills, they will be able to offer more services and customers will be more satisfied and they will pay more. But, when the skills are inadequate, well., it's the opposite."
	<i>Sana</i>	"If they upgrade their skills, then they will have more customers and can offer different types of services. They can also charge extra for their upgraded services. With increased services and more customers then they will make more money. But, without it, they can lose customers and money and this will affect their thinking and attitude"
	<i>Salam</i>	"I like it when my service-provider does a very good job on me. But, when the quality is below standard, I'm not happy and may never visit that place again."
	<i>Jamie</i>	"They will have less customers, make less money and just not be happy, I guess. This can affect them in every aspect of their lives."
Business-Owners	<i>Miss</i>	Upgraded skills will attract new customers and keep old ones because of improved quality and type of services. This will lead to increase in income because more customers mean more money; and if they charge higher, then they get even more income. This is good for the business too, and even for the customers. Of course, then, the workers feel good about themselves and take better care of themselves and their families. Also, when the workers are happy they work even better. But, when required skills are not available, there will be few customers, not enough money and life will be hard."
	<i>Mister</i>	"Quality skills will improve customer satisfaction and when customers are satisfied, they will come more often and bring more customers. This will keep

the business open and even employ more people while paying higher salary to the workers and also affect the workers positively in their attitude, relationships and life in general. They will surely earn more, especially those like me who own their own business. But, when customers are not satisfied, all these can be negative.”

During observations of 4 different operations in two separate weeks covering 7 skills drawn from the survey, a total of 275 customers visited for different services. 31 of them were not satisfied with the services while 123 of them did not get the service they required. These are presented in Figures 5.10-5.13.

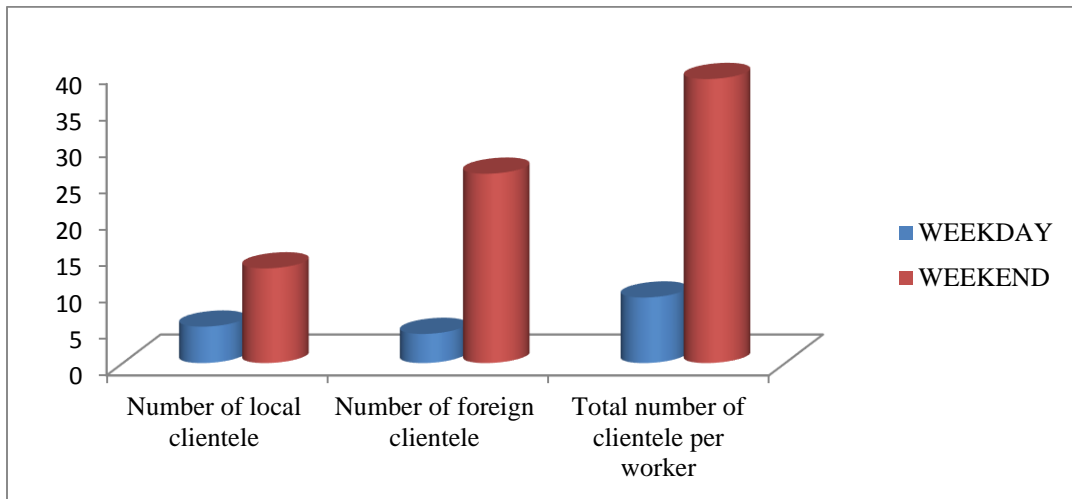


Figure 5.10: Showing Number/Status of Customers that came into the four salons during one-week observation period

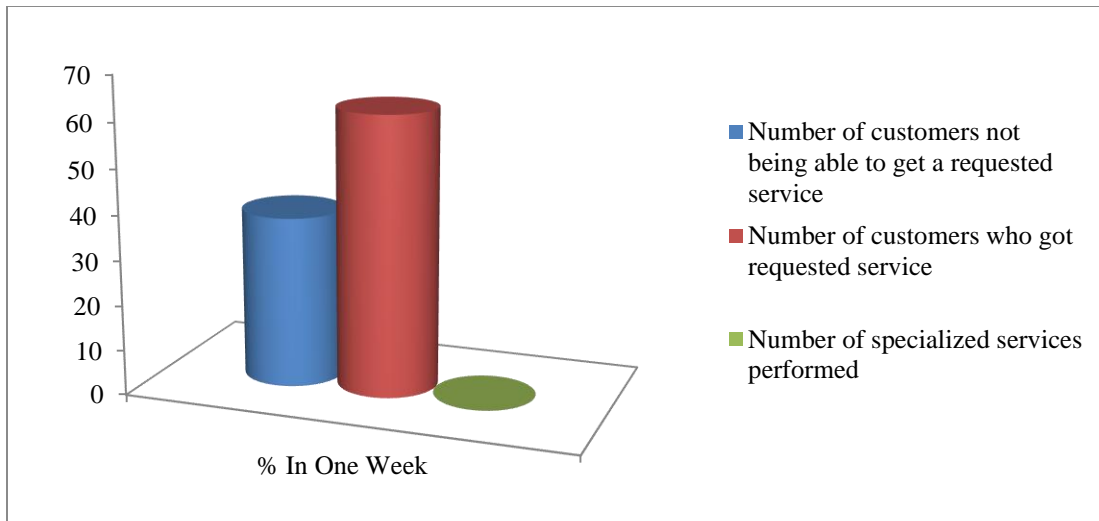


Figure 5.11 Showing results of percentage of customers who Got and Not Got desired services in Four Salons for one week

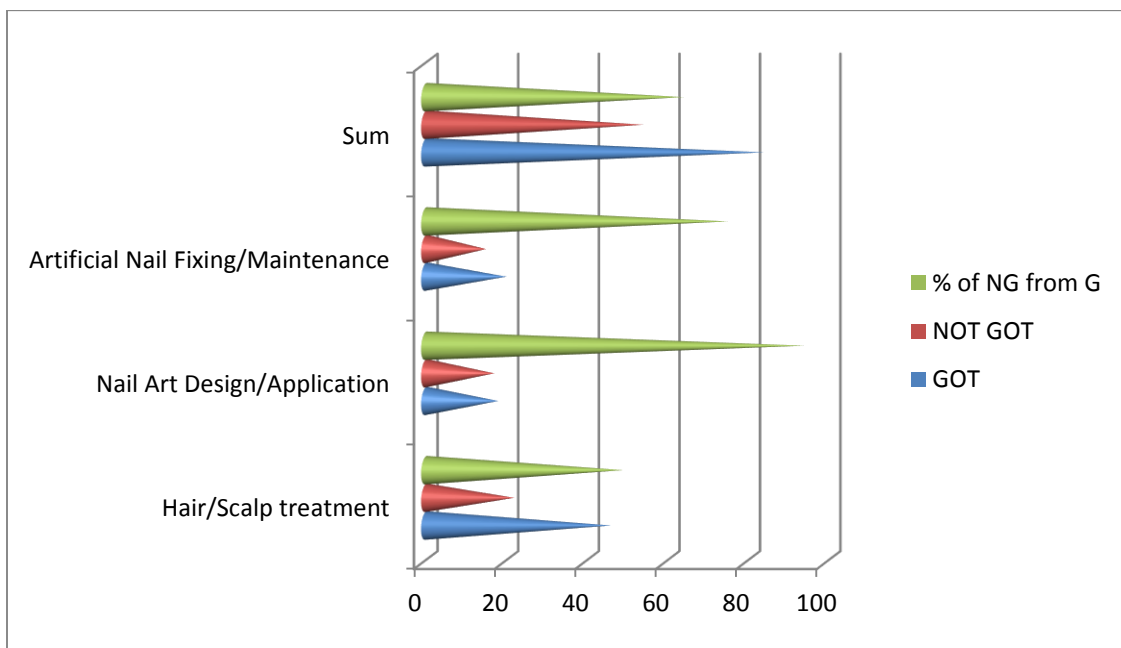


Figure 5.12 Showing Summary Results of some skills with high gaps from observations of services that were Got and Not Got

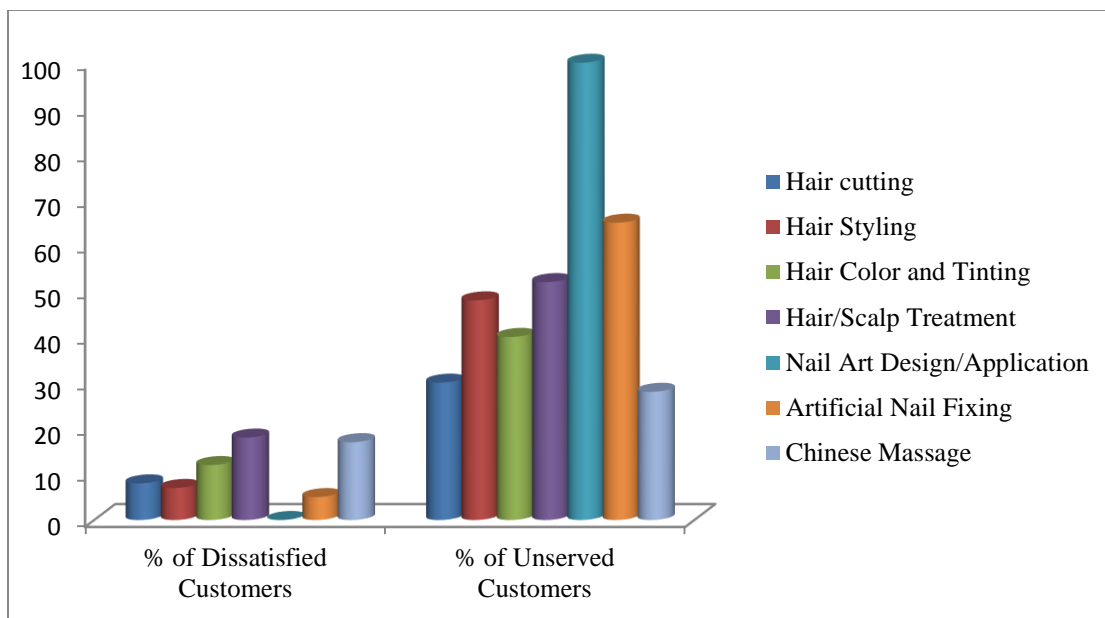


Figure 5.13 Showing Percentage of Dissatisfied and Unserved Customers during observation periods

Figure 5.14 reveals that 36% of IHBSWs obtained their initial skills training from formal apprenticeships, 19% on-the-job, 13% from Government skill development centers, 12% from fashion and beauty schools and 5% and 8% were initially trained from upper-secondary and vocational colleges respectively. This implies that the upper-secondary and vocational colleges do not cater for these occupational skill sets as most of these workers completed secondary level education. Meanwhile, most IHBSWs in the survey had been practicing for 1-2 years (37%) and 10 years and above (22%) and about 27% for 2-10 years combined. The indication is that they have the experience to provide reliable information on the status of informal hair and beauty services and training in Hat Yai.

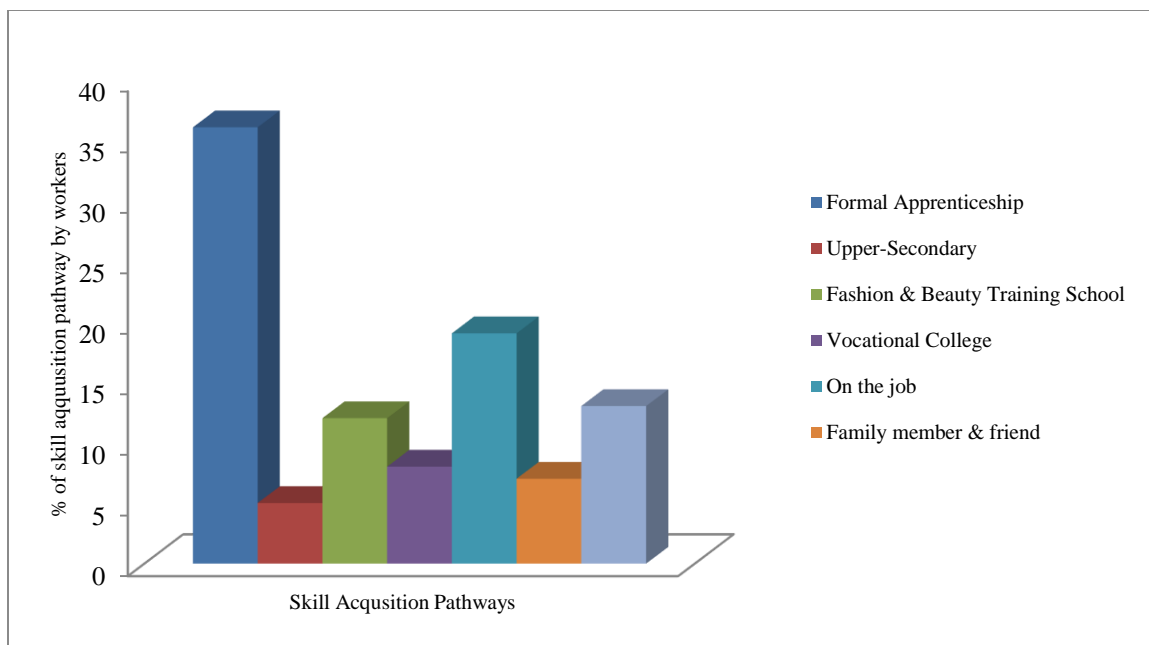


Figure 5.14: Types of Initial Skills Training for IHBSWs

5.7 Skill Performance Quality

Research Objective

To assess the skill performance levels of informal hair and beauty services workers in Hat Yai city

Research Question

What are the current skills performance levels of these informal workers?

Result

Overall skill performance level was perceived to be at novice level, but General Skills was at fair level.

Related Paper

Paper 1 (Appendix _): Skills Upgrading for Performance Improvement of Informal Economy Workers in Thailand

5.7.1 Skills Performance Level

The skill performance rating by both IHBSWs and their customers were paired in order to derive single scores per individual skill for each level. Skills performance was generally perceived to be fair for most skills in the General Skills set, but novice for most skills in the other skill sets (haircare, facecare, nailcare, bodycare and massage). The results of the perceptual paired ratings estimation (PPRE) shows some specific skills performance levels in the six different skill sets (Table 5). Most skills in the General skill set were rated fair by both groups and the pairing of the assessments also reflected a fair judgement as can be seen in Table 5. However, more customers perceived that IHBSWs

were at Very Poor and Poor levels than at Very Good and Excellent levels; contrary to the perceptions of the IHBSWs. For instance, percentage of the PPRE for cutting edge personal styling was 13% for Very-Poor, however, 10% of IHBSWs and 28% of customers perceive performance to be Very Poor (Table 5.10).

On the other hand, IHBSWs perceive skill performance to be lower than the perception of customers, while PPRs show these other skills more at novice level. Table 5.10 shows the PPRE from levels 1-6 and the highest rating score was considered as the SPL. For example, business management had 61% as the highest score, which was for ‘fair’ level and creativity/originality skill also had ‘fair’ as the level with the highest score. On the other hand, multicultural hair management and make up had ‘novice’ as the level with the highest score (38% and 43% respectively). Interviews also revealed that customers were highly dissatisfied with performance because they argued that the IHBSWs need more skills training, particularly in new, trendy and more personalized services. Customers want service that attend to their individual uniqueness and treatment conditions, but do not often get such service in Hat Yai. Meanwhile, the IHBSWs argue that they mostly learn new skills from social media like YouTube and Facebook and so have the challenge of really mastering these skills as they should.

Table 5.10: Paired perceptual selected skills performance levels

Skills	Performance Levels %						Final SPL
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
<i>General</i>							
Business management	8	16	61	19	4	0	Fair
Creativity/Originality	10	17	45	24	6	2	Fair
Cutting edge personal-styling	13	23	49	13	5	0.4	Fair
Consultation/Analysis/Therapy	11	22	55	10	5	2	Fair
Safety & health procedures & practices	6	12	53	23	9	0.8	Fair
<i>Haircare</i>							
Multi-cultural hair management	38	36	18	5	2	3	Novice
Hair pieces fixing/Wig making	41	33	20	3	3	0.4	Novice
Hair weaving/braiding	40	20	20	5	0.8	3	Novice
Hair/scalp treatment	37	29	22	9	5	2	Novice
Cutting edge hairstyling	39	34	17	5	3	3	Novice
<i>Facecare</i>							
Cutting edge facial hair removal	43	20	16	4	2	3	Novice
Multi-cultural make up	44	23	13	5	2	3	Novice
Facial treatment	46	22	16	7	2	1	Novice

Evaluate facial condition	45	22	18	5	4	3	Novice
Face wrinkle removal	43	21	15	9	3	3	Novice
<i>Nailcare</i>							
French/American Manicure/Pedicure	43	19	12	5	3	1	Novice
Global manicure & pedicure	38	22	17	7	3	1	Novice
Nail art and design	40	22	13	5	2	0.8	Novice
Artificial nail fixing/maintenance	40	17	23	5	2	0.8	Novice
Determine treatment/products based on condition	38	22	23	3	2	0	Novice
<i>Bodycare</i>							
Evaluate skin type/condition to determine treatment	42	21	15	6	0.8	0.4	Novice
Apply Body/Face art	50	20	15	3	1	2	Novice
Fixing body accessories	44	20	15	6	0.8	2	Novice
Skin treatment	46	17	15	5	0.8	2	Novice
Plan & manage treatment/therapy	50	22	13	4	3	2	Novice
<i>Massage</i>							
Evaluate clients' physical mental & emotional condition	44	24	22	6	1	0.8	Novice
Determine massage therapy based on individual conditions	43	24	21	8	2	3	Novice
Design/plan/administer massage therapy for clients	42	24	21	7	2	0.8	Novice
Cutting edge massage	51	25	8	0.8	0	0.8	Novice
Electronic massage	43	19	13	3	3	0.4	Novice

Note: 1=Novice/Very Poor; 2=Advanced-Beginner/Poor; 3=Competent/Fair; 4=Proficient/Good; 5=Expert/Very Good; 6=Master/Excellent: SPL = skill performance level

5.7.2 Skill Set Performance Level

In the case of the PPRE for the skill performance levels of the skill sets, General skills were shown to be majorly at Fair level while all the other skill sets (haircare, facecare, nailcare, bodycare and massage) were at Novice level (Figure 5.15). This is evident in the fact that most skills had the highest PPRE level rating at either or novice and so it followed that the skill sets will be patterned in the same trend. Interviews revealed that the challenge was more in the fact that customers do not want to spend time and money on services they can do for themselves, but the workers mainly operate with basic skills. For example, Thai customers who were more in number argued that they did not need Thai massage since they can get it at home, but they were willing to pay for health-related massage services like pre-natal, orthopedic, deep tissue and specific massage therapy that addresses their individual conditions. They lamented that most IHBSWs in Hat Yai treat all their customers the same as if all people were the same because they did not have the skill and knowledge to consult and handle for individualized conditions. Other nationals,

especially the tourists, complain that most of the workers do not understand how to handle multicultural hair and skin tones and this makes it difficult for the customers to patronize their services.

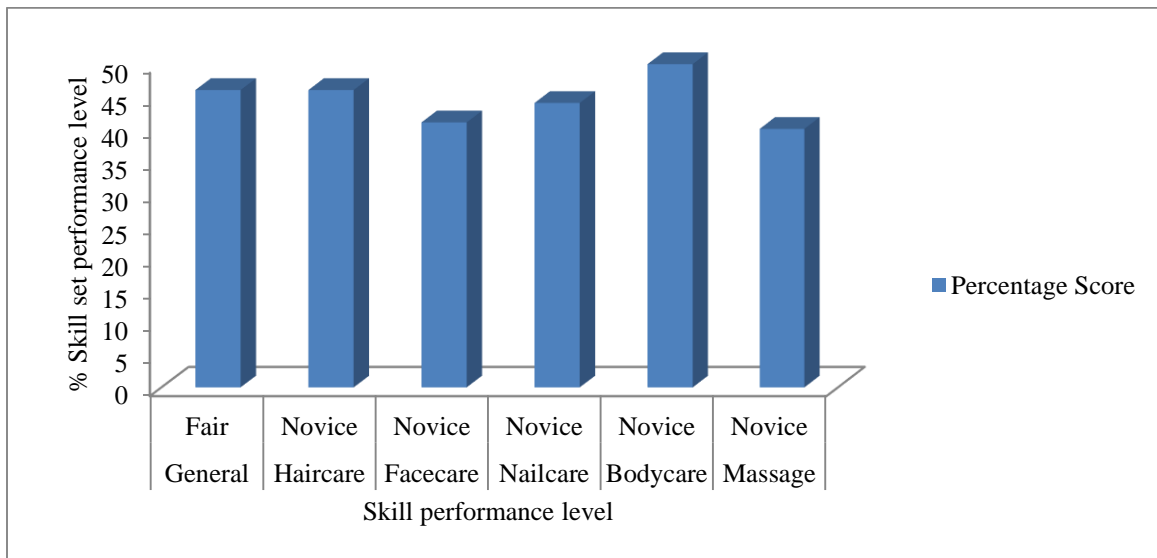


Figure 5.15: Paired perceptual skill set performance level

5.7.3 Overall Skill Set Performance Level

The overall results for the PPRE (which include both workers and customers' ratings) revealed that performance is highly perceived to be at novice level (35%), although performance level of General Skills set is considered to be more at fair level (Figure 5.16).

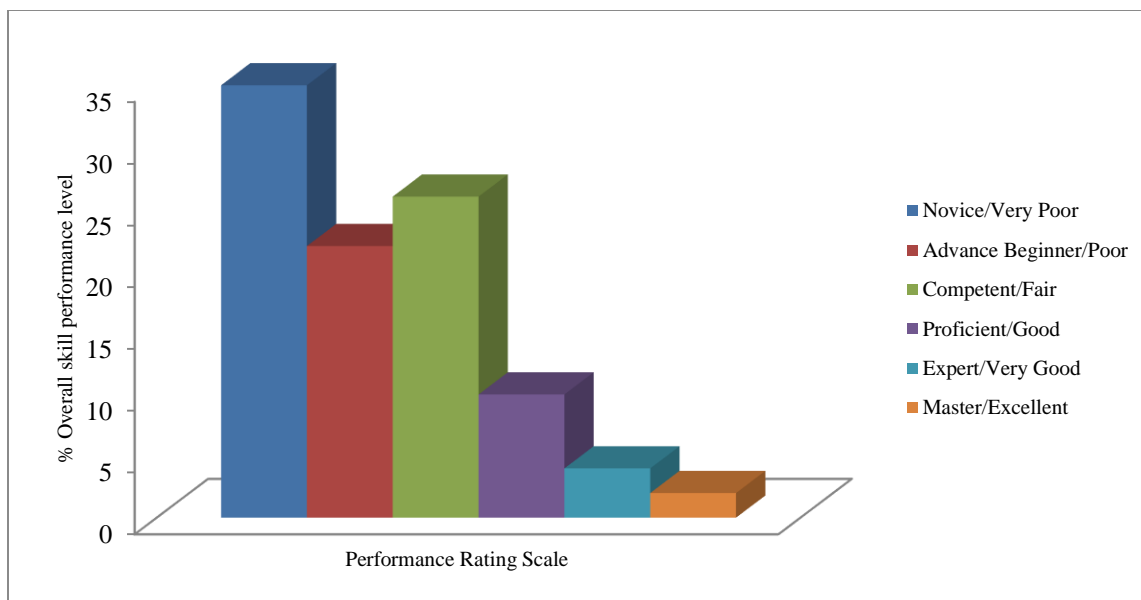


Figure 5.16: Overall skill performance level

Table 5.11 also indicates that the IHBSWs perform fairly at General skills but only basic (Novice) at all other skill sets. Interviews confirm this, as customers bemoan the fact that most of the service-providers scattered all over the study area were operating with basic skills because they get only a few weeks of training and then open shop without any further training over the years. The IHBSWs interviewed also stated that they would like to upgrade their skills, but there are no quality and desired skills trainings available to them and in any case skills training cost too much for them in time and finance.

Table 5.11 Overall Paired Perceptual Rating for Skill Set Performance Level

Performance Levels	Skill Sets						Sum
	General	Haircare	Facecare	Nailcare	Bodycare	Massage	
Novice	346	656	1520	811	1437	1398	6168
Advanced Beginner	750	313	892	433	753	739	3880
Competent	1890	267	733	431	439	775	4535
Proficient	785	98	312	116	145	260	1716
Expert	267	55	145	54	50	171	742
Master	77	43	86	16	38	141	401
						Total	17442

5.8 Challenges and Suggestions

<i>Research Objective</i>	<i>Research Question</i>	<i>Result</i>	<i>Related Paper</i>
<i>To identify some challenges to accessing skills upgrading and make recommendations towards improving the skills of informal hair and beauty services workers in Hat Yai city</i>	<i>What are some of the factors challenging skills upgrading for the informal hair and beauty services workers in Hat Yai city? What are some suggestions to remedy these challenges?</i>	<i>Challenges primarily had to do with cost of training, time constraints, low quality of training and fast pace of trends. While recommendations favored increase in duration of trainings, quality and availability of upgrading training and more support from government and industry.</i>	<i>Paper 1 (Appendix _): Skills Upgrading for Performance Improvement of Informal Economy Workers in Thailand</i>

5.8.1 Challenges IHBSWs face in assessing Skill Upgrading and Suggestions

Table 5.12 shows some of the key solutions and recommendations from the survey and interviews of the respondents. The perceptual paired response rate revealed that the final ranking matched the original ranking of the respondents. Eight themes were finally selected as major factors challenging skills upgrading of IHBSWs in Hat Yai and they were ranked 1-8 according to level of urgency. Then, suggestions were matched to challenges on how to fix them. Interviews also confirmed these challenges as being major.

Table 5.12 Challenges facing IHBSWs in assessing Skill Upgrading and Suggestions

S/N	Challenges	Recommendations
1	Short training duration	Longer Duration Training
2	Only basic courses available	Include higher-grade skills training
3	Trends/styles change so fast	Training to keep up with the trends/global styles
4	Inadequate training available	Training more focused on needs/demands of customers
5	High cost of training	Government and industry to support IHBSWs
6	Time constraint	More on-the-job training with incentives from government/industry
7	Inadequately skilled trainers	Licensing and Certification
8	Poor quality training	Better-Quality Training

All interviewees agree that government; industry and academic institutions need to do more to support the IHBSWs with assessing quality training to upgrade their skills. They argued that government could provide incentives for the workers and informal enterprises to go for skill upgrading training. Government could pay for workers to access skill upgrading or at least reduce costs and also provide quality training centers in Hat Yai. They also suggested that industry could also support training for these workers in specific areas where they need upgrading. IHBSWs and customers alike complain that there are few trainings available for workers to upgrade their skills and where trainings are available, they are not appropriate and/or of inadequate quality as well as beyond the reach of the IHBSWs affordability.

5.9 Degree of Agreement between workers' and customers'

<i>Research Objective</i>	<i>Research Question</i>	<i>Result</i>	<i>Related Paper</i>
<i>To assess the skill performance levels of informal hair and beauty services workers in Hat Yai city</i>	<i>What are the current skills performance levels of these informal workers?</i>	<i>There was minimal disagreement (7.4%) between the perceptual ratings of workers and customers, which concluded that skill performance of IHBSWs in Hat Yai is mostly at novice level</i>	<i>Paper 1 (Appendix _): Skills Upgrading for Performance Improvement of Informal Economy Workers in Thailand</i>

5.9.1 Degree of Agreement

Figure 5.17 presents a summary of the measure of agreement between ratings of the two groups. The percentage of IHBSWs that perceived performance at specific levels was compared to the perception of customers to determine the extent to which their ratings agree. This will show where the expectations of the customers exceed that of the IHBSWs and otherwise. This also indicates that where there is agreement at a high level, then urgent actions are needed to improve performance. There was weak disagreement between perceptual ratings for very-poor/novice (IHBSWs: 45%-Customers: 22%=23%) and weak disagreement for fair/competent; but all other levels showed strong agreement in perceptual ratings. However, the percentage difference for the total of both assessments was about 7.4% only. This indicates that overall, there is minimal

disagreement between the perceptual ratings, which concludes that skill performance of IHBSWs in Hat Yai is mostly at novice level.

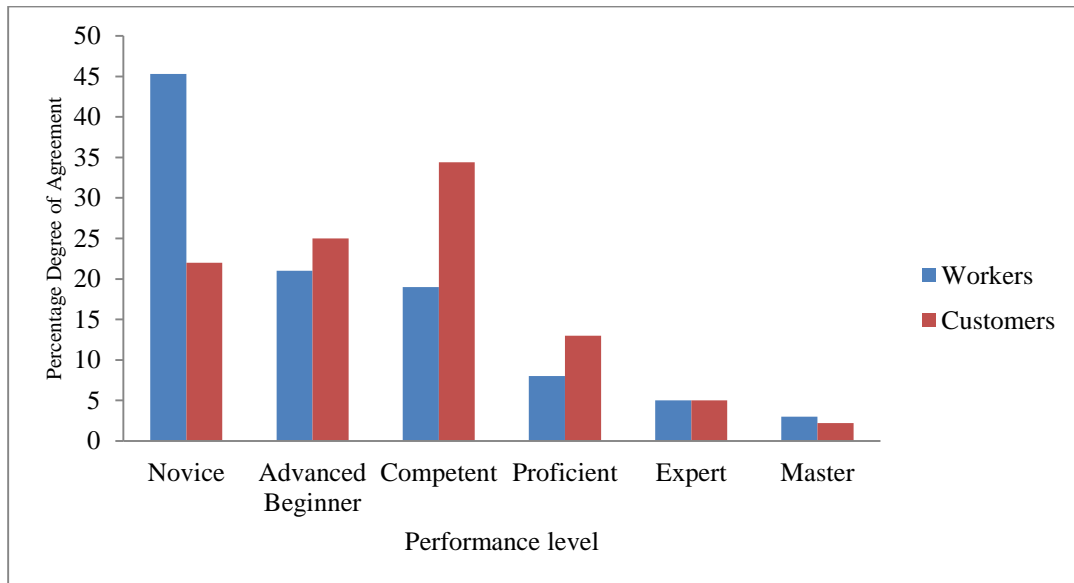


Figure 5.17 Degree of Agreement between workers' and customers' perceptions

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Reflections

Skills are critical in today's fast-growing world and have been referred to as a global currency of the 21st century (World Bank 2014; ILO 2014, 2012a, 2002c; OECD, 2012; EC, 2009) that transforms lives, generates prosperity and promotes social inclusion (OECD, 2013). This makes skills highly essential to IWs wellbeing and the growth of the informal and, by extension, national economy. Skills acquisition is a dynamic and continuous process and so to develop effective skills policies and programs, it is essential to start from the beginning by first understanding how skills are acquired and their impact on skill levels. Over the years, governments and other players have provided skill trainings for basic entry into the IE (such as auto-mechanic, hairdressing/barbering, dressmaking, cooking/baking, shoemaking, etc) in a plethora of skills development programs. These skills training for IWs are generally centered on improving their productivity, products/services quality and personal income (Becker 2004; Johanson and Adams 2004) as well as its positive effect on poverty reduction and growth of the national economy (Palmer 2008; ILO 2013a) focuses on workers alone without including enterprises (Chen 2012; ILO 2013b).

According to experts, skills are characterized by common and regular features like productivity, expandability and socialability, efficiency, experience, learning, precision, and focus (Green 2011), using a combination of cognitive, perceptual and motor processes (Adams 1987). They are continuous in growth, domain-specific, require constant practice, all-encompassing, goal-oriented and feedback-dependent (Seidi and Shahivand 2012; Matsumoto 2009; Fitts & Posner 1967; Welford 1970 and Singleton 1978 as cited in Matsumoto 2009; Rosenbaum, Carlson and Gilmore 2001; Boyatzis and Kolb 1995; Newell 1991). In other words, skill is primarily acquired through learning obtained by some form of instruction, but the ability to use acquired skills is gained through practice and experience. Closer to the issue of human capital, skill indicates the qualification to carry

out trade or craft work involving knowledge, judgement, accuracy and manual deftness usually acquired as the result of long training and lies in the use of capacities efficiently and effectively based on experience and practice (Welford 1970, 1976; Guthrie 1952; Teixeira 2002; ILO 2012b; OECD 2012; EC 2009; Adams et al 2013). This implies the ability to develop to a level of mastery and excellence acquired by learning to perform various tasks with different degrees of proficiency.

Therefore, any skills training should incorporate practice and experience into its core design. Training has been revealed to have a strong and positive relationship with performance, and indeed productivity, (Tahir, Yousafzai, Jan and Hashim 2014; Sabir, Akhtar, Bukhari, Nasir and Ahmed 2014; Ahmad, Ahmad and Asghar 2014; Kum and Cowden 2014; Habib, Mushtaq and Zahra 2015; Mehmood, Ahmed, Sultana and Irum 2012; Hafeez and Akbar 2015), whether directly or indirectly (Aragon, Jimenez and Valle 2013; Jagero, Komba and Mlingi 2012; Dabale, Jagero and Nyauchi 2011; Boothby, Dufuor and tang 2010). In other words, improving performance will require advancing and progressive levels of skills training, particularly since performance improvement is dependent on levels of skills and knowledge (Elger 2008). Therefore, skills upgrading training will serve as a means to bridge the gaps between acquisition and performance quality (Swart et al 2005; Wright and Geroy 2001; Ahmed and Bakar 2003; Kim 2006).

The challenge facing IEWs with skills upgrading are major. They cannot afford training for these skills and cannot take time off work for training to upgrade their skills. This means that they usually have to make do with limited skills, which affects what they can do, offer and earn. In other words, quality of productivity, performance, income and total wellbeing suffer. The IEWs are forced to work with basic skills and branded unprofessional, not because they like it that way, but then there are no better alternatives to them within their income and time. This is even a bigger challenge for IEWs like the IHBSWs who offer services in areas that are easy to ignore, but increasingly require higher-level skills to stay in work. These workers need urgent help with their skills situation and they assume that nobody cares because the focus of government is on industry, hospitality and tourism. We believe, however, that they are a part of the hair/ beauty, tourism and

hospitality industry. Ultimately, giving attention to their skills development could help to improve their productivity, wellbeing and socioeconomic contributions. This can add to efforts to make them self-reliant and even exportable as skilled workforce to other countries. They can also deliver services to the 67 million population domestic market, and at least 11 million per year tourism market. However, it is intrinsically obvious that the skill development in focus in Thailand is on the industrialized sector and so those outside of the formal economy are not so well provided for.

The findings of this research indicate that the skills of the IHBSWs in Hat-Yai are basic at entry and in practice as trainings and certifications available are all at basic levels. Also, most of the customers, employers and the workers agree that skills levels of the workers are mainly basic (i.e. Shu), but some of them still lack the fundamental understanding of their work. They also related this to the quality of training the workers receive and lack of professional certifications. In fact, a lot of these workers practice without any training for years. Obviously, if the majority of the IHBSWs are still at Shu level, then, it figures that they are far from achieving mastery of their skills and so their productivity will be low. In other words, basic skill acquisition process will only produce low-skilled and low-productive workers. The implication is that most of these workers are still working with their entry-level basic skills and these are the same skills they pass on to their protégés or apprentices. This agrees with the conclusions of one of the hair training schools in Bangkok, “most education providers will only focus on the basic skills – and basic skills will only teach you to become a ‘basic’ hairdresser” (Siwakorn 2013). This is indicative of the fact that in training, we ‘reap just what we sow’.

The study found out that most consumers of these services were both young adult or middle-aged females and a third of the customers surveyed were foreigners who were mainly tourists. Most of the foreign customers complained that the IHBSWs were often not able to handle their cultural differences as well as global trends. The researcher witnessed in one of the salons as some Malaysian female tourists requested for French manicures with some nail art and the ladies in the salon had no idea what they were talking about. After minutes of describing with the aid of visuals, the tourists left disappointed and

that was not the first place they had tried. This researcher tried for a haircut, but none could handle my short African natural curls. Finally, one lady barber did a fair job and during interviews, she revealed that she learned these types of skills from YouTube and Facebook videos. In fact, most customers (Thais included) complain that the services provided are inadequate and they would rather help themselves than pay money for it. Most of the salons and spas visited that had a high clientele were pricey with highly skilled, licensed and certified workers (mostly massage workers) and these were franchises or branches of establishments in Bangkok or other cities like Phuket and Chiang Mai. Also, most of the workers above 30 years and with more years of practice after training were observed to get more clientele. This is indicative of the fact that practice helps the workers to hone their acquired skills and grow a loyal customer base.

We also found out that each worker attends to limited customers in a week and are usually paid per service, consequently, the more customers, the more money they earn. During interviews, the workers believed that if they had more and better quality skills then they will get more customers, more money and more respect. The customers also corroborated by adding that they visit the service provider with better and diverse skills more often and are willing to pay more for quality services. As a matter of fact, they do pay more as is evidenced in the busy establishments in the city who charge higher than the others, but still have more clientele. These salon/spas operate on appointments and customers are willing to wait for their turn and pay extra rather than go to the other 'stroll-in-whenever-you-like-and-pay-less' salons. Although, some older customers thought the skills levels were high for hairdressing, the younger customers were mostly not satisfied because they wanted trendier services; but they all agreed that hair treatment skills were low. On this point, the customers all agreed that more training, appropriate equipment and capital should be provided for the workers. This shows the key role customers play in assessing IEWs' skills as supported by studies showing how service quality affects customer satisfaction and willingness to pay (Shahbazi and Akareem 2013; Thongplean 2012; Khan and Tabassum 2011; Konishi 2010). This implies that policymakers and

research investigators need to take customers into cognizance when planning skill acquisition programs and research for IEWs.

Our findings also revealed that funding for the training providers were inadequate, which affect the training quality. Most of these trainings are funded by the Skill Development Fund, which prohibits charging fees. But, the training providers complain that the fund cannot cater for anything above basic training and even then, it is not enough. This relates to studies of Mayombe and Lombard (2015), King and Palmer (2007) and Owusu-Mensah (2007), which show that inadequate funding affects quality of training due to poor or unavailable training tools, equipment and qualified trainers. There is generally almost no funding for informal/non-formal training options in developing countries and evaluation of their impact is almost non-existent (dvv 2011). Adequate funding is required to provide the kind of training that will equip the IEWs with productive and effective skills as they cannot give what they don't have. Our findings also indicate that most IEWs acquired their skills through apprenticeship, on-the-job and self-learning. This supports studies in Morocco where 80.4% of IWs acquired their skills on-the-job, and in Ethiopia, 67.9% through self-learning and 3.54% through apprenticeship/on-the-job training (dvv 2011).

Assessment of the study's SKAQPRO and its impact on skill levels is that all strands of available training are at basic (Shu) level, and the IEWs skills and certifications were at (Shu) levels 1 and 2 (ISCO-08) (see Tables 1 & 2; Figure 3). Therefore, the SKAQPRO currently available to IHBSWs in Hat Yai is basic and can only produce, at best, level 2 skilled workers as well as novice and advanced beginner performance level. We believe that this is responsible for the low-skills and low-productivity evidenced in our study. This SKAQPRO should be reviewed because when training is basic then skill performance and productivity will be low. It should be made more practical, systematic and holistic to be effective; and this should be captured in policies and institutions like the Thai Skill Development Promotion Act. HBSs increasingly require high-skills and the use of high-tech equipment that need more than basic skills (PBA 2011; SAS 2011). Most researches on this group of IEWs do not even

address the SKAQPRO and their skills levels (Kagone and Namusonge 2014; Mpye 2013; Kamau and Bwisa 2013; Kuyram 2013; Cohen 2010; Essah 2008; Schewer and Daneshvary 2000). In fact, they are not captured in national labor surveys as most surveys do not make provisions for self-employed or enterprises with few employees (vander Pol 2011), while occupational classifications fail to reflect these job levels. While it is generally accepted that skills are domain-specific, Taylor and Ivry (2012) have argued that skill acquisition ‘involves the synergistic engagement of strategic and adaptive processes’. In other words, it is not rigid, constrained and stereotypical but dynamic and exploratory (Newell 1991). To this regard, skill acquisition for IEWs can be seen as dynamic, adaptive and domain-specific, which should be properly investigated and understood before effective skill learning programs can be designed. Therefore, to improve the training delivery for the IEWs, it is essential to do a collective assessment on how they acquire their skills so as to reveal the weak link of an occupational domain in any given area. This will serve as a guide for skill policy development and design of training intervention programs (Kraiger, Ford and Salas 1993).

6.1.1 Training Provision

The analysis of available training revealed that only pre-employment basic training courses are available within reach of Hat Yai’s IHBSWs; there are none for incumbent workers seeking to grow their skills. These trainings are of short duration, besides only a few of the government-registered vocational institutions offer these programs. One of the training-provider surveyed, a vocational institution in the Provincial capital, offered no IHBS programs in spite of the fact that the College has a massage demonstration/service unit (neither do they have any intention to offer these programs in the future). Inadequate funding was identified as a major hindrance to type of training that can be provided and the duration as well as lack of certified trainers also affects the quality of training. This is in agreement with studies like Mayombe and Lombard (2015), Langer et al (2013), Adams et al (2013), Pina et al (2012), dvv (2011), Chen (2012), King and Palmer (2007), Owusu-Mensah (2007) and Johanson and Adams (2004), which show the

impact of low funding on training availability and quality. There is very little funding for informal training options (dvv 2011). Even the customers complained during interviews that too many IHBSWs are operating with just short-duration basic courses and so their performances are not standard or professional.

Nevertheless, most of the training-providers are willing to provide skill upgrading programs and think they are capable of doing so. However, they argue that they were not adequately equipped or funded for such trainings. This is understandable because if they have to deliver these specialized professional training programs, the administrative cost alone will be high and this will reflect in the training fee and in the end most of the IHBSWs will not be able to afford it. And even though they try to offer some specialized programs, they can only offer short-term ad-hoc/crash basic courses of 3-6 weeks, expecting the trainees to build up on their skills through self-learning, experience and practice. The IHBSWs try to overcome these challenges by picking up skills from how-to-do demonstrations on social media like YouTube and Facebook as well as books and magazines. But, is also difficult, especially if the foundation course they took was only at basic level. In addition, the costs of accessing and using these resources in money, time, effort and emotional impact (after failing through several attempts to self-learn a skill) can be a deterrent that make most of these IHBSWs not even bother to try. It is evident that any skill gap challenge of the IHBSWs in Hat Yai can be traced to the level and quality of training available to them at close reach. The IHBSWs, their customers and business-owners all agree that skill upgrading is necessary, but the challenges are too daunting for the workers to tackle themselves. The workers and business-owners appealed to government and private organizations to assist with training costs, availability/quality of training and resources.

6.1.2 Identifying Skill Upgrading Needs Areas

This study revealed some individual informal hair and beauty services (IHBS) skills and skill sets that need upgrading among the sampled IHBSWs in Hat Yai city. This agrees with studies that have shown the level of skill shortages in the IE is quite high (Pina et al 2012; Adams et al 2013; Langer et al 2013; dvv 2011).

6.1.2.1 General Skills

This skills set only had a small margin for overall gaps. This indicates that the workers and customers did not really put much importance on these skills. However, these skills are foundational and provide the worker with what is required to benefit from self-learning resources. Interestingly, most of the trainings provided in the sampled training-providers do not have these programs. Nevertheless, some individual skills stood out with high gaps: skills like English language, communication and listening/speaking had relatively high gaps, indicating the need to equip the IHBSWs with better communications skills, especially as Hat Yai is a cosmopolitan and tourist city. Also, a lot of these eLearning resources are in English language (like on YouTube and Facebook). Also, analysis/counselling, consultation/advice and therapy had high gaps, in addition to safety/health procedures/practices and chemistry/biology. This trend shows a need for workers to have a deeper understanding of the services they provide in order to render personalized services to the customer (something the customers really desire) and ensure the safety and health of both themselves and their customers. But, the most interesting gaps were in creativity/originality and cutting-edge personal styling. Both workers and customers perceived that there is a high need for skill upgrading in this area. This is understandable because these two areas are what set excellence and mediocrity apart. And this is an area that needs more than self-learning can offer.

6.1.2.2 Haircare Skills

Haircare was the only skills set that did not show any gap at all. A review of the Department of Skill Development's training program schedule from 2014-2016 revealed that hair dressing and barbering had a higher occurrence than any other IHBS, except massage. However, although skills like hair-styling and hair-cutting/barbering had low gaps, cutting-edge hair-styling and hair-cutting/barbering as well as multicultural hair management had very high gaps. In essence, it seems trainings that keep up with new trends and technologies are required for the haircare skills set; not surprising that new hair styles and cuts ranked number 1 in what customers feel needs urgent intervention. Also, for a tourism focus area like Hat Yai and Thailand, skills to manage multicultural hair are needful. But, the highest gap was in hair/scalp treatment, which also ranked number 2 as skill areas customers feel need urgent attention. Survey results were validated by interviews and observations, which revealed that customers are so not satisfied with hair/scalp treatment services, especially as observations show that more than half of those who came in for treatment left disappointed. These are not areas that can be acquired by self-learning alone either.

6.1.2.3 Facecare Skills

An analysis of both IHBSWs and their customers perspectives showed that facecare skills set had a high skills gap. This is probably indicative of the fact that over 50% of the skills reviewed had high gaps. Evaluate facial condition connects back to the gap of related skills of analysis/consultation/therapy in the General skills set; although facial treatment was only relatively high. But, multicultural makeup, personality makeup and correctional makeup indicate a need for makeup skills that are unique and specific for individual types and conditions. On the other hand, cutting-edge facial removal (like threading, laser, etc) was perceived to be in-demand but not available.

6.1.2.4 Nailcare Skills

Observations revealed that this skills set is not really high in demand, but, when it is requested for, there is almost always no availability, especially nail art design/application and artificial nail fixing/maintenance. This can be assumed to be related to the fact that most people prefer not to pay for a service they feel they can do for themselves. But, then customers ranked Nailcare as the number 3 skill area that needs urgent attention. A closer look at the individual skills revealed that some skills that have to do with personalized services were considered to have a high gap and trendy skills like nail art design/application, artificial nail fixing/maintenance and French/American manicure stood out with high gaps. The indication is that nailcare skills need to upgrade to higher levels that involve more than just coating nails to yield a high demand and/or more pay.

6.1.2.5 Bodycare Skills

Bodycare skills set also had a very high gap, probably due to not being in high-demand due to inadequate skills to attend to personalized conditions. Body/facial treatment and professional analysis and advice for individual conditions, ranked number 11 and 15 on the list of urgent areas for skills upgrading. Analysis of customers' and workers' assessment of skills available and desired revealed high gaps in body/ face art, fixing body accessories, skin treatment and plan/manage treatment/therapy. This is also indicative of the need for new and trendy skills as well as personalized services.

6.1.2.6 Massage Skills

Most people, especially locals, are not really interested in paying for massage; talk less of paying more than a small amount. But, they will pay for more for health-related massages based on observations. But, these are the massage skills that have high gaps: analysis/evaluation/plan/therapy and particular skills like pre-natal, orthopedic/sport massage and deep-rooted massage. Also, cutting-edge massage skills, vibro and acupuncture/acupressure together indicate that skills beyond Thai massage are required for IHBSWs in Hat Yai to practice their trade profitably.

The human capital theory (HCT) postulates that more and better skills could lead to better jobs, more productivity, innovation, creativity, income and total wellbeing, then it becomes expedient to help the IHBSWs to improve the skills they work with. According to Pina et al (2012), actions that address major skills gaps in the IE should focus on reforming school-based programs and improving non-school programs. But, when evaluation of the impact of skills upgrading needs on IEWs is almost non-existent (dvv 2011), then it is difficult to know what or how to reform and improve to achieve maximum effect. One way to do this will be through focusing on areas that they are deficient and helping them to access quality training and resources. Hat Yai's IHBSWs, according to this study, require skill upgrading in some specific areas rather than broad coverage of skills training (See Table 6.1 for skills that require upgrading).

Table 6.1 Showing Skills that require upgrading in Hat Yai's IHBSWs

General	Haircare	Facecare	Nailcare	Bodycare	Massage
Therapy/Analysis/Consultation/ Advice	Hair/Scalp Treatment	Cutting-edge Facial Hair	Evaluate hand/feet/nail condition	Evaluate Skin Type/Condition to determine treatment	Evaluate Clients' Physical/Mental/E motional Condition
Creativity/Originality	Multicultural Hair Management	Removal Correctional	Determine treatment/products based on individual condition	Specialized Skin Treatment Techniques	Determine Massage Therapy based on individual
Chemistry and Biology	Hair Pieces Fixing/Wig- making	Makeup Multicultural	Determine nail color design based on individual skin	Create/Design/Apply Body/Face Art	Therapy based on individual conditions
Safety/Health Procedures/ Practices	Hair Weaving/Braiding	Makeup Personalized	condition/tone/personality Nail At/Design/Application	Fixing Body Accessories	Design/ administer massage Therapy for clients
Cutting-edge Personal Styling	Cutting-edge Hair- styling	Facial Treatment	Artificial Nail Fixing/ Maintenance	Plan/Manage Treatment/Therapy	Health-related Massage: pre-natal, orthopedic/sport and deep tissue
English	Cutting-edge Hair- cutting/Barbering				Cutting-edge Massage
Language/Communication					

6.1.3 Consequences of Skill Upgrading Needs

Studies have shown a relationship between low skill quality of IWs and their income, productivity (which indicates performance quality), total wellbeing and civic participation. The implication is that the consequences of not having the required skills result in low-income, productivity, total wellbeing and development for these workers. In this present study, we sought to explore the consequences of the identified skill upgrading needs on the IHBSWs in Hat Yai from the perspectives of the IHBSWs, customers and business-owners. In agreement with previous studies, we discovered that IHBSWs could earn less income, which could affect their income and total wellbeing (Darvas and Palmer 2014; Palmer 2008; King and Palmer 2007; ILO 2008, 2014, 2015a,b; UNESCO 2014, 2012; World Bank 2014, 2012; Pina et al 2012; Haan 2002; Liimatainen 2002). From descriptive statistics, we learned that most of them practiced with haircare and massage skills on an average income of \$280 per month, which is slightly higher than the minimum wage of \$9 per day and \$428 per month in Thailand. A loss of customers would mean a drop in this already challenged income. Thailand has won the battle over unemployment and poverty, but recent years have seen a decline in the gains; helping IEWs like the IHBSWs can be a key to maintain and grow the margin again.

Observations revealed that the IHBSWs got more customers over the weekend and as was observed and confirmed by literature, most of these people were tourists from Indonesia, Malaysia, China, Singapore and outside Asia. To fully tap into this market, Hat-Yai's IHBSWs need to upgrade their communication skills, particularly, English language as well as the quality and types of skills they can deliver. Customers were increasingly disappointed when they could not get the services they require, especially specialized services and this led to many of them leaving the salon. Each customer that walked away was a loss of income. The IHBSWs were not happy as they watched customers turn away from their salons and they often tried to convince the person to go for something within their capacity (often basic and common), but the customers always declined. No specialized services were observed and these are the kind of services that customers are even willing to pay more for. Interviews revealed consequences like losing

customers, losing income, feeling terrible, low self-esteem and confidence, poor attitude, customer dissatisfaction and bad business. This corresponds with studies in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and ASEAN (Adams et al 2013; ADB 2011; Adams 2011, 2008; Darvas and Palmer 2014; Pina et al 2012). Plus, some studies have linked service quality to customer perception, satisfaction, loyalty and willingness to pay (Chieochankitkan and Sukpatch 2014; El-refae 1012; Khan and Tabassum 2011).

6.1.4 Skill Upgrading and Performance

Performance improvement is not easy (Ali et al 2011; Klay 2016) and requires concerted efforts from governments and other stakeholders. Basically, in order for productivity (and other related outcomes like income and wellbeing, competitiveness and development) to improve, performance quality/level must go up and for this to happen, skills, abilities and capacities must expand and extend through training (Ali et al 2011; Phusavat 2013; Gupta and Upadhyay 2012). This, therefore, necessitates the need for performance assessments in order to determine the performance levels of workers so as to identify what and where improvement is required (Behn 2003; Brown and Benson 2003; Gupta and Upadhyay 2012; Salau, Oludayo, Omoniyi and Akinbode 2014). Furthermore, for performance assessments to be effective, it should involve those being assessed (i.e. workers or employees) in order to capture their own perspectives (Mone and London 2010; Salau et al 2014). Subsequently, improving the productivity of IEWs will inevitably proceed from an assessment of their performance levels, which will then serve as feedback for the workers, policymakers and training-providers to support planning and implementation of programs for SU (Brown 2004; Wiggins 1989; Moss 1992; Herman, Aschbacher and Winters 1992; Khattri, Reeve and Kane 1998; Hudson and Toshioka 1998; Landy and Farr 1980).

This study asked how skills upgrading can be used to improve skill performance of IEWs with the objective to determine the skill performance level IHBSWs, Hat Yai, Thailand and make recommendations for appropriate strategies to integrate skill upgrading into skill development programs and policies for Thailand's IEWs. To address

these issues, the perceptions of IHBSWs in the study area as well as those who use their services (i.e. customers) were explored about the impact of skills upgrading on skill performance and the skill performance levels of IHBSWs. In assessing the skill performance levels of the workers, we used paired perceptual rating estimation (PPRE) (since there were no standards to measure skill performance against) and also to ensure high level of uniformity, a performance rating scale (PRS) was adopted from the Dreyfus skill performance concept. The PPRE was developed by matching ratings of workers and customers to derive a single score and the study concluded that majority of IHBSWs in Hat Yai performed at novice level.

The PPRE for skill performance levels was developed based on the principle of matching results from multiple raters to derive a single score in order to reduce bias and increase reliability. The consensus estimation of agreement was also adapted to measure the statistical significance by determining interrater reliability through how close or far in agreement the final consensus of both groups were from each other. It was revealed that the highest disagreement was at the novice level (23%) where more workers rated themselves as novice than customers did. This was still weak disagreement. However, interviews exposed a case of leniency and central tendency bias on the part of the customers because they believed that were been fair to the workers since skills were low mainly due to training quality and availability, which the workers have no control over.

In addition, the use of multiple raters reduced bias as we could easily deduce perceptions of the majority as the reality. Also, when workers rated themselves, they over-compensated less because they assessed from the lens of being in a group and not as an individual; so they were more honest. Furthermore, the mixed method design reduced biases by using interviews to confirm or strengthen survey findings while multilevel sampling, respondent verification of their responses after translation, exposing findings to peers and experts for scrutiny, and a preliminary study to aid research and instruments design contributed immensely to the validation of the study.

The customers' perception served as a control measure to counter the self-assessments of the IHBSWs; and also to gauge the expectations of the customers.

Exploring this issue from the perspectives of the IHBSWs and their customers give insight to their understanding and challenges and also contribute to design and develop policy instruments and provisions that capture the specific interests and needs of the IEWs and the expectations of those who use their services (ILO 2011; Rigby and Sanchis 2006). The implication is that when national skill development policies (NSDPs) provide and support skills upgrading for IEWs, it will improve their performance systematically upward from novice to master levels and this in turn will improve productivity, income, total wellbeing and complete its cycle to improved national economy, development and competitiveness. But, this will have to start from an all-inclusive policy design process as well as training program design and delivery, which systematically covers skill acquisition and upgrading.

The study revealed right off that most of the IHBSWs acquired their initial skills from formal apprenticeships, on-the-job and fashion and beauty training schools rather than vocational colleges, upper-secondary and government skill development centers. This is interesting because the Thai TVSD system is made up of mainly upper-secondary, vocational/technical colleges, university as well as enterprise and skill development centers at various levels (Huang 2012; NESPAP 2016; BIC-MoE 2008; ONEC 2003). There is no formal apprenticeship system for IEWs in any policy instrument and formal enterprise training (e.g. DVT or Workplace training) does not cover IEWs or informal enterprises with less than 100 employees (KOT 2002; Rojvithee 2007).

Also, most IHBSWs in the survey had practiced for just 1-2 years, but a good number of them had being practicing for over 10 years, but performance was generally considered to be at novice level. This indicates a dire need for improvement in order to help the IEWs improve their labor and income prospects as well as their self-esteem and societal contributions. On a side note, it was interesting to discover that up to 15% of the IHBSWs were educated to university level and 69% secondary. This indicates that some of these workers actually have higher education, which goes to show that it is not only those with low educational qualifications that work in the informal economy (King 2012). Also, high educational attainment does not equal high skills as even the university graduates still need SU in their occupational domain.

Furthermore, majority of the respondents perceive that the IHBSWs need skills upgrading, although the IEWs themselves were more in favor of this than their customers. Of course, customers indicated, during interviews, that they didn't expect much from the service-providers (even though survey showed that more than half of them desired upgraded services) because the trainings available were not up-to-grade, which explained why they were skeptical about upgrading skills. However, the IHBSWs were emphatic that if they had access to quality skills training that it will improve the type and quality of their services which will increase their clientele base and then income/wellbeing. They strongly desired to learn new trendy and global styles and services as well as to increase the kind of services they can offer. With customers indicating a fair willingness to pay more for upgraded services, this will support the argument that more training will lead to increased earnings as reflected in our conceptual foundations.

The findings revealed that people generally perceive that skill upgrading greatly impacts skill performance. In fact, a major consensus was that skill upgrading could improve performance and productivity, income and clientele as well as total wellbeing. This definitely answers the research question and indicates that policymakers should give more attention to skill upgrading when planning for IEWs. However, customers were more inclined towards this thinking, perhaps due to the fact that the customers wish for better services than they currently get and feel that upgrading training could lead to better quality services. In other words, they believe that trainings to upgrade the skills of these workers is a good cause, but for the IHBSWs of Hat Yai in particular, the trainings available are not adequate and so may just be an effort in futility. This suggests apathy in customers' expectations of service quality. In any case, the overall consensus is that skills upgrading can improve skill performance of IEWs, but it has to be under the right conditions.

Although overall PPRE show skills performance levels to be at novice levels for most skills and all other skill sets except General Skills, there is some disagreement between IHBSWs and customer ratings. Most customers seem to perceive performance levels for General Skills to be lower than what most IHBSWs perceive, while most customers perceive Facecare Skills performance to be higher than IHBSWs think.

But, there is identical agreement for all the other skill sets (i.e. novice performance). Of course, the customers revealed during interviews that they did not expect much from their service providers due to inadequate training provisions and so judged them based on this bias intending to be fair. However, the IHBSWs respond to this by arguing that they do try to learn new skills and improve on old ones through social media and practicing, but there is only so much they can gain since there is no-one to show them how to do things right. The customers also argued that they really do not see the need to patronize these service providers because the services they offer are so common and easy to do at home, but they would be willing to be pay for more advanced services. This, then, shows that if the IHBSWs upgrade their skills, they will keep old customers and gain new ones, make more money, keep up with the trends and even earn more money (as interviews revealed).

6.1.5 Challenges

The challenges of training costs and time constraint were also ranked by the respondents as top hindering IHBSWs in their quest for skills upgrading and this has been observed as a global challenge for IEWs (Adams et al 2013; Johanson and Adams 2004). However, there was consensus in the fact that longer duration, advanced and up-to-date trainings were needed as well as trainings that fit with customers' expectations, licensing/certification for trainers and increased support from government and industry, even academia in terms of incentives and other considerations. This implies that the IHBSWs and their customers perceive that government and industry should give more specific attention to them and assist them with cost and availability of training. Subsequently, NSDPs should consider these issues seriously in order to meet the aspirations of IEWs and their national contributions.

6.2 Conclusions

The conclusions of this research show that the SKAQPRO of IHBSWs in Hat Yai is basic and inadvertently basic trainings will only produce basic skills because you can only reap what you sow. This seems to have affected the skill performance levels

of the workers. The workers and their customers suggested that the government, industry and academic institutions work together to develop and provide trainings that enhance professionalism. Since customers are willing to pay for improved and quality services, this will go a long way to increase the earnings and total wellbeing of the workers, therefore helping policy makers to maintain the poverty reduction rate and reduce unemployment in the country. The workers find a way to access information through the internet, print media and other experienced colleagues and this indicates that if these were incorporated into the intervention programs of government and other organizations, it will be appreciated and accepted. Also, the customers bemoaned the levels of training available and suggested that training providers should improve the kinds of training they offer; just as the workers complained that higher-level skills trainings are not available to them. This will go a long way to strengthen the skills of the IHBSWs and also make them more resourceful, productive and exportable.

This research agrees with Adams et al (2013) comprehensive strategy to resolve the challenges IEWs face in skills upgrading, which include: (i) promoting private investments in skills, (ii) improving the quality of training offered by master craftspersons in apprenticeship, (iii) providing second-chances for education, (iv) exposing small firms in the IE to the benefits of training, (v) introducing training funds for the IE, (vi) strengthening the capacities of small industry associations, (vii) encouraging private providers for skills development in the IE, (viii) improving market efficiency, (ix) more involvement of government and private organizations, (x) expanding training supply, and (xi) building a knowledge base. Johanson and Adams (2004) had also suggested other measures that could enhance the skills of IWs and they are (i) put in place policy documents specifically for IWs training, (ii) recognize that the IE has come to stay, (iii) consider training for small workshop employment and self-employment, and (iv) improving the traditional apprenticeship training.

Finally, we conclude that there is a significant connection between the quality of SKAQPRO and the skill levels of IEWs, which in turn affects their skill performance, income and total wellbeing. This implies that correcting the low-skill palaver in the IE will require skills training policies and designs that are all-inclusive, holistic and systematic.

Overall, this study suggests that IHBSWs in Hat Yai have major skill gaps, except in Haircare, which also records high gaps in hair/scalp treatment. The consequences of these gaps could be summed up as loss of income, low-productivity (performance), customer dissatisfaction, loss of customers, negative attitude and self-esteem/confidence. It is, therefore, evident that skill development interventions for these workers need a change in policy and training design to strengthen the provisions available to them so they can earn a living wage and be a positive contribution to society.

6.3 Recommendations

Consequently, some recommendations based on the findings of this study include (see details in Papers 1-3):

- I. Specific policies and plans for upgrading of skills for incumbent IEWs with clear direction for IEWs' for skills upgrading and on-the-job training will make a huge difference and should be a key aspect of NSDPs for IEWs
- II. Development of skill upgrading program design that captures excellence, professionalism and particular skill upgrading areas highlighted in this study and upgrade quality of curricula and delivery to higher levels
- III. Blend apprenticeship at all levels because this will enable the IEWs to practice what they learn right away and get submerged into their skills faster
- IV. Encourage and assist IHBSWs to form associations where peer rating can be used and affordable training also provided so that training institutions and professional associations related to IHBSWs could work together to plan, design and deliver

training programs; so that professionalism and peer-rating can also be embedded in the IE

- V. Better funding by governments at all levels and multi-lateral agencies; and private companies, professional associations, individuals and relevant industry should contribute to IEWs skills training (GHK 2011d) as part of their corporate social responsibilities. (e.g. funding for trainees and trainers, materials, training-the-trainers, paying for quality trainers and supporting ancillary activities)
- VI. Hair and beauty industry should be more attentive to the IHBSWs as their big-time customers. They can organize or support trainings and other experience-building activities such as scholarships accessed through contests, internships, free trainings, providing quality and licensed trainers and some kind of rating system that comes with a reward annually towards helping to build up their skill mastery and total wellbeing. They can do this by providing funding for trainees and training providers, materials, training the trainers, paying for quality trainers and supporting ancillary activities
- VII. A certification system that enables assessment and certification of skills obtained regardless of form of learning should be set-up, whereby certificates of achievement, experience or practice can be awarded (GHK 2011a-f) as well as development of skill standards for the level of performance expected of IHBSWs
- VIII. Government encourage and support the private sector and academic institutions to work with IHBSWs to access affordable training, resources and opportunities to grow their skills and provide opportunities for acquiring these skills at a cost effective and time flexible rate such as financial incentives, like tax deductions to citizens fully enrolled for courses in accredited training centers and allowances (not below the minimum wage) for the financially-challenged and those who have to leave work to learn (GHK 2011d) so that they do not losing their jobs or time-off work

- IX. Training program design and delivery for IHBSWs in Hat Yai need to be reviewed and government should support training providers to provide professional and specialized courses
- X. Skills development for IEWs should be given the same attention as IWs in the formal economy
- XI. Government needs to provide financial incentives for informal enterprises to train their employees as well as for IEWs to be able to afford skill upgrading training
- XII. Government and academic institutions should consider including hair and beauty services into key vocational education programming

6.4 Transformative Ideas

6.4.1 Improving the Skill Acquisition Process

We suggest that a SKAQPRO assessment be conducted before any skills acquisition program is designed for IEWs, and these assessments should include customer assessments in order to capture the skills-in-demand and what customers are willing to pay for.

Building from the conceptual lens, we propose a systematic and all-inclusive SKAQPRO with formal, informal, on-the-job and self-learning elements (Adams 2011; Palmer 2007b), which provides potential and productive capacities that can positively impact income and total wellbeing. Global Monitoring Reports (GMR) on Education for All (EFA) largely focus on formal training alone, perhaps due to the availability of data, and most skills and employability policies and discussions still put emphasis on formal training even for vocational skills, while IEWs learn in a plethora of ways (Darvas and Palmer 2014; UNESCO 2014, 2012; ILO 2012b; OECD 2012; dvv 2011; Adams 2011; UNHCR 2011; Palmer 2007; King and Palmer 2006a-c). Schooling and skill accumulation is not necessarily the same thing; therefore skill acquisition goes beyond just formal training instructions (Blankenau and Camara 2006). This is in agreement with the findings of this study that skills are actually acquired through a mix of methods in the IE.

We believe that providing training should not be restricted to any type whether formal or informal or even self-directed since it has been successfully argued that education and experience are blended in our learning process (Sawchuk 2008; Andersen et al 1995). The SKAQPRO should not be restricted to one particular form of training style but should include a balanced mix that incorporates all forms of learning to create a synergistic system. In other words, the SKAQPRO for IEWs should be designed to include formal education with classroom instructions, non-formal/further education like professional workshops and courses, informal education/training like apprenticeships/on-the-job training and self-directed/informal learning through experience, practice and all other forms that do not include an external instructor (Livingstone 2005 as cited in Sawchuk 2008). In any case, just like Tough (1967) suggested, adults acquire most of their skills and knowledge through self-learning, by experience and/or practice, but even then assistance is sometimes required from an external source indicative that not all learning is formal (Jennings and Wagnier 2015). This relates to the 70:20:10 rule of Eichinger and Lombardo (1996), which suggests that people acquire 10% of skills and knowledge through formal training and education (classroom instruction, courses, workshops, seminars, reading, professional qualifications/certifications and eLearning), 20% through other people (coaching, mentoring, partnering and social/professional networks) and 70% through practice, on-the-job and other experience-building activities (Jennings and Wagnier 2015; Vallejo and Wehn 2016).

It is essential when planning training for workers in the IE who often find it difficult to access training due to cost and time constraints. For example, graduates of formal training often lack the practical skills gained from apprenticeship while graduate apprentices have no theoretical knowledge of the processes and/or systems of their work (McLaughlin 1989). Therefore, an all-inclusive approach to training programs will provide both theoretical and practical knowledge and ability needed for proficiency in acquired skills. And so, for policy-makers and development agencies to design systematic, appropriate and effective skill development programs to counter the low skill levels of IEWs, they need to first assess the current SKAQPRO to determine its level of delivery

and impact on skills levels and performance quality, and then design a system with a balanced mix of training methods that captures the unique niche of the specific occupational group in view.

6.4.2 Pathway to improved Performance for IEWs

To this effect, a transformative pathway towards improving skills of IEWs in Thailand to improve performance, productivity, income, total wellbeing and contributions to national economic development is suggested. This recommendation is presented as a four-route system based on our conceptual foundations.

The first route is a series of provincial research conferences aimed at exploring and discovering solutions for improving skills and performance of IEWs in Thailand to increase productivity, income and total wellbeing and how these can impact society as well as national economic growth and development. A comprehensive report of findings should be produced from the conferences. The second route will go the way of taking major and workable findings from the conferences to provincial and municipality (Tambons) roundtable discussions, which should include IEWs, users of their services, training-providers, relevant government agencies, related industry, Municipalities/Tambons and academic institutions. The aim is to include all stakeholders in decision-making as well as to mine for ideas from their perspectives and reach some consensus that could increase acceptance and cooperation. The output could include a comprehensive consensus report.

The next route follows the crucial aspect of developing a IEWs skill performance transformation agenda. The aim is to have a coordinated, comprehensive and systematic national plan to improve performance and productivity of IEWs in Thailand. This could be a 5-10 year plan and could include the following seven steps:

- I. Policy re-direction: To determine specific policy formulation for skills upgrading for IEWs and perhaps be included particularly in the 12th National Economic and Social Development Plan (NESDP) for 2017-2021 as well as the new constitution

being drafted; policy reforms, especially in the Vocational Education Act (2008), Promotion of Non-Formal and Informal Education Act (2008) and the Skill Development Act (2002); and policy development of clear and specific policy instruments targeting skills enhancement of IEWs, particularly through apprenticeships and on-the-job (OJB) trainings.

- II. New training program and delivery design: To include all forms of learning styles.
- III. Industry participation: To determine the role of industry in transforming the skills situation of Thailand IEWs and effective incentives.
- IV. Academic institutions participation: To determine how academic institutions will contribute to research, training and curricula development for IEWs skill upgrading and how they will be supported to do this.
- V. Municipality/Tambons participation: To determine how Municipalities/Tambons will contribute to the process and most IEWs will reach their local governments more easily.
- VI. Licensing and certification: To develop licensing and certification schemes for practitioners, enterprises, trainers, training institutions, training programs and services rendered that will be within the attainment of the IEWs.
- VII. Minimum skill standards and qualifications: To develop standards and qualifications framework for the level of IEWs that will not be beyond their reach.

The fourth route is partnership and sustainability, which should feed into the transformation agenda. This will include the plan on how to partner with national and global agencies and enterprises to support the transformation agenda's implementation as well as how the process will be sustained. A meeting with potential national and global partners could be convened where the plans will be presented and commitment secured from the partners. But, for all these to be a national agenda for Thailand's IEWs, research must be widened to cover other areas in the country and other skill domains of IEWs.

6.5 Limitations of Research

The mixed method and multilevel approach of the study generated an in-depth understanding of the skill upgrading needs from the point of view of the IHBSWs, their customers, business-owners and training-providers. However, the simple subtraction and addition method working with differential of means to determine skill upgrading needs may seem inadequate. But, considering that we were dealing with personal perspectives based on assumptions, and not measuring against any known standards, the design was adopted to make explaining it to the IHBSWs easy. But, a further analysis weighing available and desired skills perspectives of IHBSWs and customers against performance ratings by both groups is also underway. These results could be matched for convergence or divergence in future studies. Also, future studies could look at developing skill standards for this occupational domain and then go further to assess skill gaps based on these standards when accredited.

Moreso, due to the fact that there was no sampling frame for the study area, the generalizability of the study may be biased for the whole of Thailand or the south. However, it can be strong enough to stand for Hat Yai municipality. Future studies could be carried out to cover several other locations after a sampling frame has been provided by the Municipality or Province. One major limitation of this study is there were no standard rating format for this occupational domain to draw from, which led to the development of the PPRE.

Conclusively, this study reveals skill areas that need urgent attention to policy makers and training-providers so that quick arrangements could be taken to address them. This will improve the ability of the IHBSWs to perform optimally and in turn gain more customers, earn more money, enjoy a better life and be confident to work in their chosen occupation anywhere in the world. The study also draws the attention of policy-makers and academic researchers to this category of IEWs for direct action. In the field of research, it strengthens the role of the mixed method and multilevel research in development studies, which can capture information on the same phenomena from different angles to give deeper and more comprehensive insights

6.6 Further Research

- I. Further research could explore performance levels using a standard rating format to see if there will be any convergence or divergence with this study.
- II. In addition, further research could also look at the perceptions of IEWs and customers on NSDPs that concern them, their expectations and ratings of such instruments.
- III. The workers really rated their skill performance levels low even when customers rated them high; and this indicates a low-self-esteem and occupational respect among the workers. Future research could look into this issue to determine the degree of self-esteem among IHBSWs (and other IEWs as well), causes and remedies.
- IV. Further research into the issue of skill acquisition for IEWs is necessary as they make up a large chunk of the workforce of developing countries and this is not going to change for a while.
- V. Further research on the understanding of skill upgrading is needed, particularly for IEWs, to make meaningful contributions to sustainable and effective national skills upgrading development policies and training programs (Azoh, Weyer & Carton 2015, 2015; King and Palmer 2014; Norrag 2012).
- VI. Future research could also investigate the informal hair and beauty services workers in Bangkok to determine if they have the same challenges as those in Hat Yai, with bangkok being the capital city.
- VII. This is an area for further research: do higher education equal higher skills for IEWs?
- VIII. This same study can be carried out in other occupational domains to determine performance levels in order to aid training design and delivery.

6.7 Closing Remarks

The scope of the Recommendations can be said to be skills upgrading (lifelong learning) in specific context of vocational and professional abilities of a worker, recognized internationally, nationally and sectorally, which enhances an individual's capacity to secure and retain decent work, grow within occupation and cope with change (ILO 2004, 2006). But, as long as policy direction and objectives are focused on formalization, the IEWs will not receive the support they need, even though the promotion of access to lifelong learning for low-skilled people and IEs is advocated. The contradiction is, however, evident in the call to support individuals with skill upgrading and promote access to training in the IE. The system advocated sees government's primary focus as education, pre-employment training and training for the unemployed while further training is for the social partners of employers and employees. If this is so, then how can the governments assist and support IEWs with their training and skill upgrading aspirations, especially when the reality indicates that access and affordability are overwhelming challenges for these workers. Where is the place for incumbent IEWs who also need skill upgrading training they cannot afford or access? Also, encouraging social partners to participate in training design deliberations may sound inclusive, but when focus is on formalizing the IEWs, will their perceptions be sought? And why did social partners not include customers or users who pay for services and products?

All in all, the study shows that most of the IEWs in the hair and beauty services occupational domain in Hat Yai were primarily novices, which relates to the general concept that IEs are basically low-skilled with low-productivity. These IEWs need skill upgrading, but certain actions need to be taken by government, industry, the academia and even the workers themselves before positive results can be attained. We argue that NSDPs need to capture these issues in policy provisions so as to include informal enterprises and their workers in the skill development scheme of Thailand. In addition, the Thai NSDPs do not really recognize the role of the IEWs in national economic development and see them as palliatives or stopgaps only. Several studies on building skills in the IE have pointed out the need to have clear, specific and comprehensive approaches

(Adams et al 2013; Pina et al 2012; Johanson and Adams 2004) that target IEWs skill development for national economic growth and development. Our findings could contribute to reforming and updating NSDPs as well as including paired perceptual surveys of IEWs and users of their services in research designs for skills development in the IE.

Considering that the IHBSWs are uniquely representative of IEWs in developing countries like Thailand, we assume that the results of this study can be relevant to other countries. We submit that the quality and level of skills development available to IEWs will determine the quality and level of their performance and productivity. You cannot make a silk purse out of sow's ear because you will only reap just what you sow; basic training equals basic skills and low productivity.

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APPENDIX I
Sample Consent Letter

**CONSENT LETTER FOR HAT YAI CITY INFORMAL HAIR AND BEAUTY SERVICES
WORKERS SKILLS LEVELS SURVEY**

I am a Masters student in the Faculty of Liberal Arts at Prince of Songkla University (PSU) and as part of my Master research, 'Skills Levels Upgrading for Informal Fashion and Beauty Services Workers of Hat Yai City, Thailand'. I am conducting this research under the supervision of Dr. Kanda Janyam. The purpose of the research study is to explore and describe the skills levels and upgrading needs of informal Fashion & Beauty services workers in Hat Yai city.

The areas of focus include: haircare, facecare, bodycare, nailcare and massage. You have been chosen because you provide any of the above services or you are a user of any or all of the services. You are requested to fill the questionnaire and also answer some interview questions. The interview shall be for a maximum of 1 hour.

I kindly request that you give me your open and clear answers to these questions as your answers will be fundamental to the understanding of the issue and will help the world see things from your point of view.

This exercise is strictly for academic purposes. Please note that your participation is absolutely voluntary and your answers are confidential. You may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. All information obtained in this study shall be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. You can include nicknames if you prefer not to be identified by your real name and no individual participant will be identified without their permission. No personal data shall be disclosed at any time in the study or the study report. The results of the study shall be presented to you for your approval before ever going public.

By signing this consent form, you are indicating that you fully understand the above information and agree to participate in this study.

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Participant's Nickname (optional): _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Mayowa Abiodun Peter-Cookey, 0924293408, 0869470448, live4mayo@gmail.com and Dr. Kanda Janyam, 074286748, kanda.j@psu.ac.th.

APPENDIX II
Sample Survey Instruments

1. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR WORKERS

This aspect of the survey is meant for the workers that provide informal fashion and beauty care services in Hat Yai city center only.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Please provide contact details in case of clarification and/or follow-up.
- Feel free to ask questions where the information is not clear.
- Please be honest, sincere and unbiased as possible – your confidentiality is guaranteed.
- This Survey is about your improvement and gain, please feel free to express your deep considerations.

A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

I. BIODATA

1. Name (or Nickname): _____
2. Gender: Male Female
3. Current Age: 15-18 19-21 22-25 26-30 31+
4. Marital Status: Single Married Divorced Widowed
5. Religion: Buddhism Christianity Islam Hinduism None Others
6. Number of Children: None 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+
7. Household Size: 1-5 6-10 11-15 16-20 21+
8. Educational Status: No formal education Primary Secondary Technical Vocational University Apprenticeship
9. Years of Living in Hat Yai: 1-5 6-10 11-15 16-20 21-25 26-30 31+

II. OCCUPATIONAL HISTORY

GPS Coordinates

- | | | | | | |
|-------------|-------|----|-------|----------|-----------|
| | | | | N+ | E+ |
| | | | | Latitude | Longitude |
| 10. Current | Place | of | Work: | | |
| _____ | | | | (name) | |

11. Location: Niphat Uthit Road 1 Niphat Uthit Road 2 Niphat Uthit Road 3

12. Current Work Address: _____

_____ Phone: _____

13. Type of Establishment: Haircare only Bodycare only {massage, body art, skincare, tattooing, tanning, waxing, etc} Facecare only {make up, treatment, massage, hair removal, etc} Nailcare only {nail treatment, fixing, nail art/design, manicure/pedicure, massage, etc} Massage only Full Salon Spa/Salon
14. Type of Ownership: Sole Proprietorship Partnership Rent-a-Space

15. Business Registration Status: Not Registered Registered with Municipality Registered with Professional Association Registered with National Authority Registered with Business body
16. Personal Work Contract: Full Time Part Time Freelance/Mobile
17. Work Status: Employee Owner-Worker Owner/Employer
18. Current Position: Owner Manager Senior Stylist Junior Stylist Senior Technician Junior Technician Hairdresser/Barber Trainer/Teacher Technician Apprentice Receptionist Artist Masseurse Therapist/Counsellor Beautician Consultant
19. Duration of current employment: 1 – 2years 2years – 4years 4years – 6years 6years – 8years
20. Area(s) of Service: Haircare Facecare Bodycare Nailcare Massage
21. Years of Experience: 1-2 3-5 6-10 11-15 16+
22. Age at Entry: 14-16 17-20 21-25 26-30 31+
23. Hours of Work per day: 2-3 3-5 6-8 9+
24. Days of Work per week: 2 3 4 5+
25. Income earned: Hourly Daily Weekly Monthly Per Service
26. Average Monthly Income: B1,000-2,5000 B2,500-5,000 B5,000-7,500 B7,500-10,000 B10,000+
27. Number of Customers personally attend to per day: 1-2 2-4 4-6 7-10 11-15 15+

B. SKILL ACQUISITION

28. Skills training: Formal Apprenticeship Technical/Vocational College Fashion & Beauty Training School On the job Family member & friend Government Skill Development Centre
29. Duration of training: 1 - 6months 6 – 12months 12months – 18months 18months – 24months 24months – 30months 30months – 36months
30. What type of certificate did you obtain during your training: Basic certificate Intermediate certificate Advance certificate No certificate
31. Years of Practice: 1 – 2years 2years – 4years 4years – 6years 6years – 8years 8years – 10years 10years - above
32. When was your last skill training: 1 – 2years ago 2years – 4years ago 4years – 6years ago 6years – 8years ago 8years – 10years ago
33. Have you taken any training related to your job in Songkhla Skills Development Institute? Yes No Maybe

34. Do you know any place in Hat Yai/Songkhla that provide fashion and beauty skills training? () Yes () No () May be

35. If yes, mention two: _____

C. SKILLS TYPES

36. Choose your work skills tick (x) as many as possible

	Skills types	tick	Skills types	tick
General Skills	1	English language	10	ICT
	2	Teaching/training	11	Consultation/Advice
	3	Customer handling/management	12	Therapy
	4	Analysis/counselling	13	Cutting edge personal styling
	5	Creativity/originality	14	Business management
	6	Communication	15	Listening/speaking
	7	Safety & health procedures & practices	16	Art & design
	8	Chemistry/biology	17	Maintaining workstation
	9	Cleaning & sterilizing work tools		-----
Haircare Skills	1	Hairdressing	7	Hair coloring, bleaching, tinting
	2	Hair styling	8	Hair weaving/braiding
		Hair cutting/barbering	9	Hair/scalp treatment
	3	Multi-cultural hair management	10	Cutting edge hairstyling
	4	Hair pieces fixing/Wig making	11	Cutting edge hair cutting/ barbering
	5	Hair perming/straightening	12	Hair waxing/curling/waving
	13	Managing long hair		-----
Facecare Skills	1	Cutting edge facial hair removal	9	Facial hair removal (male/female)
	2	Movie/theatre make-up	10	Modelling/celebrity make-up
	3	Bridal make up	11	Face wrinkle removal
	4	Correctional makeup	12	Eyebrow/eyelash management
	5	Personality make-up	13	Evaluate facial condition

	6	Multi-cultural make up	14	Determine treatment/product based on individual condition
	7	Facial treatment	15	Design makeup style & product based on skin type/tone facial feature & personality
	8	Event/Party make-up	16	Color management & design
		-----	17	Create & design make-up styles
Nailcare Skills	1	Nail/foot/hand treatment	6	Artificial nail fixing/maintenance
	2	Evaluate hand/feet/nail condition	7	Manicure & Pedicure
	3	Determine treatment/products based on condition	8	French/American Manicure/Pedicure
	4	Determine nail polish/ design based on individual skin condition, tone & personality	9	Global manicure & pedicure
	5	Nail art and design		-----
Bodycare (skincare) Skills	1	Evaluate skin type/condition to determine treatment	8	Steaming/Wrapping
	2	Skin treatment	9	Apply Body/Face art
	3	Skin waxing/Peels/scrubbing	10	Create/design body/face art
	4	Skin exfoliation/ Extraction	11	Fixing body accessories
	5	Tanning	12	Laser treatment
	6	Tattooing	13	Plan & manage treatment/therapy
	7	Cleansing/ Scrubbing	14	-----
Massage Skills	1	Pre-natal massage	9	Deep tissue massage
	2	Thai massage	10	Manual/physical massage
	3	Chinese/Japanese massage	11	Cutting edge massage
	4	Swedish massage	12	Vibro-massage
	5	Foot/Face/neck/head massage	13	Evaluate clients' physical mental & emotional condition
	6	Orthopedic/Sport Massage	14	Determine massage therapy based on individual conditions
	7	Hydrotherapy & aroma therapy/hot stone massage	15	Design/plan/administer massage therapy for clients
	8	Acupuncture/Acupressure	16	Electronic massage

37. Have you upgraded to new skills since you started working with the above skills?
 Yes No Maybe

38. If yes, please give the name of the place of training:_____

39. Choose the new skills you will like to learn/acquire tick (x) as many as possible

		Skills types	tick	Skills types	tick
General Skills	1	English language		10	ICT
	2	Teaching/training		11	Consultation/Advice
	3	Customer handling/management		12	Therapy
	4	Analysis/counselling		13	Cutting edge personal styling
	5	Creativity/originality		14	Business management
	6	Communication		15	Listening/speaking
	7	Safety & health procedures & practices		16	Art & design
	8	Chemistry/biology		17	Maintaining workstation
	9	Cleaning & sterilizing work tools			-----
Haircare Skills	1	Hairdressing		7	Hair coloring, bleaching, tinting
	2	Hair styling		8	Hair weaving/braiding
		Hair cutting/barbering		9	Hair/scalp treatment
	3	Multi-cultural hair management		10	Cutting edge hairstyling
	4	Hair pieces fixing/Wig making		11	Cutting edge hair cutting/ barbering
	5	Hair perming/straightening		12	Hair waxing/curling/waving
	13	Managing long hair			-----
Facecare Skills	1	Cutting edge facial hair removal		9	Facial hair removal (male/female)
	2	Movie/theatre make-up		10	Modelling/celebrity make-up
	3	Bridal make up		11	Face wrinkle removal
	4	Correctional makeup		12	Eyebrow/eyelash management

	5	Personality make-up	13	Evaluate facial condition
	6	Multi-cultural make up	14	Determine treatment/product based on individual condition
	7	Facial treatment	15	Design makeup style & product based on skin type/tone facial feature & personality
	8	Event/Party make-up	16	Color management & design
		-----	17	Create & design make-up styles
Nailcare Skills	1	Nail/foot/hand treatment	6	Artificial nail fixing/maintenance
	2	Evaluate hand/feet/nail condition	7	Manicure & Pedicure
	3	Determine treatment/products based on condition	8	French/American Manicure/Pedicure
	4	Determine nail polish/ design based on individual skin condition, tone & personality	9	Global manicure & pedicure
	5	Nail art and design		-----
Bodycare (skincare) Skills	1	Evaluate skin type/condition to determine treatment	8	Steaming/Wrapping
	2	Skin treatment	9	Apply Body/Face art
	3	Skin waxing/Peels/scrubbing	10	Create/design body/face art
	4	Skin exfoliation/ Extraction	11	Fixing body accessories
	5	Tanning	12	Laser treatment
	6	Tattooing	13	Plan & manage treatment/therapy
	7	Cleansing/ Scrubbing	14	-----
Massage Skills	1	Pre-natal massage	9	Deep tissue massage
	2	Thai massage	10	Manual/physical massage
	3	Chinese/Japanese massage	11	Cutting edge massage
	4	Swedish massage	12	Vibro-massage
	5	Foot/Face/neck/head massage	13	Evaluate clients' physical mental & emotional condition
	6	Orthopedic/Sport Massage	14	Determine massage therapy based on individual conditions
	7	Hydrotherapy & aroma therapy/hot stone massage	15	Design/plan/administer massage therapy for clients

8 Acupuncture/Acupressure 16 Electronic massage

40. Which industry sector will you like to work if you have the required skills? tick (x) only two

Industry sector	tick	Industry sector	tick
1 Fashion/ Modelling		7 Elderly/children care	
2 Beauty		8 Health services	
3 Salon		9 Advertising/media	
4 Spa		10 Wedding/Special events	
5 Hospitality		11 Training/education	
6 Personal care/style		12 Movie/TV/Theatre	

D. SKILLS LEVELS

41. Are you certified to Thailand Professional Qualification Institute's (TPQI) competency standards? () Yes () No () Not sure

42. If yes, which level: _____

43. Are you certified to the Thailand National Qualification Framework (TNQF) Standards? () Yes () No () Not sure

44. If yes, which level: _____

45. Are you certified to any professional association standards? () Yes () No () Not sure

46. If yes, which professional association and which level: _____

47. Are you certified to any trade associations? () Yes () No () Not sure

48. If yes, which one: _____

49. What are you licensed to operate as: () Specialist () Technician () Therapist () Manager () Trainer () Consultants () Others: _____

E. SKILLS PERFORMANCE LEVELS AUDIT

50. Rate your skill level according to your performance using the following scale based on your ability in that area.

General Skills	Very poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
1 English language						
2 Teaching/training						

- 3 Customer handling/management
- 4 Analysis/counselling
- 5 Creativity/originality
- 6 Communication
- 7 Safety & health procedures & practices
- 8 Chemistry/biology
- 9 Cleaning & sterilizing work tools
- 10 ICT
- 11 Consultation/Advice
- 12 Therapy
- 13 Cutting edge personal styling
- 14 Business management
- 15 Listening/speaking
- 16 Art & design
- 17 Maintaining workstation

Description for Questions 53-57: Skills performance levels will be assessed using the following options described in the table below. Rate your skill level according to your performance whether novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient, expert or master.

1	Novice	I... Just learned or learning skills Need complete supervision Need more understanding
2	Advanced Beginner	I... Follow rules step-by-step Need less supervision Complete simpler tasks without supervision
3	Competent	I... Can learn new techniques Need no supervision Still need refinement in my work
4	Proficient	I... Maintain regular high standards Do not need to follow rules step-by-step Have deep understanding of the processes
5	Expert	I... Work intuitively from my own mind Am creative and spontaneous

- 6 Master Create exceptional designs and work
 Make good use of time without compromising quality
 I...
 Express exceptional creativity, originality and spontaneity always
 Create cutting edge designs and service effortlessly
 Work well under pressure
51. Rate your technical/practical skills performance levels in Haircare: tick (x) the most appropriate skill levels
- | Technical/practical skills | novice | Advance
beginner | competent | Proficient | Expert | Master |
|---|--------|---------------------|-----------|------------|--------|--------|
| 1 Hairdressing | | | | | | |
| 2 Hair styling | | | | | | |
| 3 Hair cutting/barbering | | | | | | |
| 4 Multi-cultural hair management | | | | | | |
| 5 Hair pieces fixing/Wig making | | | | | | |
| 6 Hair perming/straightening | | | | | | |
| 7 Hair coloring, bleaching, tinting | | | | | | |
| 8 Hair weaving/braiding | | | | | | |
| 9 Hair/scalp treatment | | | | | | |
| 10 Cutting edge hairstyling | | | | | | |
| 11 Cutting edge hair cutting/barbering | | | | | | |
| 12 Hair waxing/curling/waving | | | | | | |
| 13 Managing long hair | | | | | | |
52. Rate your technical/practical skills performance levels in Facecare: tick (x) the most appropriate skill levels
- | Technical/practical skills | Novice | Advanced
beginner | competent | Proficient | Expert | Master |
|---|--------|----------------------|-----------|------------|--------|--------|
| 1 Cutting edge facial hair removal | | | | | | |
| 2 Movie/theatre make-up | | | | | | |

- 3 Bridal make up
- 4 Correctional makeup
- 5 Personality make-up
- 6 Multi-cultural make up
- 7 Facial treatment
- 8 Event/Party make-up
- 9 Facial hair removal
(male/female)
- 10 Modelling/celebrity
make-up
- 11 Face wrinkle removal
- 12 Eyebrow/eyelash
management
- 13 Evaluate facial condition
- 14 Determine
treatment/product based
on individual condition
- 15 Design makeup style &
product based on skin
type/tone facial feature &
personality
- 16 Color management &
design
- 17 Create & design make-up
styles

53. Rate your technical/practical skills performance levels in Nailcare: tick (x) the most appropriate skill levels

- | | Technical/practical skills | novice | Advance
beginner | competent | Proficient | Expert | Master |
|---|--------------------------------------|--------|---------------------|-----------|------------|--------|--------|
| 1 | Nail/foot/hand treatment | | | | | | |
| 2 | Evaluate hand/feet/nail
condition | | | | | | |

- 3 Determine treatment/products based on condition
 - 4 Determine nail polish/design based on individual skin condition, tone & personality
 - 5 Nail art and design
 - 6 Artificial nail fixing/maintenance
 - 7 Manicure & Pedicure
 - 8 French/American Manicure/Pedicure
 - 9 Global manicure & pedicure
54. Rate your technical/practical skills performance levels in Bodycare: tick (x) the most appropriate skill levels
- | | Technical/practical skills | novice | Advance beginner | competent | Proficient | Expert | Master |
|----|---|--------|------------------|-----------|------------|--------|--------|
| 1 | Evaluate skin type/condition to determine treatment | | | | | | |
| 2 | Skin treatment | | | | | | |
| 3 | Skin waxing/Peels/scrubbing | | | | | | |
| 4 | Skin exfoliation/ Extraction | | | | | | |
| 5 | Tanning | | | | | | |
| 6 | Tattooing | | | | | | |
| 7 | Cleansing/ Scrubbing | | | | | | |
| 8 | Steaming/Wrapping | | | | | | |
| 9 | Apply Body/Face art | | | | | | |
| 10 | Create/design body/face art | | | | | | |

- 11 Fixing body accessories
- 12 Laser treatment
- 13 Plan & manage treatment/therapy
55. Rate your technical/practical skills performance levels in Massage: tick (x) the most appropriate skill levels
- | | Technical/practical skills | novice | Advance beginner | competent | Proficient | Expert | Master |
|----|--|--------|------------------|-----------|------------|--------|--------|
| 1 | Pre-natal massage | | | | | | |
| 2 | Thai massage | | | | | | |
| 3 | Chinese/Japanese massage | | | | | | |
| 4 | Swedish massage | | | | | | |
| 5 | Foot/Face/neck/head massage | | | | | | |
| 6 | Orthopedic/Sport Massage | | | | | | |
| 7 | Hydrotherapy & aroma therapy/hot stone massage | | | | | | |
| 8 | Acupuncture/Acupressure | | | | | | |
| 9 | Deep tissue massage | | | | | | |
| 10 | Manual/physical massage | | | | | | |
| 11 | Cutting edge massage | | | | | | |
| 12 | Vibro-massage | | | | | | |
| 13 | Evaluate clients' physical mental & emotional condition | | | | | | |
| 14 | Determine massage therapy based on individual conditions | | | | | | |
| 15 | Design/plan/administer massage therapy for clients | | | | | | |
| 16 | Electronic massage | | | | | | |

2. QUESTIONNAIRE INTERVIEW FOR CUSTOMERS

This aspect of the survey is meant for the users (customers) of the informal fashion and beauty care services in Hat Yai city.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Please provide contact details in case of clarification and/or follow-up.
- Feel free to ask questions where the information is not clear.
- Please be honest, sincere and unbiased as possible – your confidentiality is guaranteed.
- This Survey is about your improvement and gain, please feel free to express your deep considerations.

A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

I. BIODATA

1. Name (or Nickname): _____
2. Place of Residence (town/city, Country): _____
3. Place of Work (location in town/city, Country): _____
4. Nationality: () Thai () ASEAN () Asia () Europe () America () Africa () Arab
5. Gender: () Male () Female
6. Age: () 14-19 () 19-24 () 24-29 () 29-35 () 35-40 () 40+
7. Marital Status: () Single () Married () Divorced () Widowed
8. Religion: () Buddhism () Christianity () Islam () Hinduism () None () Others: _____
9. Educational Status: () No formal education () Primary () Secondary () Technical () Vocational () University () Apprenticeship
10. Years of Living in Hat Yai: () 1-5 () 6-10 () 11-15 () 16-20 () 21-25 () 26-30 () 31+
11. Number of Children: () None () 1-2 () 3-4 () 5-6 () 7+
12. Household Size: () 1-5 () 6-10 () 11-15 () 16-20 () 21+

II. OCCUPATIONAL HISTORY

13. Work Status: () None () Employer () Employee () Senior Manager () Junior Manager () Supervisor () CEO
14. Field of Work: () Academic () Medical () Manufacturing () Fashion & Beauty () Politics () Tourism/Hospitality () Management () Finance/Accounts () Government () Fitness/Wellness () NGO Media/Entertainment/Advertising () Science & Technology () Other: _____
15. Monthly Income: () Less than B2,500 () B2,500-5,000 () B5,000-7,500 () B7,500-10,000 () B10,000-12,500 () B12,500+

16. Monthly Spending on Hair & Beauty Services: () Less than B2,500 () B2,500-5,000 () B5,000-7,500
() B7,500-10,000 () B10,000-12,500 () B12,500+

III. USER HISTORY

17. Type of Establishment Used (Tick as many as is appropriate): () Haircare only () Bodycare only {massage, body art, skincare, tattooing, tanning, waxing, etc} () Facecare only {make up, treatment, massage, hair removal, etc} () Nailcare only {nail treatment, fixing, nail art/design, manicure/pedicure, massage, etc} () Massage only () Full Salon () Full Spa () Spa/Salon

18. Please tick the major services you often get in Hat Yai City

	Skills types	tick	Skills types	tick
General Skills	1	English language	10	ICT
	2	Teaching/training	11	Consultation/Advice
	3	Customer handling/management	12	Therapy
	4	Analysis/counselling	13	Cutting edge personal styling
	5	Creativity/originality	14	Business management
	6	Communication	15	Listening/speaking
	7	Safety & health procedures & practices	16	Art & design
	8	Chemistry/biology	17	Maintaining workstation
	9	Cleaning & sterilizing work tools		-----
Haircare Skills	1	Hairdressing	7	Hair coloring, bleaching, tinting
	2	Hair styling	8	Hair weaving/braiding
		Hair cutting/barbering	9	Hair/scalp treatment
	3	Multi-cultural hair management	10	Cutting edge hairstyling
	4	Hair pieces fixing/Wig making	11	Cutting edge hair cutting/ barbering
	5	Hair perming/straightening	12	Hair waxing/curling/waving
	13	Managing long hair		-----
Facecare Skills	1	Cutting edge facial hair removal	9	Facial hair removal (male/female)
	2	Movie/theatre make-up	10	Modelling/celebrity make-up
	3	Bridal make up	11	Face wrinkle removal
	4	Correctional makeup	12	Eyebrow/eyelash management

	5	Personality make-up	13	Evaluate facial condition
	6	Multi-cultural make up	14	Determine treatment/product based on individual condition
	7	Facial treatment	15	Design makeup style & product based on skin type/tone facial feature & personality
	8	Event/Party make-up	16	Color management & design
		-----	17	Create & design make-up styles
Nailcare Skills	1	Nail/foot/hand treatment	6	Artificial nail fixing/maintenance
	2	Evaluate hand/feet/nail condition	7	Manicure & Pedicure
	3	Determine treatment/products based on condition	8	French/American Manicure/Pedicure
	4	Determine nail polish/ design based on individual skin condition, tone & personality	9	Global manicure & pedicure
	5	Nail art and design		-----
Bodycare (skincare) Skills	1	Evaluate skin type/condition to determine treatment	8	Steaming/Wrapping
	2	Skin treatment	9	Apply Body/Face art
	3	Skin waxing/Peels/scrubbing	10	Create/design body/face art
	4	Skin exfoliation/ Extraction	11	Fixing body accessories
	5	Tanning	12	Laser treatment
	6	Tattooing	13	Plan & manage treatment/therapy
	7	Cleansing/ Scrubbing	14	-----
Massage Skills	1	Pre-natal massage	9	Deep tissue massage
	2	Thai massage	10	Manual/physical massage
	3	Chinese/Japanese massage	11	Cutting edge massage
	4	Swedish massage	12	Vibro-massage
	5	Foot/Face/neck/head massage	13	Evaluate clients' physical mental & emotional condition
	6	Orthopedic/Sport Massage	14	Determine massage therapy based on individual conditions
	7	Hydrotherapy & aroma therapy/hot stone massage	15	Design/plan/administer massage therapy for clients

8 Acupuncture/Acupressure 16 Electronic massage

19. Please tick the Hair & Beauty Services you will like to receive in Hat Yai:

	Skills types	tick	Skills types	tick
General Skills	1	English language	10	ICT
	2	Teaching/training	11	Consultation/Advice
	3	Customer handling/management	12	Therapy
	4	Analysis/counselling	13	Cutting edge personal styling
	5	Creativity/originality	14	Business management
	6	Communication	15	Listening/speaking
	7	Safety & health procedures & practices	16	Art & design
	8	Chemistry/biology	17	Maintaining workstation
	9	Cleaning & sterilizing work tools		-----
Haircare Skills	1	Hairdressing	7	Hair coloring, bleaching, tinting
	2	Hair styling	8	Hair weaving/braiding
		Hair cutting/barbering	9	Hair/scalp treatment
	3	Multi-cultural hair management	10	Cutting edge hairstyling
	4	Hair pieces fixing/Wig making	11	Cutting edge hair cutting/ barbering
	5	Hair perming/straightening	12	Hair waxing/curling/waving
	13	Managing long hair		-----
Facecare Skills	1	Cutting edge facial hair removal	9	Facial hair removal (male/female)
	2	Movie/theatre make-up	10	Modelling/celebrity make-up
	3	Bridal make up	11	Face wrinkle removal
	4	Correctional makeup	12	Eyebrow/eyelash management
	5	Personality make-up	13	Evaluate facial condition
	6	Multi-cultural make up	14	Determine treatment/product based on individual condition

	7	Facial treatment	15	Design makeup style & product based on skin type/tone facial feature & personality
	8	Event/Party make-up	16	Color management & design
		-----	17	Create & design make-up styles
Nailcare Skills	1	Nail/foot/hand treatment	6	Artificial nail fixing/maintenance
	2	Evaluate hand/feet/nail condition	7	Manicure & Pedicure
	3	Determine treatment/products based on condition	8	French/American Manicure/Pedicure
	4	Determine nail polish/ design based on individual skin condition, tone & personality	9	Global manicure & pedicure
	5	Nail art and design		-----
Bodycare (skincare) Skills	1	Evaluate skin type/condition to determine treatment	8	Steaming/Wrapping
	2	Skin treatment	9	Apply Body/Face art
	3	Skin waxing/Peels/scrubbing	10	Create/design body/face art
	4	Skin exfoliation/ Extraction	11	Fixing body accessories
	5	Tanning	12	Laser treatment
	6	Tattooing	13	Plan & manage treatment/therapy
	7	Cleansing/ Scrubbing	14	-----
Massage Skills	1	Pre-natal massage	9	Deep tissue massage
	2	Thai massage	10	Manual/physical massage
	3	Chinese/Japanese massage	11	Cutting edge massage
	4	Swedish massage	12	Vibro-massage
	5	Foot/Face/neck/head massage	13	Evaluate clients' physical mental & emotional condition
	6	Orthopedic/Sport Massage	14	Determine massage therapy based on individual conditions
	7	Hydrotherapy & aroma therapy/hot stone massage	15	Design/plan/administer massage therapy for clients
	8	Acupuncture/Acupressure	16	Electronic massage

20. Please tick how often you use Hair & Beauty Services

S/N	Services	1-2 Times Weekly	2-4 Times Monthly	2-4 Times Quarterly	1-4 Times Yearly	Once a Year	Occasionally	Never
1	Haircare							
2	Facecare							
3	Bodycare							
4	Nailcare							
5	Massage							

21. Please tick the frequency of the following:

S/N	Question	Services	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Very Often	Always
1	How often do you go outside Hat Yai for hair & beauty services?	Haircare Facecare Bodycare Nailcare Massage					
2	How often does your service provider exceed expectations?	Haircare Facecare Bodycare Nailcare Massage					
3	How often does your service provider match up with global standards?	Haircare Facecare Bodycare Nailcare Massage					
4	How often do you require personal/home service?	Haircare Facecare					

		Bodycare
		Nailcare
		Massage
5	How often do you need to change your service provider due to service dissatisfaction?	Haircare Facecare Bodycare Nailcare Massage

22. Please tick your opinion on the following services in Hat Yai:

S/N		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Interested
1	Hair and Beauty services providers should all be licensed and certified						
2	I would pay more for a licensed and certified service provider						
3	My service provider is very knowledgeable about hair/beauty services quality and standards						
4	My service provider gives quality tips about treatment and maintenance						
5	My service provider has deep understanding of individual differences and preferences when it comes to service delivery						
6	I trust my service provider to make me look good and respectable all the time						
7	I would pay more for improved and better qualities up to global standards even without certification/licensing						

- 8 My service provider has working knowledge of English Language
- 9 I would recommend my service provider to my high profile guest/friend
- 9 I would recommend my service provider to my non-Thai friend/guest
- 10 Overall, I am very satisfied with my service provider
- 11 Hair/beauty services here can compare to Bangkok
- 12 Hair/beauty service provider in Hat Yai need more quality skills training

E. SKILLS PERFORMANCE LEVELS AUDIT

23. Rate your service providers' skill levels according to their performance using the following scale based on their ability in that area.

		Very poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
1	English language						
2	Teaching/training						
3	Customer handling/management						
4	Analysis/counselling						
5	Creativity/originality						
6	Communication						
7	Safety & health procedures & practices						
8	Chemistry/biology						
9	Cleaning & sterilizing work tools						
10	ICT						
11	Consultation/Advice						
12	Therapy						
13	Cutting edge personal styling						

- 14 Business management
- 15 Listening/speaking
- 16 Art & design
- 17 Maintaining workstation

Description for Questions 24-28: Skills performance levels will be assessed using the following options described in the table below. Rate your service providers' skill levels according to their performance whether novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient, expert or master.

1	Novice	I.... Just learned or learning skills Need complete supervision Need more understanding
2	Advanced Beginner	I... Follow rules step-by-step Need less supervision Complete simpler tasks without supervision
3	Competent	I... Can learn new techniques Need no supervision Still need refinement in my work
4	Proficient	I... Maintain regular high standards Do not need to follow rules step-by-step Have deep understanding of the processes
5	Expert	I... Work intuitively from my own mind Am creative and spontaneous Create exceptional designs and work Make good use of time without compromising quality
6	Master	I... Express exceptional creativity, originality and spontaneity always Create cutting edge designs and service effortlessly Work well under pressure

- 24.** Technical/practical skills performance levels in Haircare: tick (x) the most appropriate skill levels
- | Technical/practical skills | novice | Advance
beginner | competent | Proficient | Expert | Master |
|----------------------------------|--------|---------------------|-----------|------------|--------|--------|
| 1 Hairdressing | | | | | | |
| 2 Hair styling | | | | | | |
| 3 Hair cutting/barbering | | | | | | |
| 4 Multi-cultural hair management | | | | | | |
| 5 Hair pieces fixing/Wig making | | | | | | |

- 6 Hair perming/straightening
- 7 Hair coloring, bleaching, tinting
- 8 Hair weaving/braiding
- 9 Hair/scalp treatment
- 10 Cutting edge hairstyling
- 11 Cutting edge hair cutting/ barbering
- 12 Hair waxing/curling/waving
- 13 Managing long hair

25. Technical/practical skills performance levels in Facecare: tick (x) the most appropriate skill levels

	Technical/practical skills	novice	Advance beginner	competent	Proficient	Expert	Master
--	----------------------------	--------	------------------	-----------	------------	--------	--------

- | | | | | | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 1 | Cutting edge facial hair removal | | | | | | |
| 2 | Movie/theatre make-up | | | | | | |
| 3 | Bridal make up | | | | | | |
| 4 | Correctional makeup | | | | | | |
| 5 | Personality make-up | | | | | | |
| 6 | Multi-cultural make up | | | | | | |
| 7 | Facial treatment | | | | | | |
| 8 | Event/Party make-up | | | | | | |
| 9 | Facial hair removal (male/female) | | | | | | |
| 10 | Modelling/celebrity make-up | | | | | | |
| 11 | Face wrinkle removal | | | | | | |
| 12 | Eyebrow/eyelash management | | | | | | |

- 13 Evaluate facial condition
- 14 Determine treatment/product based on individual condition
- 15 Design makeup style & product based on skin type/tone facial feature & personality
- 16 Color management & design
- 17 Create & design make-up styles
- 26.** Technical/practical skills performance levels in Nailcare: tick (x) the most appropriate skill levels
- | Technical/practical skills | novice | Advance beginner | competent | Proficient | Expert | Master |
|---|--------|------------------|-----------|------------|--------|--------|
| 1 Nail/foot/hand treatment | | | | | | |
| 2 Evaluate hand/feet/nail condition | | | | | | |
| 3 Determine treatment/products based on condition | | | | | | |
| 4 Determine nail polish/design based on individual skin condition, tone & personality | | | | | | |
| 5 Nail art and design | | | | | | |
| 6 Artificial nail fixing/maintenance | | | | | | |
| 7 Manicure & Pedicure | | | | | | |
| 8 French/American Manicure/Pedicure | | | | | | |
| 9 Global manicure & pedicure | | | | | | |

- 27. Technical/practical skills performance levels in Bodycare: tick (x) the most appropriate skill levels**
- | Technical/practical skills | novice | Advance
beginner | competent | Proficient | Expert | Master |
|---|--------|---------------------|-----------|------------|--------|--------|
| 1 Evaluate skin type/condition to determine treatment | | | | | | |
| 2 Skin treatment | | | | | | |
| 3 Skin waxing/Peels/scrubbing | | | | | | |
| 4 Skin exfoliation/ Extraction | | | | | | |
| 5 Tanning | | | | | | |
| 6 Tattooing | | | | | | |
| 7 Cleansing/ Scrubbing | | | | | | |
| 8 Steaming/Wrapping | | | | | | |
| 9 Apply Body/Face art | | | | | | |
| 10 Create/design body/face art | | | | | | |
| 11 Fixing body accessories | | | | | | |
| 12 Laser treatment | | | | | | |
| 13 Plan & manage treatment/therapy | | | | | | |
- 28. Technical/practical skills performance levels in Massage: tick (x) the most appropriate skill levels**
- | Technical/practical skills | novice | Advance
beginner | competent | Proficient | Expert | Master |
|-------------------------------|--------|---------------------|-----------|------------|--------|--------|
| 1 Pre-natal massage | | | | | | |
| 2 Thai massage | | | | | | |
| 3 Chinese/Japanese massage | | | | | | |
| 4 Swedish massage | | | | | | |
| 5 Foot/Face/neck/head massage | | | | | | |
| 6 Orthopedic/Sport Massage | | | | | | |

- 7 Hydrotherapy & aroma therapy/hot stone massage
- 8 Acupuncture/Acupressure
- 9 Deep tissue massage
- 10 Manual/physical massage
- 11 Cutting edge massage
- 12 Vibro-massage
- 13 Evaluate clients' physical mental & emotional condition
- 14 Determine massage therapy based on individual conditions
- 15 Design/plan/administer massage therapy for clients
- 16 Electronic massage

3. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR BUSINESS OWNERS/MANAGERS

1. Name of establishment: _____
2. Address of establishment: : _____ Phone: _____
3. Location: () Niphath Uthit Road 1 () Niphath Uthit Road 2 () Niphath Uthit Road 3
4. Type of Establishment: () Haircare only () Bodycare only {massage, body art, skincare, tattooing, tanning, waxing, etc} () Facecare only {make up, treatment, massage, hair removal, etc} () Nailcare only {nail treatment, fixing, nail art/design, manicure/pedicure, massage, etc} () Massage only () Full Salon () Full Spa () Spa/Salon
5. Type of Ownership: () Sole Proprietorship () Partnership () Rent-a-Space () Mobile
6. Business Registration Status: () Not Registered () Registered with Municipality () Registered with Professional Association () Registered with National Authority () Registered with Business body () Other (specify) _____
7. Total number of employees: 1-3__ 4-6__ 7-10__ 10-15__
8. Number of full time employees: 1-2__ 3-5__ 6-10__
9. Number of part time employees: 1-2__ 3-5__ 6-10__

10. Number of freelance (mobile): 1-2__ 3-5__ 6-10__
11. Gender of employees: Male: 1-2__ 3-5__ 6-10__ Female: 1-2__ 3-5__ 6-10__
12. Total number of customers per week (week day): 1-3__ 4-6__ 7-10__ 10+__
13. Total number of customers per week (weekend): 1-3__ 4-6__ 7-10__ 10+__
14. Total number of Tourist-Customers per month: 1-5__ 6-10__ 11-15__ 15+__
15. Total number of Local-Customers per month: 1-5__ 6-10__ 11-15__ 15+__
16. Approximate monthly income (optional): 10,000+ THB__ 5,000-10,000 THB__ 2,500-5,000 THB__ 1,000-2,5000__
17. Approximate monthly expenses (optional): 10,000+ THB__ 5,000-10,000 THB__ 2,500-5,000 THB__ 1,000-2,5000__
18. Are you certified or licensed to operate formally? Yes No Not Sure
19. If yes, by which authority? _____
20. Are your workers certified or licensed? Yes No Not Sure
21. How many of them? 1 2 3 4 5 6+

22. Services Provided:

	Skills types	tick	Skills types	tick
General Skills	1	English language	10	ICT
	2	Teaching/training	11	Consultation/Advice
	3	Customer handling/management	12	Therapy
	4	Analysis/counselling	13	Cutting edge personal styling
	5	Creativity/originality	14	Business management
	6	Communication	15	Listening/speaking
	7	Safety & health procedures & practices	16	Art & design
	8	Chemistry/biology	17	Maintaining workstation
	9	Cleaning & sterilizing work tools		-----
	1	Hairdressing	7	Hair coloring, bleaching, tinting

Haircare Skills	2	Hair styling	8	Hair weaving/braiding
		Hair cutting/barbering	9	Hair/scalp treatment
	3	Multi-cultural hair management	10	Cutting edge hairstyling
	4	Hair pieces fixing/Wig making	11	Cutting edge hair cutting/ barbering
	5	Hair perming/straightening	12	Hair waxing/curling/waving
	13	Managing long hair		-----
Facecare Skills	1	Cutting edge facial hair removal	9	Facial hair removal (male/female)
	2	Movie/theatre make-up	10	Modelling/celebrity make-up
	3	Bridal make up	11	Face wrinkle removal
	4	Correctional makeup	12	Eyebrow/eyelash management
	5	Personality make-up	13	Evaluate facial condition
	6	Multi-cultural make up	14	Determine treatment/product based on individual condition
	7	Facial treatment	15	Design makeup style & product based on skin type/tone facial feature & personality
	8	Event/Party make-up	16	Color management & design

Nailcare Skills	1	Nail/foot/hand treatment	6	Artificial nail fixing/maintenance
	2	Evaluate hand/feet/nail condition	7	Manicure & Pedicure
	3	Determine treatment/products based on condition	8	French/American Manicure/Pedicure
	4	Determine nail polish/ design based on individual skin condition, tone & personality	9	Global manicure & pedicure
	5	Nail art and design		-----
Bodycare (skincare) Skills	1	Evaluate skin type/condition to determine treatment	8	Steaming/Wrapping
	2	Skin treatment	9	Apply Body/Face art
	3	Skin waxing/Peels/scrubbing	10	Create/design body/face art
	4	Skin exfoliation/ Extraction	11	Fixing body accessories

	5	Tanning	12	Laser treatment
	6	Tattooing	13	Plan & manage treatment/therapy
	7	Cleansing/ Scrubbing	14	-----
Massage Skills	1	Pre-natal massage	9	Deep tissue massage
	2	Thai massage	10	Manual/physical massage
	3	Chinese/Japanese massage	11	Cutting edge massage
	4	Swedish massage	12	Vibro-massage
	5	Foot/Face/neck/head massage	13	Evaluate clients' physical mental & emotional condition
	6	Orthopedic/Sport Massage	14	Determine massage therapy based on individual conditions
	7	Hydrotherapy & aroma therapy/hot stone massage	15	Design/plan/administer massage therapy for clients
	8	Acupuncture/Acupressure	16	Electronic massage

23. Services desire to provide

		Skills types	tick	Skills types	tick
General Skills	1	English language	10	ICT	
	2	Teaching/training	11	Consultation/Advice	
	3	Customer handling/management	12	Therapy	
	4	Analysis/counselling	13	Cutting edge personal styling	
	5	Creativity/originality	14	Business management	
	6	Communication	15	Listening/speaking	
	7	Safety & health procedures & practices	16	Art & design	
	8	Chemistry/biology	17	Maintaining workstation	
	9	Cleaning & sterilizing work tools		-----	
Haircare Skills	1	Hairdressing	7	Hair coloring, bleaching, tinting	
	2	Hair styling	8	Hair weaving/braiding	
		Hair cutting/barbering	9	Hair/scalp treatment	

	3	Multi-cultural hair management	10	Cutting edge hairstyling
	4	Hair pieces fixing/Wig making	11	Cutting edge hair cutting/ barbering
	5	Hair perming/straightening	12	Hair waxing/curling/waving
	13	Managing long hair		-----
Facecare Skills	1	Cutting edge facial hair removal	9	Facial hair removal (male/female)
	2	Movie/theatre make-up	10	Modelling/celebrity make-up
	3	Bridal make up	11	Face wrinkle removal
	4	Correctional makeup	12	Eyebrow/eyelash management
	5	Personality make-up	13	Evaluate facial condition
	6	Multi-cultural make up	14	Determine treatment/product based on individual condition
	7	Facial treatment	15	Design makeup style & product based on skin type/tone facial feature & personality
	8	Event/Party make-up	16	Color management & design
		-----	17	Create & design make-up styles
Nailcare Skills	1	Nail/foot/hand treatment	6	Artificial nail fixing/maintenance
	2	Evaluate hand/feet/nail condition	7	Manicure & Pedicure
	3	Determine treatment/products based on condition	8	French/American Manicure/Pedicure
	4	Determine nail polish/ design based on individual skin condition, tone & personality	9	Global manicure & pedicure
	5	Nail art and design		-----
Bodycare (skincare) Skills	1	Evaluate skin type/condition to determine treatment	8	Steaming/Wrapping
	2	Skin treatment	9	Apply Body/Face art
	3	Skin waxing/Peels/scrubbing	10	Create/design body/face art
	4	Skin exfoliation/ Extraction	11	Fixing body accessories
	5	Tanning	12	Laser treatment
	6	Tattooing	13	Plan & manage treatment/therapy

	7	Cleansing/ Scrubbing	14	-----
Massage Skills	1	Pre-natal massage	9	Deep tissue massage
	2	Thai massage	10	Manual/physical massage
	3	Chinese/Japanese massage	11	Cutting edge massage
	4	Swedish massage	12	Vibro-massage
	5	Foot/Face/neck/head massage	13	Evaluate clients' physical mental & emotional condition
	6	Orthopedic/Sport Massage	14	Determine massage therapy based on individual conditions
	7	Hydrotherapy & aroma therapy/hot stone massage	15	Design/plan/administer massage therapy for clients
	8	Acupuncture/Acupressure	16	Electronic massage

24. Do your workers need to improve their skills levels? Yes__ No__ Maybe__
25. Would you like to employ highly skilled workers with global styles? Yes__ No__ Maybe__
26. Will you like to improve the services you provide to your customers? Yes__ No__ Maybe__
27. How can you do this? _____
28. Do you think this will improve your income and clientele? Yes__ No__ Maybe__
29. Why do you think so? _____
30. How can workers improve their skills in Hat Yai? _____
31. Do you have any suggestions or ideas to add? _____

4. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

This questionnaire seeks to gather information about your Institute's and testing/certification for hairdressers, barbers, beauticians (that is skincare, manicure/pedicure, facecare, make up, body art, etc) and massage workers. This information will be used strictly for academic purposes only as part of a Master Degree Thesis research with the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Department of Educational Foundation, Prince of Songkhla University, Hat Yai.

Part 1: Trainings Provided

1. Please tick the trainings you provide:

- A. Haircare: Hairdressing () Barbering/Hair Cuts () Hair-Styling () Hair-Weaving/Braiding () Hair Extension/Wig Fixing () Hair Designs () Safety & Standards () Hair Treatment () Hair Color () Multi-racial Hair Management () Fixing Hair Accessories ()
- B. Facecare: Facial Treatment () Eyebrow & Eyelash Management () Make Up Designs () Multi-racial Make-up () Facial Hair Removal ()
- C. Nailcare: Nail and Foot Treatment () Manicure & Pedicure () Nail Art Design/Application () Nail Attachments & Management ()
- D. Bodycare: Skin Treatment () Artificial Tanning & Waxing () Extraction & Exfoliation () Body & Face Art Designs/Application () Tattooing () Fixing Body Accessories ()
- E. Massage: Personal Massage Therapy () Pre-natal Massage () Orthopedic Massage () Sport Massage () Acupuncture/Acupressure () Deep Tissue Massage () Electronic Massage () Chinese/Japanese Massage () Foot, Face & Neck Massage () Thai Massage ()
- F. Business/Social: Safety & Health Procedures & Practices () Customer Handling/Management () Social/Behavioral Skills () Standards Monitoring & Evaluation () Therapy/Counselling/Consultation () Business Management () Communication Skills ()
2. What are your training durations?
Basic: _____(months) Intermediate: _____(months) Advanced: _____(months)
3. Do you train to acquire new skills?
Yes () No ()
4. Do you train to improve professional performance?
Yes () No ()
5. Do you provide specialized trainings for those seeking to improve or upgrade their skills?
Yes () No ()
6. If yes, what Skills?

7. What are the entry requirements for your trainings?

8. How many trainings were conducted in Songkhla between 2013-2015?
- Haircare ____ Facecare ____ Nailcare ____ Bodycare
 ____ Massage ____ Business/Social ____ Other
 _____: _____

Part 2: Testing/Certification

9. What levels of certificates do you offer? Please tick
- Basic () Intermediate () Advanced () Technician () Stylist () Master ()
 Professional ()
10. Do you only test to certify for newly acquired skills from your own trainings?
 Yes () No ()
11. Do you also test to certify for newly acquired skills regardless of where training was done?
 Yes () No ()
12. Do you also test to certify for professionalism and performance? Yes () No ()
13. Do you test to certify for any of the following performance criteria? Please tick
- Effortless Work () Speed () Creativity () Originality () Automaticity ()
14. How many certificates were issued in Songkhla between 2013-2015?
- Haircare ____ Facecare ____ Nailcare ____ Bodycare
 ____ Massage ____ Business/Social ____ Other
 _____: _____

Part 3: Trainers

15. What levels do your trainers have?
- Basic () Intermediate () Advanced () Technician () Stylist ()
 Master () Professional () Other _____: _____
16. Are your trainers certified/licensed practitioners/professionals?
 Yes () No () Not Sure ()
17. Are your trainers certified/licensed to train in this practice/profession?
 Yes () No () Not Sure ()
18. If yes, by whom?

Thai Professional Qualification Institute () Thai National Qualification Framework ()
 Thai Vocational Qualification Framework () Department of Skills Development ()
 Other _____: _____

Part 4: Collaboration

19. Do you liaise with the professional associations in your trainings and certifications?
 Yes () No () Not Really () _____
20. Do you liaise with the professional associations in planning your trainings curricula?
 Yes () No () Not Really () _____
21. What advise do you have for the relevant government agencies about skills development and upgrading for informal hair and beauty services workers?

22. Do you think your training Institution can offer even more advanced trainings in these areas if well-equipped?
 Yes () No () Not Really () _____

As part of your support for this research work, can you please provide the curricula and testing criteria as well as certification samples from your training programs, if possible.

We are truly grateful for your time and effort. Thank you so much.

APPENDIX 3
Interview Protocols

1. Customer's Interviews

1. Please describe your experiences of hair and beauty service here in Hat Yai.
2. Do you ever go out of Hat Yai for these services? Why, please?
3. Do you think your service providers and others need to upgrade their skills for higher quality performance, and why?
4. Do you think if they upgrade their skills they will be able to deliver better and higher quality performance than they currently do? Please expand on this.
5. Will you like to receive better and higher quality services from your service provider? Please expand on this.
6. Will you pay more for improved and better-quality skills and services? Please expand on this.
7. How do you think this will impact on their income, value, respect and total wellbeing? Please expand on this.
8. Will you support licensing and certification of informal hair and beauty services skills? Please expand on this.
9. Will you pay more for a licensed and certified service provider? Please expand on this.
10. Can you please describe your relationship with your service provider in Hat Yai? Please expand on this.
11. How do all these affect you? Please expand on this.
12. What do you think is their biggest challenge in skills and service delivery? Please expand on this.
13. Do you have any suggestions for upgrading their skill? Please expand on this.
14. Please, tell me anything else you have on your mind.

Sign off here: (name/date) _____

2. Workers' Interviews

1. What are your technical work skills?
2. How did you acquire these skills?
3. Did you do apprenticeship and formal training or just one?
4. How long were these training?
5. What did you learn in 3, 6, 9 and 12 months of your training?
6. How have you improved or added to your skills over the years?
7. Do you want to learn new and advanced skills, and why?

8. Will you like to upgrade your skills to improve the type and quality of services you provide to your customers and why?
9. How will you rate your own performance in speed, originality, creativity and why?
10. How do you improve your skills apart from these trainings?
11. Do you think if hair and beauty services workers like you upgraded their skills to improve performance and service delivery, then you can get more customers, increase your income, value and respect; and why?
12. If there is a way to improve your current skills without losing your income, will you take it, and why?
13. Will you support licensing and certification of informal hair and beauty services skills?
Please expand on this.
14. What are the challenges informal workers like you have in upgrading their skills in Thailand and Hat Yai?
15. Do you think you can reproduce any of the works in these pictures?
16. Please, tell me anything else you have on your mind.

Sign off here: (name/date) _____

3. Business-Owners Interviews

1. Please describe your experiences of your hair and beauty service worker in Hat Yai.
2. Do you ever seek workers from outside Hat Yai for these services? Why, please?
3. Do you think your workers and others need to upgrade their skills for higher quality performance, and why?
4. Do you think if they upgrade their skills they will be able to deliver better and higher quality performance than they currently do? Please expand on this.
5. Will you like to receive better and higher quality services from your workers? Please expand on this.
6. Will you employ highly-skilled workers with upgraded skills? Please expand on this.
7. Will you pay more for improved and better-quality work skills and services? Please expand on this.
8. How do you think this will impact on their income, value, respect and total wellbeing?
Please expand on this.
9. Will you support licensing and certification of informal hair and beauty services skills?
Please expand on this.
10. Will you pay more for a licensed and certified worker? Please expand on this.
11. Can you please describe your relationship with your service provider in Hat Yai? Please expand on this.

12. How do all these affect you? Please expand on this.
13. What do you think is their biggest challenge in skills and service delivery? Please expand on this.
14. Do you have any suggestions for upgrading their skill? Please expand on this.
15. Please, tell me anything else you have on your mind.

Sign off here: (name/date) _____

4. Training-Providers' Interviews

1. Please describe your experiences of training hair and beauty service workers in Hat Yai.
2. Do you think the workers need to upgrade their skills for higher quality performance, and why?
3. Do you think if they upgrade their skills they will be able to deliver better and higher quality performance than they currently do? Please expand on this.
4. How do you think this will impact on their income, value, respect and total wellbeing? Please expand on this.
5. Will you be willing to provide advanced and specialized skills for IEWs (IHBSWs) and why?
6. Please expand on this.
7. Will you support licensing and certification of informal hair and beauty services skills? Please expand on this.
8. Can you please describe the training provision process in Hat Yai? Please expand on this.
9. How do all these affect you? Please expand on this.
10. What are some challenges of providing training for the IEWs? Please expand on this.
11. Do you have any suggestions for upgrading their skill? Please expand on this.
12. As a trainer, what skills/levels do you have and how much training have you had?
13. Could you tell me about your own training experience and about being a trainer.
14. Please, tell me anything else you have on your mind.

Sign off here: (name/date) _____

APPENDIX 4
QUOTES FROM INTERVIEWS with customers, workers, business-owners
and training-providers)

1. **Customers:** Five customers were selected out of all those interviewed. Two were male and one of them was non-Thai. These were chosen because they summed up all other responses. Also, only those interviews with natives that had a translator present to directly translate were used for this section. Each interview lasted approximately 25-40 minutes. The quotes are made up of original responses as well as responses to follow-up questions. All interviewees gave written and verbal consent. Pseudo-names are used in order to protect the privacy of the interviewees and ensure confidentiality. Contents and translation of the interview were confirmed with the interviewee before the interview was concluded.

Quotes: When asked:

a) Will skills upgrading improve the income of the IEWs (IHBSWs)?

Charis: “Absolutely! More and better skills will enable the service-providers to charge more for their services. Besides, I will visit more regularly and that is more money.”

Iman: “With improved skills, they will be able to offer more services and customers will be more satisfied and they will pay more. This means that the service-provider will make more money.”

Sana: “If they upgrade their skills, then they will have more customers and can offer different types of services. They can also charge extra for their upgraded services. With increased services and more customers then they will make more money.”

Salam: “I like it when my service-provider does a very good job on me. As a guy who likes to look good always, I think that if they add new skills and perform better services on their customers, then they will get more customers, and they can charge more, even the status of their customers will be upgraded. Even if they don’t charge more, with increased clientele, they will earn more money. But, if their skills are top-quality, they should charge more too; and make more money.”

Jamie: “They get to charge more, offer more services and get more clients – more of all these, I think, should result to more money earned. So, I believe, upgrading their skills will improve their income....”

b) Will you pay more for upgraded skills?

Charis: “Yes, I would! If the service is of high-quality compared to others, I will gladly pay more, especially since most of them do the same thing in the same way. I will visit the person even more regularly because I will be more than satisfied.”

Iman: “Why not? I like good things and they often cost more. Actually, some service-providers are really good and they charge more, but still have a large customer-base. My salon, for instance, charge more for their services, but they have a lot of customers.”

Sana: “I will definitely pay more for quality services or services I don’t get in other places. Sometimes, I go to the salons that charge more because I want excellent service and they have highly-skilled workers. if all I want is to shampoo and condition my hair, then I can do it at home and not have to pay for it. But, I’m willing to pay more for more than what I can do for myself when it is excellent.”

Salam: “Yes, I will pay more for top-quality service. It should be expected, yes?”

Jamie: “I’m willing to pay top rate for high-quality, especially when most services available are so mediocre. So, yes I will pay more.....”

c) Will skills upgrading improve their wellbeing and self-esteem (on an extra note)?

Charis: “Yes, because when they have more customers commending their services, they will feel better about themselves and also feel appreciated. Moreover, they will earn more and so will be able to afford better living.”

Iman: “Yes, I think so. They will have more clientele, make more money and also be in demand. This will make the, happy and live a better life. Even their attitude will change because they feel worthy in life.”

Sana: “I think upgrading their skills will make them more confident and bold to be creative. Also, their customers will be pleased with them and this will make them even more confident and their self-value will increase. I suppose the extra money will also help a lot to improve their wellbeing.”

Salam: “When they earn more money and their customers talk about their good work and recommend them to others and their clientele increase.....this will make them feel good inside, which can affect their physical, mental and emotional health as well as relationships. Also, more money means they can take better care of themselves.”

Jamie: “Sure. Anyone will feel good about themselves when business is good and their making more money. I mean, there’s nothing like being able to pat yourself on the back for a job well done and have others appreciate you as well – with words and money. Yes, that’s a good feeling.”

d) What hair and beauty services do you use regularly?

Charis: “I use hair, nail and facials regularly, but facials are mainly done at home because it’s the same as when I go to the salon except when I need make-up for special events. But, treatment for hair needs to be improved.”

Iman: “Hair and nail most regularly. Facial treatment not too regularly -- maybe 2-3 months; but more often at home. Make-up – not really because I do it by myself. I get foot and head massage every time I go to the salon though, except that I need better treatment for my hair.”

Sana: “Mostly hair, face treatment, nail and skin treatment. As I get older, I find I need to take better care of myself every now and then. But, I only do make-up sometimes for special occasions. I wish I could get more personalized treatment for my hair and face, but that is not available.”

Salam: “I get haircuts and styling most regularly as well as coloring, sometimes. I also get regular facial hair removal (shaving). I sometimes go for massage, but this is not something I pay for except maybe its specialized like orthopedic or sport massage.”

Jamie: “Haircuts, shampooing with conditioning and my fiancée gets her hair trimmed. I used to keep a beard, but due to not being able to find someone to maintain it, I go clean-shaven now, so yes, I go for a shave when I’m too lazy to do it myself. My fiancée likes to have a manicure and pedicure because she enjoys the massage that goes with it, but the services is not exceptional. As a faran, it’s hard to get what you need.”

e) Any suggestions?

Charis: “These service-providers should be more service-minded so that they can meet the needs and demands of their customers in order to satisfy them. And they need to understand the individuality of their customers so that they can give them personalized services.”

Iman: “They need skills in better treatment methods and procedures as well as understanding of the best and suitable products and procedures for individual types and conditions.”

Sana: “There are too many service providers scattered all over the city with too little training and almost no professionalism. They have to upgrade their skills to professional levels by taking improved trainings and practicing more.”

Salam: “They seriously need to upgrade their skills. They should also put more effort into learning new skills, tricks and styles because the trends are changing fast. Also, available trainings should recognize that the trends are changing fast.”

Jamie: “They need to learn how to deal with multi-racial clients because Thailand is a globally-oriented country. They also must learn to be globally competitive. They can work anywhere in the world and even earn much more, but they first need to improve their English communication and upgrade their skills to global standards.”

2. **Workers:** Five workers were selected out of all those interviewed and two were male. These were chosen because they summed up all other responses. Also, only those interviews that had a translator present to directly translate were used for this section. Each interview lasted approximately 25-40 minutes. The quotes are made up of original responses as well as responses to follow-up questions. All interviewees gave written and verbal consent. Pseudo-names are used in order to protect the privacy of the interviewees and ensure confidentiality. Contents and translation of the interview were confirmed with the interviewee before the interview was concluded.

Quotes: When asked:

a) Will skills upgrading improve the income or self-esteem of the IEWs (IHBSWs)?

Mia: “I’m not sure because this might mean that we will have to charge more and customers may not want to pay and then we lose our customers. This will make us to lose money. ... But, it can make us feel better about ourselves since we can be proud of our skills and people will value our services. This work is about making people beautiful and healthy so when we have the best skills to deliver excellent service to our customers, we feel good inside.”

Nun: “It costs money to get training to upgrade our skills and we may not be able to recover the expense. Customers are already few, if we charge more for our services, they will not want to pay. I believe it will improve self-esteem because this is an artistic and emotional work and so when the work is great, I feel good and when my customer is not satisfied, I feel terrible.”

Boss: “Yes, I really think so. I already have many customers because they like my work. I think I can offer them more services by upgrading my skills and the quality of my service, then I can ask for more money and this will improve my income because I will also have more customers. ... Yes, it will improve my self-esteem because I like my work and I want to please my customers.”

Diva: “I don’t think so because the economy today does not encourage people to spend money. Upgrading skills cost money and improved performance should cost more for the customer, that is, rise in price. But, customers may not be willing or able to pay and this will affect income negatively. ... No, I don’t think so because when there are no customers and money is short, it cannot be good for workers’ self-esteem. I don’t know how this will be, but I think maybe it can affect attitude.”

James: “I agree because when I improved my skills and added new styles and services in my salon where I work, I got more customers and they pay more for the new services, so I earn more money, I know that if I learn more new skills that I will get more customers and more money. But, I don’t have the time now because of work and the cost is high, moreover, there are no trainings for what I want to learn here, only in Bangkok. But, I try to practice from YouTube and Facebook. ... Really, I feel great every time my customers praise my work and when I earn more, I’m happy. ... Self-esteem has to do with confidence, so I think when my skills are improved, I will be more confident and this will improve my self-esteem.”

b) Will you like to upgrade your skills?

Mia: “Yes, but I don’t have the time and training is too expensive. And there are only basic training available here so I have to travel and I cannot afford that. But, I will like to upgrade my hair coloring and treatment skills.”

Nun: “Yes, I will really like to learn skills in hair treatment and new styles and cuts as well as nail art and enhancements. But, these trainings are not available here and they are very expensive for me. I cannot leave my work because then I will not be earning money. But, I really want to upgrade my skills...if I can get someone to pay for me ... (laughs).”

Boss: “More than anything. I want to improve in quality and what I can offer, but I cannot afford the training cost or the time to leave work and go for the kind of training that I need. Besides, the kind of training I want are not available here. I try to learn them on my own, but it’s difficult. ... Self-esteem has to do with confidence, so I think when my skills are improved, I will be more confident and this will improve my self-esteem.”

Diva: “I’m not sure because I don’t see the need. We don’t really have much customers anyway. It doesn’t make sense to spend money to learn new skills, especially in this economy. Anyway, I think I’m too old to be learning new things when I cannot afford it.”

James: “Like I said before, I want to upgrade my skills, but for now, I cannot afford the money or time. Most of the trainings for upgrading skills are in Bangkok or at least not around here, which means I will have to

leave my work for some time and during this time, I won't have any income and I may not have a job to come back to. But, I'm planning towards it. . . ."

c) Any suggestions?

Mia: "If it is possible for government to help pay for skills upgrading for those who are already working and also for them to provide training centers that deliver these specialized trainings here in Hat Yai or close-by, it will really help."

Nun: "Training cost is too high and even trainings are not available here. I think the government should help us by making training affordable and available. And I think we need people who really know the skills to teach us so we can really get it."

Boss: "If there's anything that can be done to reduce training cost and availability to make it easier for us to access the training we need, it will be great. Also, training needs to consider the changing trends and keep up."

Diva: "I think more focus should be put on practice because training is so expensive. Also, if on-the-job training quality can be improved, then it will help to reduce costs. But, that means trainers must first be trained and this brings us back again to the beginning."

James: "Government and other private organizations can help to support skill upgrading by subsidizing cost as well as providing the required trainings and not just basic courses. Also, competitions can be organized to challenge the IHBSWs to improve their skills. and better quality trainers need to be provided. I also think that the manufacturers of the products and tools we use should support us more in getting the training we need."

3. Business-Owners: Two business-owners were selected out of all those interviewed; one female and one male. These were chosen because they summed up all other responses. Also, only those interviews that had a translator present to directly translate were used for this section. Each interview lasted approximately 25-40 minutes. The quotes are made up of original responses as well as responses to follow-up questions. All interviewees gave written and verbal consent. Pseudo-names are used in order to protect the privacy of the interviewees and ensure confidentiality. Contents and translation of the interview were confirmed with the interviewee before the interview was concluded.

Quotes: When asked:

a) Will skills upgrading improve the income or self-esteem of the IEWs (IHBSWs)?

Miss: "Sure, I do. Upgraded skills will attract new customers and keep old ones because of improved quality and type of services. This will lead to increase in income because more customers mean more money; and if they charge higher, then they get even more income. This is good for the business too, and even for the customers. Of course, then, the workers feel good about themselves and take better care of themselves and their families. Also, when the workers are happy they work even better."

Mister: “Yes, because it will improve customer satisfaction and when customers are satisfied, they will come more often and bring more customers. This will keep the business open and even employ more people while paying higher salary to the workers. I think it will also affect the workers positively in their attitude, relationships and life in general. They will surely earn more, especially those like me who own their own business.”

b) Will you pay extra for highly-skill workers?

Miss: “Yes, if I can find them. They will increase our customer base and I can charge more. Maybe, not so much, but it will be more.”

Mister: “I will surely pay more to a worker that has more to offer because they are good for business. But, it’s hard to find such people around here. If their skills improve clientele, then I will pay them accordingly. But, most times, these people prefer to leave and go start their own business and so in the end, it does not make sense. So, I will pay even more for loyalty, dedication and commitment.”

c) Any suggestions?

Miss: “Well, I think more training should be provided and I mean quality training – and training costs should be reduced. I also think training should include attitude appearance, communication and business management. Training to upgrade skills is more essential because we need professionalism for those in work already than we need more new entrants. Also, workers need to practice more and stop being lazy. They need to improve their attitude to work and customers. Maybe, government can help more with training for those of us already working to gain new and improved skills.”

Mister: “It is important for beginning skills to be upgraded and also training for novice beginners should be improved so they are better equipped and ready to learn new skills. Also, workers need to learn new skills to add to what they already have because the trends change so fast and you can end up with skills nobody wants. Therefore, training should also capture this. But, workers must improve their attitude and communication skills and they should practice more often and try to learn new things on their own. Above all, government can really help by reducing training cost and supporting training-providers to deliver quality and up-to-date programs. Also, cooperation and collaboration between training-providers, government, private organizations and even academic institutions will go a long way to improve training quality.”

4. Training-Providers: Two training-providers from two training institutions were interviewed. Interviews had a translator present to directly translate during the interview. Each interview lasted approximately 25-40 minutes. The quotes are made up of original responses as well as responses to follow-up questions. All interviewees gave written and verbal consent. Pseudo-names are used in order to protect the privacy of the interviewees and ensure confidentiality. Contents and translation of the interview were confirmed with the interviewee before the interview was concluded.

Quotes: When asked:

b) Will you be willing to provide advanced and specialized skills for IEWs (IHBSWs)?

Bay: “We will be willing to provide higher level and specialized trainings for the IEWs if we were well-equipped and well-funded. But, the current trainings we have are only for basic courses and we cannot train for professionalism because of inadequate funding.”

Bee: “Yes, of course. We are planning some training for specialized aspects like make-up and hair style skills to suit individual face shapes. . . . No, we do not have enough funding so we can only offer a few basic courses. For now the trainees have to find more knowledge and experience through self-learning and practice.”

c) What some challenges of providing training for the IEWs?

Bay: “Due to inadequate funding training duration is short and only basic courses are provided. And trainers are not always available. There are no professional courses.”

Bee: “The main challenge is that budget is low. We can only afford to provide short basic training courses in a few skill areas and students have to teach themselves anything else and some of our trainers are not professionally certified.”

Conclusions & Recommendations: Findings from all aspects of the study were summarized in thematic form to produce some conclusions and recommendations for skills upgrading of IHBSWs in Hat Yai city, Thailand.

Themes	Findings
How does this affect the informal hair and beauty services workers' skills?	Some of the workers are very good in basic hair and beauty care, but they need to learn new skills and understand the procedures of the work. They need to acquire more appropriate skills. They need to be more professional, too many of them lack professional skills. This is why they get few customers because the customers don't feel that the workers have any outstanding skills and they can easily do for themselves at home whatever is offered in the salons. Most foreigners complain that workers do not have the skills to handle multicultural (non-Thai) demands. Most of the workers cannot handle high trends like nail art, dreadlocks, hair braiding, hair treatment, individual conditions and treatment massage (like prenatal, orthopedic, deep tissue) and anything specific.
What are the current skills levels of the informal hair and beauty services workers?	Majority of the workers are at Basic skill level. Some of the workers believe that they are experts, but still need to learn new skills because they only very good at doing one thing. They are very good at basic skills like hair shampooing/conditioning, hairdressing/trimming, nail buffing/trimming/coating/fixing and face scrub/masking. The workers want to learn skills in all spectrum of the hair and beauty services skill set.
What are the challenges of the informal hair and	The workers want to learn new skills but trainings are scarce, cost more than they can afford and there is no time because they cannot leave their workplaces as that would mean loss of income. They want to add to their skills because trends are ever changing and they want to be up-to-date. They are willing to attend trainings if it will not affect their income and if it is affordable. But, customers

beauty services workers in this regard? complain that most of the workers are lazy and do not try to learn new skills or practice old skills regularly. But, the workers fear that if they spend money on acquiring new skills, they will not get a return on such investments because they cannot raise prices since customers will not pay (because they say the economy is bad). But, the customers say that they are willing to pay more for high quality and in-trend services. Most of the workers have peak days of Friday to Sunday and off-days from Monday to Thursday; and most of these customers over the weekend are tourists. However, most of these workers have very low English language skills. Customers complain that there are too many salons with just basic skilled workers. But, there are some franchised salons/massage parlors from Bangkok and otherwise who have highly skilled and certified workers; but they are few.

Do you have any suggestions or recommendations? Workers need to practice their skills more and try to gain experience through self-learning. Workers need attitude, social and communication skills in order to keep customers. Hair and beauty services is a very challenging area of work and requires dedication and commitment to skill learning because it works with changing times and trends, which means that workers need to always be learning new tricks and skills. It is better to first master the basic skills before trying to learn the higher order skills; and any skill can be mastered through practice. More training should be provided for professional skills; and training duration should be extended. Intermediate and Advanced certificates should also be awarded. Training institutions can offer advanced and professional trainings if they are well-equipped and funded. More training should be arranged and training costs reduced, and training should include practice sessions. Training design should involve the professional hair and beauty services workers and other relevant organizations. Also, training providers need to collaborate with professional associations, private sector, government and academic institutions to improve the skill acquisition process. This will benefit all the parties. Hair and beauty industry should get more involved in skills upgrading trainings in order to improve the quality of work of these IEWs which will in turn increase their purchase of industry's products.

APPENDIX 5
Observation Protocol

a) Number of Customers that came into the salons during observation periods.

ACTIVITY	WEEKDAY			WEEKEND			SUM
	Morning	Afternoon	Evening	Morning	Afternoon	Evening	
Number of local clientele per worker							
Number of foreign clientele per worker							
Total number of clientele per worker							
Number of customers not being able to get a requested service							
Number of customers who got requested service							
Number of specialized services performed							
Number of female customers that came in							
Number of male customers that came in							
Number of young adult customers that came in							
Number of middle-aged customers that came in							
Number of elderly customers that came in							

b) Type of services Customers that came into the salons requested and got during observation periods.

Salon	ACTIVITY	WEEKDAY			WEEKEND			SUM	
		Morning	Afternoon	Evening	Morning	Afternoon	Evening		
Hair & Beauty Salon 1									
Hair & Beauty Salon 2		G	NG	G	NG	G	NG	G	NG
Barber Salon									
Spa/Massage Salon									
Sum									

Note: G: Services Got

NG: Services not Got

APPENDIX VI

APPENDICES: PHOTOGRAPHS



Photographs 1: IHBSWs filling out the Questionnaires



Photographs 2: Survey and Interview with Training Providers



Photograph 3: Researcher as a Participant Observer in two locations



Photographs 4: During Special Workshop and ad-hoc training for the public on hair and beauty

INDEXING

PAPER ONE

Skills Upgrading for Performance Improvement of Informal Economy Workers in
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Abstract

Improving the economic and productive capacity of informal economy workers (IEWs) in developing countries has been a major priority globally. Studies have revealed that informal workers (IWs) are generally plagued with low skills, low income and low productivity, which could tie to the fact that they do not have the requisite means to improve their performance quality through skills training. This study asked how skills upgrading can be used to improve skill performance of IEWs with the objective to determine the skill performance level informal hair and beauty services workers (IHBSWs), Hat Yai, Thailand and make recommendations for appropriate strategies to integrate skill upgrading into skill development programs and policies for Thailand's IEWs. To address these issues, the perceptions of IHBSWs in Hat Yai as well as their customers were explored about the impact of skills upgrading on skill performance and the skill performance levels of IHBSWs. Mixed method design was used with questionnaire and interview instruments. In analyzing the skill performance levels of the workers, we used paired perceptual rating estimation (PPRE) and also to ensure high level of uniformity, a performance rating scale (PRS) from the Dreyfus skill performance level model was adapted. The PPRE was developed by matching ratings of workers and customers to derive a single score. The findings revealed that people (71%) generally perceive that skill upgrading greatly impacts skill performance. Overall PPRE show skills performance levels to be at novice levels for most skills and all other skill sets except General Skills, which relates to the general concept that informal workers are basically low-skilled with low-productivity. Conclusively, IEWs need skill upgrading to improve their performance and so thus skill upgrading should be an integral part of skill development strategies.

Keywords: informal-economy-workers; informal-hair-and-beauty-services-workers; perceptual-rating-estimation; skill-performance-level; skills-upgrading

1.0 Introduction

Improving the economic and productive capacity of informal economy workers (IEWs) in developing countries has been a major priority globally (OECD 2015, 2012, 2002; ILO 2015a,b, 2014, 2013a,b, 2002a,b; World Bank 2014; Adams, de Silva and Razmara 2013; Langer 2013; UNESCO 2012; Pina, Kotin, Hausman and Macharia 2012; Cano-Urbina 2012; ADB 2011; Palmer 2008; Adams 2008; Johanson and Adams 2004; Liimatainen 2002; Chen 2002; Haan 2002; Chen, Jhabvala and Lund 2001; Birchall 2001; Leach 1995; McLaughlin 1989; Fluitman 1989). This is probably based on the recognition that decent work and productive employment alone cannot transit people out of poverty, low income and low self-esteem (World Bank 2014; UNESCO 2012; Adams 2011; King and Palmer 2007; ILO 2003; Haan 2002; Khan 2001), especially since the majority of new work opportunities in recent times are found in self-employment and work in the informal economy (IE) (ILO 2013a,b, 2012a; Adams et al 2013). As a matter of fact, informal employment seems to be rising like a tidal wave above formal employment - over 80% of the workforce in developing nations and 20% of those in developed nations are in the IE (ILO 2014, 2013a,b; EC 2009a; Becker 2004).

However, studies have revealed that informal workers (IWs) are generally plagued with low skills, low income and low productivity (ILO 2013a,b, 2010, 2008; Adams et al 2013; Palmer 2008; King & Palmer 2008; Silva 2008; Pavcnik, 2002) because they lack access or funding for training to upgrade their skills (Langer 2013; Adams et al 2013; Johanson and Adams 2004; Palmer 2008; Liimatainen 2002). This argument could tie to the fact that they do not have the requisite means to improve their performance quality in order to improve their productivity (Klay 2016; Ali, Yousof, Khan and Masood 2011; Gupta and Upadhyay 2012). It has, therefore, become clearly evident that IWs need to improve their skills performance level to be able to function properly and profitably in their economic activities (Langer 2013; Adams et al 2013; Pina et al 2012; ILO, 2012a, 2010; ADB, 2011).

According to Johanson and Adams (2004), in their study of the sub-Saharan African IE, skills training for IWs are centered on improving their productivity, products and

services quality and personal income. Others have also added that it predicated on the exponential growth of the labor force over the years and the need to create more jobs since the IE seems expansive enough to assimilate the teeming global workforce population (Langer 2013; Adams et al 2013; Becker 2004) as well as its effect on poverty reduction and national economies (Palmer 2008; ILO 2013a). To this regard, helping IWs improve their labor prospects must go beyond helping the unemployed find jobs; but must include helping low-skilled incumbent workers enhance their skills levels (Brewer et. al., 2012; BIS, 2010; Brisbois & Saunders, 2005).

A large proportion of the working population requires upgraded skills (ILO 2010; EC 2010a,b, 2009a,b) and the capacity to learn new skills is essential in a globalized economy (World Bank 2014). Skills upgrading (SU) is targeted at incumbent workers who are already practicing their profession with some skills. The EC (2009b) recognized the need for skills upgrading while the OECD (2006) insists that SU for low-skilled workers should become a strategic objective of governments. However, most existing training provisions and studies almost exclusively target pre-employment candidates for the wage economy rather than the large population of incumbent workers in the IE who need SU (Johanson and Adams 2004), and most of these trainings are designed for the industrial environment (Adams et al 2013). The workers primarily in the IE (i.e. the IEWs) have not been captured in policy and training designs for skill development (SD), nationally and globally (King 2012; ILO 2014, 2011; Chen 2012; Chen et al 2002; La Porta and Shleifer 2009).

Moreso, SU for IEWs has hardly been studied (King 2012), but only mentioned in few studies (Pina et al 2012) that focused more on pre-employment preparation for work in the formal economy (FE) (Adams et al 2013; King and Palmer 2013; ADB 2013; Pina et al 2012; Chen 2012; Palmer 2007a-c, 2006a,b; Liimatainen 2002; Chen et al 2002). Furthermore, studies on skill development for IWs hardly approach the issue from the perspectives of the IWs and/or the users of their services. Therefore, the purpose of this work is to explore the perceptions of IEWs and the users of their services on the need for skill upgrading and determine the skill performance levels of these workers. This will

contribute to understanding how the workers and customers view SU as well as enable policymakers and training-providers to plan and design specific programs that fit effectively and practically to the needs of the IEWs and customers. This then prompts the research question ‘how can skill upgrading be used to improve skill performance of informal economy workers?’ with an objectives aimed at determining the skill performance levels of informal hair and beauty services workers (IHBSWs) in Hat-Yai and make recommendations for policy and training improvement.

2.0 Literature Review

Skills upgrading involves expanding, extending or building upon existing skills in order to succeed in a preferred occupational domain, and the ultimate aim is to build better skilled and oriented individuals (EC 2009a; Wilhelm and Mueller 2003) as well as keep skills up-to-date on a continuous basis in order to remain competitive. Performance, however, is to do something up to a standard (Schechner 2013) and produce valued results through applying skills and abilities to any given task. It is like a journey and not a destination and the stops along the way are called performance levels where each level represents efficiency and quality of the performance (Elger 2007). Training has been revealed to have a strong and positive relationship with performance, and indeed productivity, (Tahir, Yousafzai, Jan and Hashim 2014; Sabir, Akhtar, Bukhari, Nasir and Ahmed 2014; Ahmad, Ahmad and Asghar 2014; Kum, Cowden and Karodia 2014; Habib, Mushtaq and Zahra 2015; Mehmood, Ahmed, Sultana and Irum 2012; Hafeez and Akbar 2015), whether directly or indirectly (Barba-Aragon, Jimenez and Valle 2014; Jagero, Komba and Mlingi 2012; Dabale, Jagero and Nyauchi 2014; Boothby, Dufuor and Tang 2010). In other words, improving performance will require advancing and progressive levels of skills training, particularly since performance improvement is dependent on levels of skills and knowledge (Elger 2007). Therefore, skills upgrading training will serve as a means to bridge the gaps in performance quality and levels (Swart et al 2005; Wright and Geroy 2001; Ahmed and Bakar 2003; Kim 2006).

However, performance improvement is not easy (Ali et al 2011; Klay 2013) and requires concerted efforts from government and other stakeholders. Basically, in order for productivity (and other related outcomes like income and wellbeing, competitiveness and development) to improve, performance quality/level must go up and for this to happen, skills, abilities and capacities must expand and extend through training (Ali et al 2011; Phusavat 2013; Gupta and Upadhyay 2012). This, therefore, necessitates the need for performance assessments in order to determine the performance levels of workers so as to identify what and where improvement is required (Behn 2003; Brown and Benson 2003; Gupta and Upadhyay 2012; Salau, Oludayo, Omoniyi and Akinbode 2014). Furthermore, for performance assessments to be effective, it should involve those being assessed (i.e. workers or employees) in order to capture their own perspectives (Mone and London 2010; Salau et al 2014). Subsequently, improving the productivity of IEWs will inevitably proceed from an assessment of their performance levels, which will then serve as feedback for the workers, policymakers and training-providers to support planning and implementation of programs for SU (Brown 2004; Wiggins 1989; Moss 1992; Herman, Aschbacher and Winters 1992; Khattri, Reeve and Kane 1998; Norris, Brown, Hudson and Yoshioka 1998; Landy and Farr 1980).

Further research on the understanding of skill upgrading is needed, particularly for IEWs, to make meaningful contributions to sustainable and effective national skills upgrading development policies and training programs (Azoh, Weyer & Carton 2015; King and Palmer 2014; Norrag 2012). Furthermore, most countries national skills development policies (NSDPs) are still inadequate and as such may not benefit the millions of incumbent workers in the IE. Also, multilateral agencies like the ILO, UNESCO and the World Bank encourage national skill policies that are focused on pre-employment training designed for the acquisition of foundational skills of literacy and numeracy at the detriment of the technical and vocational skills. In addition, not much attention has been given to skills development of workers in the IE in national programs and planning (King 2012) in spite of the fact, it has been recognized that quality education, pre-employment training and continuous learning (i.e. skill upgrading) are solid pillars for sustaining individual

employability essential for promoting people, enterprise, economic and societal development (ILO 2006, 2004; UNESCO 2012).

The concept of skill upgrading is drawn from the ILO international labor standard which recommends people-centered education and training as well as lifelong learning to promote people employability that contributes to personal, cultural and citizen development (ILO 2004). Even though the recommendations call for member states to develop policies and programs that address the challenges in the IE, it still does not consider the IE as an entity on its own, but as temporal and undesirable status which denies the IEWs the needed support for SU (ILO 2004, 2006). Therefore, the scope of skills upgrading (lifelong learning) in the specific context of vocational and professional education should be designed to enhance an individual's capacity to secure and retain decent work, grow within occupation and cope with change (ILO 2004, 2006). The challenge of IEWs productive capacity cannot be simplified into ability to read, write and count (UN 5015b; GEM 2016; King 2012; King and Palmer 2012, 2015), but more on their skill performance quality, which is dependent on the quality of skill upgrading opportunities available in technical, vocational and skill development (TVSD) systems (King 2012; King and Palmer 2012, 2015).

2.1 Skill Development in Thailand

National Skill Development Policies (NSDPs) in Thailand follow the ILO's Recommendation 195 (ILO 2004) and are primarily focused on the formal economy (FE) and industry (KOT 2002; KOT 2008a; KOT 2008b; NESPAP 2016). There is an urgent need for skills upgrading for IEWs in Thailand and access to trainings need to be intensified (ILO 2016), but, skill development for IEWs are not pronounced in NSDPs. The national Skill Development Promotion Act (SDPA) did not make provision for SU for IWs. Skills upgrading is primarily for those who work in the FE, but Thailand's large informal workforce is not given any targeted attention (ONESDB 2012, 2008, 1998; KOT 2002). IWs are officially described as wage or self-employed persons wage or self-employed persons of at least 15 years whose employment is not protected or regulated (NSO 2015,

2014; Thanachaisethavut 2011). They make up 55.9% of the labor force and majority of them (32.9%) work in trade and services sector (NSO 2016), but there is no data showing the differential of those working in the FE and the IE. The number of IWs has continued to be above the formal workers (FWs) (16.1%) (NSO 2015) in Thailand (Warunsiri 2011; Sauwalak & Chettha 2000; ILO 2016) even though formal employment is on the increase while informal employment is on the decrease (NSO 2015). However, trade and services in the IE such as shop and sales of goods, repairs, massage, haircare, car wash, laundry, street-vending among others, have continued to grow, especially in the urban centers (NSO 2015; Warunsiri 2011; Phongpaichit & Baker 2000).

Skill development is accessed in three ways in Thailand: formal (vocational education and training), non-formal (dual-vocational-training [DVT] and workplace training) and informal (skill development training and apprenticeship) (NESPAP 2016; ILO 2013c; World Bank 2012; ILO 2016; Rojvithee 2007). The formal vocational education is offered in three levels. The first is the certificate in vocational education (Por Wor Chor) taken from upper-secondary level; followed by the diploma or associate degree in vocational education (Por Wor Sor), which is post-secondary level; and higher diploma at a vocational college, after which a university bachelor can be pursued (ILO 2016; OEC 2008; MoE 2008a,b; KOT 1999; ONEC 2003a,b).

Vocational education starts at the upper-secondary level. Students can choose to proceed from lower-secondary directly to vocational studies in upper-secondary or remain in the general education program. For those in the upper-secondary vocational program, a vocational certificate is awarded after successful completion of the 3-year program. The certificate can then be used to train for a vocational and technical diploma for another 3 years in post-upper-secondary level (in a vocational college), which is also open to upper-secondary graduates of the general education program. A further 2-year program leads to a higher diploma or bachelor degree (NESPAP 2016; ILO 2016; OEC 2008; MoE 2008a,b; KOT 1999; ONEC 2003a,b). Some IEWs acquire their initial skills from the 'Por Wor Chor' and the 'Por Wor Sor', but few from vocational colleges. This is understandable as many of them complete their secondary education, but the cost of any more formal

education deters them from going any further (Peter-Cookey and Janyam 2016a). Besides, the formal vocational education pathway is primarily directed towards pre-employment in the FE and not SU in the IE.

The non-formal vocational education and training primarily takes place in workplace settings and there two forms administered by the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare (MoLSW). First, there is the DVT program that involves partnerships between vocational colleges, students and private enterprises administered by the MoE. The aim is for students to learn the theoretical aspects of their training in school and transfer this knowledge to practical demonstration in industry to hone their skills. The system covers upper-secondary to university levels. Certificates are awarded based on the level of education the student is engaged upon (NESPAP 2016; ILO 2016; KOT 2008a; OEC 2008; MoE 2008a,b; KOT 1999; ONEC 2003a,b). This also targets pre-employment for the formal sector, and not SU, and so may not be relevant for IEWs who work in informal enterprises that do not participate in the DVT program due to stringent requirements (KOT 2008a).

Second, there is the non-formal vocational training that is clearly linked to SU is the ‘workplace training’ for company employees, which is administered by the MoLSW. Employers are encouraged and mandated to train their employees in the acquisition of new skills or improving old ones; as stated in the Thai Skill Development Act (KOT 2002). The government offers incentives to the enterprises to train more than half of their employees annually and some non-employees. For instance, income tax exemptions on the percentage of training expenses; import duty and value-added-tax exemptions on training equipment and expatriate personnel; and deductions on water and electricity bills up to double training expenses (KOT 2002; Smiti 2010). In this regard, the company management is the training-provider and the workplace setting is the training center. This opportunity is available to enterprises with at least 100 employees. The non-formal vocational education system also appears to primarily aim at providing a better skilled workforce for the FE and larger enterprises. IEWs, which could benefit from such trainings, are left out because they work

for informal enterprises that only employ a maximum of ten employees and these enterprises have no incentives to train their workers.

The third pathway for vocational skill development is the informal training, which is most appropriate for SU of IEWs. The informal vocational education/training system consists of short and medium term courses in skill development centers and some vocational colleges (public and private), but does not include apprenticeship training. These courses range from 6-280 hours and are either pre-employment or SU focused; and sometimes, particularly designed for the self-employed and IEWs. Certificates are awarded after successfully passing a skill standard test administered by the Department of Skill Development (DSD) of the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare (DSD 2016; NESPAP 2016; ILO 2016; OVES 2012; Silpa-Archa 2010; Rojvithee 2007). This paper aims to use the perceptions of IHBSWs and customers to determine need for skill upgrading for performance quality in order to see how skill upgrading can improve performance and then make recommendations particularly for Thailand.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations

The theoretical framework adapted for this study is anchored on the human capital theory (HCT) (Becker 2002, 1993, 1975; Schultz 1971; Kwon 2009; Cueto et al 2014; Popovic 2011; Unger et al 2011; Matanda 2008; Reimer-Hild et al 2007; Olaniyan and Okemakinde 2008; Bildirici et al 2005; Teixeira 2002, Cornachione 2010; Little 2002) and the system theory ((Lazlo and Krippner 1989; Bishop 2008; Scoones et al 2007)), while performance assessment is adapted from the Dreyfus Novice-to-Expert model (Dreyfus, 2004; Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986, 1982, 1980, 1977, 1979). It is based on the proposition that learning new skills and perfecting old ones while on the job can improve performance and then productivity, ultimately affecting income and total wellbeing of the individual positively and the pathway to this outcome will involve a systematic process. In spite of critics arguments against the HCT's focus on education and training (Reed and Wolniack 2005; Bildirici et al 2005; Wolf 2002), indications have shown (through research investigations)

that increasing the human capital (skills) of IWs can improve their performance, productivity, and income (Adams et al 2013; Johanson and Adams 2004; Chen and Jhablava 2002). To balance out the HCT, however, and the need for a holistic and comprehensive approach, the study viewed skills upgrading as a systematic cycle of interactions that will not be restricted to education and training alone, but include the socioeconomic, political and cultural contexts that pervade the informal economy.

The Dreyfus Novice-to-Expert skill performance model emphasizes the learning from experience or learning by doing theoretical framework required for practical sets (Kinchin & Cabot, 2010) and the stages of skills levels reflect changes in the general aspects of skill performance (Kinchin & Cabot, 2010; Benner, 1982). According to the Dreyfus brothers (1980), the Model traces the journey of skills performance of the novice to the master stage, and of the expert facing unfamiliar situations. The brothers argued that “a detailed understanding of the stages through which skillful performance develops is essential if one is to design training programs and training materials to facilitate the acquisition of high order skills” (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1980) because identifying the capacities acquired at each level, and also what further capacities are required to move to the next level is essential in planning any training program (Carraccio et al, 2008; Benner 2004a, Dreyfus, 2004; Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986, 1982, 1980, 1977, 1979- Figure 1). They described six stages or levels of skills acquisition an individual must ascend in order to reach the level of expertise: novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient, expert and master (Dreyfus, 2004, 2002, 2001; Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986, 1982, 1980, 1977, 1979). It has been used in several researches in education, engineering, medicine, nursing, sports, language, science, psychology, librarians, etc (Honken, 2013; Rushbrooke, 2013; Gentile, 2012; Carraccio et al, 2008; Bridges & Lau, 2006; Dreyfus, 2005; Benner, 2004a,b, 1982, 1984; Benner et al, 1996; Hall-Ellis & Grealy, 2008).

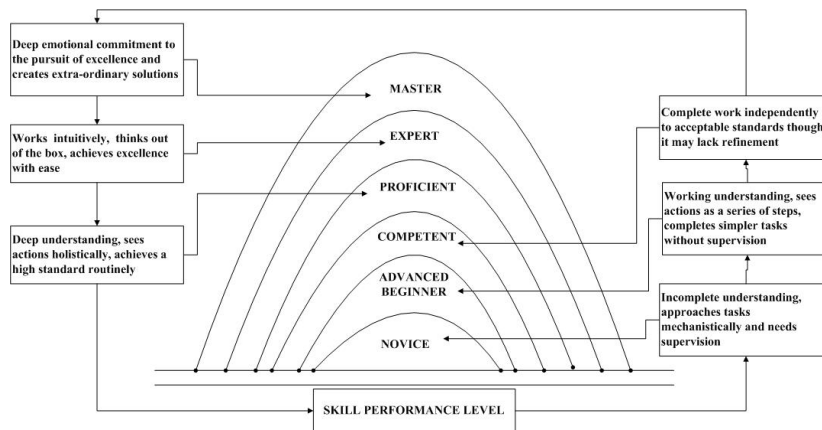


Figure 1 The Dreyfus Novice-to-Master Model Adaptation (Source: Author)

The implication is that an individual must begin at a lower point to progress to the higher skill level, drawing on their problem-solving experiences along the way. Each time, they start at the novice stage indicating a systematic cycle that shows a progressive need for skill upgrading at every stage in work life. Therefore, skill acquisition from novice to expert is progressive. It is based on learning a skill and not a profession, and unlike other skills assessment models, does not rate individual's total human capital, but is applicable per skill (Honken 2013; Hunt, 2008; Dreyfus, 2004, 1986; Eraut, 2009, 2000, 1994). Figure 2 shows a simple generic progression of the process.

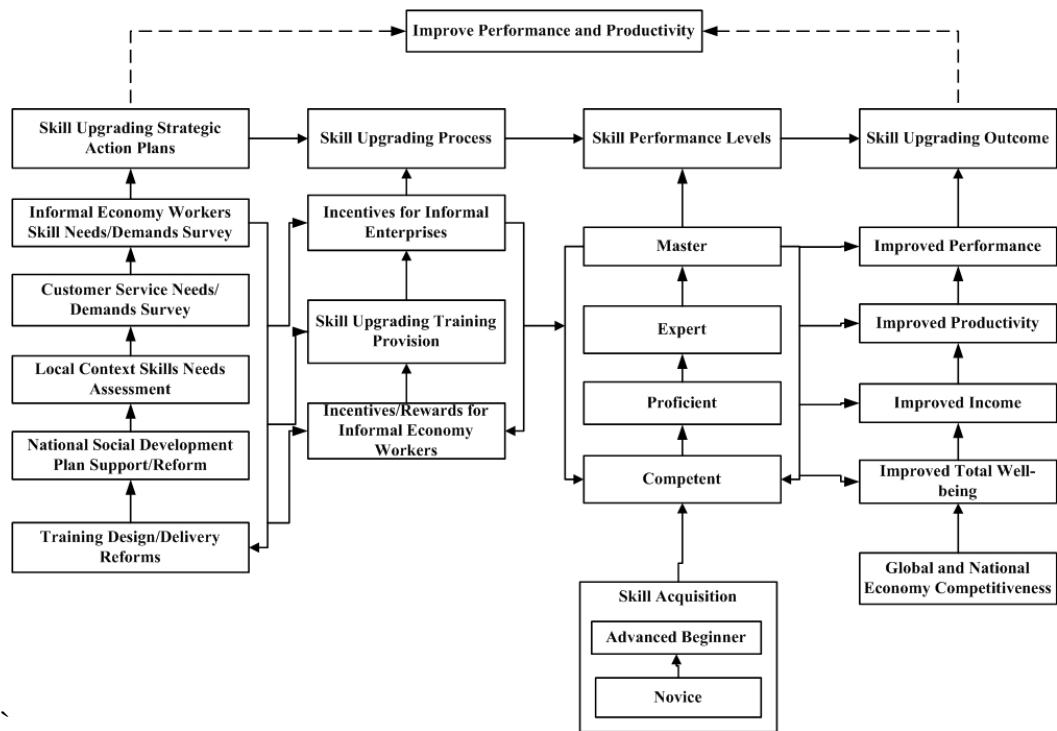


Figure 2 Concept Foundation for Improving the Performance of IEWs through Skills Upgrading

The aim of this study’s conceptual foundation is to show how skills upgrading of IEWs can improve their performance quality from novice to master through a systematic flow of policy reforms that take in all contexts in the informal economy and is driven from the perceptions of workers and customers, training provision, delivery and evaluation, as well as cooperation between the IEWs, policy-makers, industry/enterprises and training-providers. This indicates a systemic cycle from skill learning to relearning (Tough 1971), upgrading, performance and then improvement in income, total-wellbeing and societal contributions; which works through synergistic linkages between all forces, processes and connections in order to provide adaptable solutions for IEWs socioeconomic situations and their contributions to local/national economies (Peter-Cookey and Janyam 2016a,b).

3.2 The Study Area

The study area, Hat-Yai (Figure 3), is the business and commercial center of the south of Thailand, the largest metropolitan area in the South and third largest in the country ([Kuncharin & Mohamed, 2014, 2013](#)). [It is also](#) the largest municipality in the Songkhla Province, located near the border of Malaysia, with a population of 158, 128 ([HYC 2011](#)) [and since it is](#) estimated that about 356, 917 foreigners live, study and work in southern Thailand; considering the number of foreign students and staff in Hat-Yai's universities, it can be safely assumed that a good number of these foreigners are in Hat Yai (Sciortino & Punpuing, 2009; IOM, 2011). It is referred to as the southern center for commerce, business, entertainment, transportation, tourism and healthcare (Tepsing 2014; Jariyachamsit, Sakul & Wongleedee, 2012; Kuncharin & Mohamed, 2014, 2013).

Hat Yai was chosen as the study area based on its metropolitan and heterogeneous population, is an urban center in a developing nation (Adams et al 2013; Langer 2013; ILO 2013a; IMF 2015; World Bank 2015; UN 2015) with a large foreign visitor population, as well as its convenience of proximity (Tashakkori and Teddlie 2003a,b; Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009, 2007; Cresswell 2009). Hat Yai is also a tourist hotspot for ASEAN visitors, especially from Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia as well as China; in fact over 400,000-600,000 visitors are in Hat Yai every weekend from Malaysia alone (Tepsing 2014). The city center and its teeming shops, malls and other attractions play host to an overflow of locals and visitors every weekend ([TAT 2014](#)). This high population of locals and tourists provide a market for hair and beauty services, and it is no surprise that these operations can be observed all over the city.

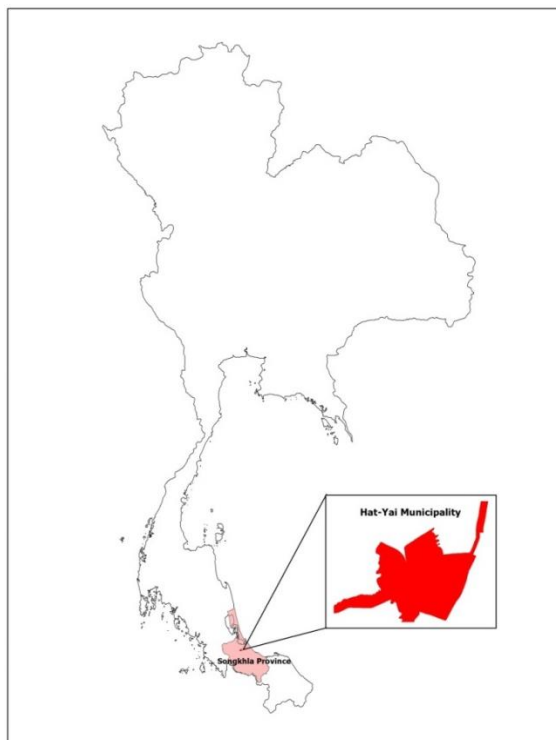


Figure 3 Map showing Hat Yai Municipality's City Center

3.3 Research Design

The study used the mixed methods design (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003a,b; Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Cresswell, 2009; Cresswell et al 2003) to allow for flexibility and multiple evidences and data sources enabling diverse interpretations for triangulation and in-depth assessments (Cresswell, 2009, 2007, 2003; Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2009, 2003; Stake, 2005, 1995; Gillham, 2000; Baxter & Jack, 2008). An in-depth document review was also conducted. A pilot study was first conducted for a surface exploration on the current skill status of the IHBSWSs in Hat Yai (Peter-Cookey and Janyam 2015).

3.4 Sampling

There was no sampling frame for the study due to unavailable data and so mixed purposeful sampling was used. Multilevel and identical mixed methods sampling were used to collect data from IHBSWs and their customers so as to maintain inference quality and ensure that participants for quantitative and qualitative investigations were drawn from the same pool (Kemper et al, 2003; Onwugbuezie & Collins, 2007; Teddlie & Yu, 2007; Kuzel 1999).

The sampling field was narrowed down to the city center to reduce bias and increase representation and it was based on findings from a pilot study that was conducted showing that a large number of hair and beauty operations serve locals and tourists in the city center (Peter-Cookey and Janyam 2016a; Bernard 2000). Only participants that were strictly connected with the informal hair and beauty services in Hat-Yai were used (Onwugbuezie and Collins 2007; Teddlie and Yu 2007) to enable in-depth study and a convergence of results (Palinkas et al 2013, 2011; Patton, 1990, 2002; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Haircare, facecare, nailcare, body/skincare and massage were considered as hair and beauty services for the purpose of the study.

The informal hair and beauty services (IHBSs) were chosen because they form an occupational domain that is quite popular with women, youth and vulnerable groups, are very common in developing nations and can be found literally on most urban center streets (Kagone and Namusonge 2014; Kamau and Bwisa 2013; Mpye 2013). They work in the informal economy, especially in developing countries, have all the features of informal workers, are mostly self-employed or work for micro-businesses and have no social or legal protection; as well as the vibrant-timeless nature (Allen et al 2011), potential for job creation in the informal economy; and it is most unlikely to succumb to formalization.

In 2008, a significant number of the Thai labor force and unemployed desired to learn related skills (NSO 2008). But these services increasingly require high-skills and the use of high-tech equipment that need more than basic skills (PBA 2011); skills that are often lacking in the IHBSWs of developing nations. Most researches on this group of IWs do not even address their skills levels and the challenges they face accessing skill upgrading they need to improve their service delivery (Kagone and Namusonge 2014; Mpye 2013; Kamau and Bwisa 2013; Kuyram 2013; Shahbazi and Akareem 2013; Thongplean 2012; Khan and Tabassum 2011). In fact, they are almost invisible in national labor surveys as most surveys do not capture self-employed or enterprises with few employees, while occupational classifications fail to reflect these levels of jobs (NSO 2014; ILO 2012a).

3.5 Data Collection

Mixed data collection was carried out simultaneously from October 2015 – February 2016 (Bernard, 2000; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003a/b). Closed/open ended questions were used in survey instruments (intramethod) and interviews (intermethod) (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003a/b; Cresswell, 2009; Cresswell et al, 2003), in this single investigation. Data collection was primarily a mixed and multilevel questionnaire survey, supported by in-depth face-to-face interviews to maintain depth of understanding, inference quality and representation (Kemper et al, 2003; Yin, 2003).

3.4.1 Questionnaire Survey

The survey covered 150 IHBSWs and 160 customers, that is, 300 in total; but 81% of questionnaires were retrieved. IHBSWs were selected from 71 hair/beauty operations in Hat Yai while customers were selected from the surveyed operations, tourist groups, non-Thai residents and university students. Structured self-administered questionnaires were developed by the researcher to obtain the socioeconomic demographics of the respondents, customers and workers perceptions of skill upgrading impact on skill performance and performance rating in Hat Yai. All questionnaires were presented in Thai and English formats, however, only 50 were completed in English by non-Thai customers. Different sets of questionnaires were designed for each level of respondents. The survey instrument was designed based on findings from the pilot study and verified by three-member panels from each level and then corrections were effected and confirmed before use in the survey. The multilevel survey ensured credibility, trustworthiness and reliability (Peter-Cookey and Janyam 2016a,b; Bernard, 2000; Johnson & Turner, 2003; Onwugbuezie & Collins, 2007; Patton, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Denzin & Guba, 2005).

These two sets of questionnaires (workers and customers) were identical, but slightly tailored to fit the interests of each group. They were in four sections containing open and close-ended questions as well as quantitative and qualitative questions. The first section covered the profile and socio-demographics of the respondents, which addressed issues of age, gender, nationality, educational status, skill acquisition pathway, number of years of practice, duration of stay in the area, service establishments available/patronized,

and skill areas workers have and customers patronize. The second section looked at the perception of the respondents on impact of skill upgrading on skill performance using a three-point Likert scale ('yes', 'no' and 'maybe') to elicit straightforward answers and avoid biases. The third section aimed to assess skill performance levels of the IHBSWs across six skill sets (Table 1) using the Performance Rating Scale (PRS) (Table 2) adapted from the Dreyfus skill performance model (Dreyfus, 2004; Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986, 1982, 1980). Questionnaires were self-administered and so explanations were easily given to respondents where necessary.

The workers were required to tick their perceived performance level per skill, while the customers were to tick the performance level (Table 2) they perceived their service provider to be at. This was done because there were no national or professional performance standards for rating workers in this occupational domain. Furthermore, performance assessments from the workers and those who use their services will provide deep insight to personal and professional expectations as well as client expectations. Finally, the fourth section was designed to identify the challenges of IHBSWs in Hat Yai as well as what the respondents perceive to be some solutions to these challenges. This section was mainly qualitative, which gave the respondents the opportunity to express themselves freely. (Translation was done on the spot at collection and confirmed by the respondent).

A Performance Rating Scale (PRS) was provided for the respondents to guide them in the process (Table 1). The PRS used in the questionnaire was adapted from the Dreyfus skill performance assessment model. The IHBSWs and customers had separate questionnaires but with the same questions and scale; only from different focus. They were asked to rate the performance of the IHBSWs per skill in each skill set according to the PRS provided in the questionnaire as seen in Table 1. The IHBSWs did self-assessments while the customers assessed the same IHBSWs without any interactions between the two groups. A Performance Rating Scale (PRS) was provided for the respondents to guide them in the process (Table 1). The PRS used in the questionnaire was adapted from the Dreyfus skill performance assessment model.

Table 1 Informal hair and beauty services skills assessed

General Skills (17)	Haircare skills (13)	Facecare skills (17)	Nailcare skills (9)	Bodycare skills (13)	Massage skills (17)
English language	Hairdressing	Cutting edge facial hair	Nail/foot/hand treatment	Evaluate skin	Evaluate clients' physical mental &
Teaching/training	Hair styling	removal	Evaluate hand/feet/nail	type/condition to determine	emotional condition
Customer	Hair cutting/barbering	Movie/theatre make-up	condition	treatment	Determine massage therapy based on
handling/management	Multi-cultural hair	Bridal make up	Determine treatment/products	Skin treatment	individual conditions
Analysis/counselling	management	Correctional makeup	based on condition	Skin	Design/plan/administer massage
Creativity/originality	Hair pieces fixing/Wig	Personality make-up	Determine nail polish/ design	waxing/Peels/scrubbing	therapy for clients
ICT	making	Multi-cultural make up	based on individual skin	Skin exfoliation/ Extraction	Pre-natal massage
Consultation/Advice	Hair perming/straightening	Facial treatment	condition, tone & personality	Tanning	Thai massage
Therapy	Hair coloring/, bleaching,	Event/Party make-up	Nail art and design	Tattooing	Chinese/Japanese massage
Cutting edge personal styling	tinting	Facial hair removal	Artificial nail	Cleansing/ Scrubbing	Swedish massage
Business management	Hair weaving/braiding	(male/female)	fixing/maintenance	Steaming/ Wrapping	Deep tissue massage
Communication	Hair/scalp treatment	Modelling/celebrity make-up	Manicure & Pedicure	Apply Body/Face art	Vibro-massage
Listening/speaking	Cutting edge hairstyling	Face wrinkle removal	French/American	Create/design body/face art	Hydrotherapy & aroma therapy/hot
Safety & health procedures &	Cutting edge hair cutting/	Eyebrow/eyelash management	Manicure/Pedicure	Fixing body accessories	stone massage
practices	barbering	Evaluate facial condition	Global manicure & pedicure	Laser treatment	Orthopedic/Sport massage
Art & design	Hair waxing/curling/waving	Determine treatment/product		Plan & manage	Foot/Face/neck/head massage
Chemistry/biology	Managing long hair	based on individual condition		treatment/therapy	Cutting edge massage
Maintaining workstation		Design makeup style &			Acupuncture/Acupressure
Cleaning & sterilizing work		product based on skin			Manual/physical massage
tools		type/tone facial feature &			Electronic massage
		personality			
		Color management & design			
		Create & design make-up			
		styles			

Table 2 Performance Rating Scale used for the assessment (Adapted from the Dreyfus Novice-to-Expert Model)

S/N	Skill performance level	Explanation
1	Novice	Just learned or learning skills; Need complete supervision; and Need more understanding
2	Advanced Beginner	Follow rules step-by-step; Need less supervision; and Complete simpler tasks without supervision
3	Competent	Can learn new techniques; Need no supervision; and Still need refinement in my work
4	Proficient	Maintain regular high standards; Do not need to follow rules step-by-step; and Have deep understanding of the processes
5	Expert	Work intuitively from my own mind; Am creative and spontaneous; Create exceptional designs and work; and Make good use of time without compromising quality
6	Master	Express exceptional creativity, originality and spontaneity always; Create cutting edge designs and service effortlessly; and Work well under pressure

The IHBSWs and customers had separate questionnaires but with the same questions and scale; only from different focus. They were asked to rate the performance of the IHBSWs per skill in each skill set according to the PRS provided in the questionnaire as seen in Table 1. The IHBSWs did self-assessments while the customers assessed the same IHBSWs without any interactions between the two groups. There were six skill sets in all (general, haircare, facecare, nailcare, bodycare and massage) and each skills set had a number of specific skills ranging from nine to seventeen. These skills were selected based on the findings of a pilot survey of 30 IHBSWs, 30 customers and 4 business-owners in the study area. Raters were asked to rate themselves or their service-providers on a six-point scale (novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient, expert and master). Both groups were also required to respond to questions relating to the importance and impact of skill upgrading to performance.

The fourth section covered what the respondents perceived were some challenges that the IHBSWs in the study area faced as well as suggestions that may ameliorate these challenges. This section was both quantitative and qualitative as respondents were given options to tick for challenges to ranking (from 1-15 with 1 being most urgent) of

importance and also add other options they felt should be included accordingly. However, the section on suggestions were left open, but required to match to their options on challenges.

3.4.2 Interviews

15 customers and 15 IHBSWs were interviewed. Interviews followed a guide with exploratory, in-depth open and closed ended questions designed to allow probing and full exploration of the subject matter (Bernard, 2000; Johnson & Turner, 2003; Onwugbuezie & Collins, 2007; Patton, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Denzin & Guba, 2005). The idea was to dig deeper to find out their perception about the impact of skill upgrading on skill performance and the performance levels of the IHBSWs in the study area as well as what they believe are their challenges and suggest some solutions. Questions covered perceptions and expectations on need for SU, willingness to upgrade, willingness to pay, impact of SU on skill performance as well as challenges and suggestions. Five workers' interviews were selected out of all those interviewed and two were male, all Thai; and five customers' interviews, two were male and one of them was non-Thai, were selected. They were chosen because they summed up all other responses. Also, only those interviews that had a translator present to directly translate were used for this section. Each interview lasted approximately 25-40 minutes. All interviewees gave written and verbal consent. Contents and translation of the interview were confirmed with the interviewees before the interview was concluded. The researcher conducted all interviews personally with the aid of Thai native translators where necessary.

3.5 Data Analysis

3.5.1 Skill upgrading analysis

We utilized frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation for descriptive analysis of the quantitative data for the results. Thematic analysis was used for interviews to find common themes and sub-themes using frequency counts, which were then matched and triangulated with quantitative and qualitative results of the survey; while IHBSWs and

customers ratings were also matched (Onwugbuezie & Teddlie 2003; Onwugbuezie & Collins, 2007; Yin, 2003; Gillham, 2000; Erzberger & Kelle, 2003; Cresswell 2009; Bernard, 2000). Skill performance levels estimation was done using perceived paired ratings estimation (frequency counts and percentage of workers and customer ratings). Perceived paired ratings estimation refer to skill performance level combined scores of workers and customers.

3.5.2 Paired perceptual rating estimation (PPRE) of challenges IHBSWs face in assessing skill upgrading and suggestions

The results were drawn from interviews and qualitative aspects of questionnaire and quantitized based on common themes then combined to make a ranked list of challenges and suggestions from paired response rate. Based on the survey and interview responses, themes were derived and then the number of workers and customers who selected each theme were counted separately and then summed up. The themes with a number higher than 60% of the respondents were selected and there were eight of them. Afterwards, the way each theme was ranked by all respondents was counted and the ranking with the highest score was assigned to that theme and then the challenges were presented according to their ranks. The same was done with the suggestions to ameliorate the challenges.

3.8.3 Paired perceptual rating estimation (PPRE) of impact of skill upgrading on performance

Perceptual paired ratings were used to determine respondents' perception towards the need for skill upgrading, willingness of workers to upgrade skill, desire of customers to have upgraded services, willingness of customers to pay for upgraded services, impact of skill upgrading on improving skill performance/productivity, income/clientele and total wellbeing. A three-point Likert scale of yes, no and maybe was used. First, the perception of respondents' concerning each of the options was computed by pairing the results of both

groups, divide by total number of respondents and multiply by 100 (equation 1). The highest percentage is considered the overriding perception of the survey respondents.

$$ISUSP = WP(im1) + CP(im1) = \frac{\Sigma(WP(im1)+CP(im1))}{TNR (240)} \times 100 \quad (\text{equation I})$$

Where *ISUSP* represents impact of skill upgrading on skill performance, *WP* = workers' perception, *CP* = customers' perception, *TNR* = total number of respondents and *im1* = impact 1 (need for skill upgrading), *im2* = impact 2 (willingness to upgrade skills), *im3* = impact 3 (desire to receive upgraded services), *im4* = impact 4 (willingness to pay for upgraded services), *im5* = impact 5 (SU improves performance and productivity), *im6* = impact 6 (SU improves income and clientele) and *im7* = impact 7 (SU improves total wellbeing of workers)

Second, the overall perception was determined by calculating the paired ratings per scale, divide by total number of scores across the three choices and multiply by 100 (equation 2).

$$OISUSP = WoP + CoP = \frac{\Sigma(WoP+CoP)}{TNS (1004)} \times 100 \quad (\text{equation 2})$$

Where *OISUSP* represents impact of skill upgrading on skill performance, *WoP* = workers' overall perception, *CoP* = customers' overall perception, *TNS* = total number of scores
A total response above 70% of total respondents indicated the perception of the survey respondents about the level of impact skill upgrading has on skill performance.

3.5.4 Paired perceptual rating estimation (PPRE) of skill performance level

This refers to paired perceptual rating estimation of performance level for each skill in a skill set (see Table 1/Section 3.6), which determines the number of individuals who perceive workers performance of skill to be at a particular level. It measures the performance level of each skill in each skill set using data from both workers' and customers' assessments, while estimating the performance level of specific skills based on the sum of workers' and customers' perceptual ratings. This parameter measures the skill performance levels of workers from novice to master to determine what level respondents

perceive workers to be on. It measures the performance levels of occupational domains and not individuals and rating is multilevel and expansive in order to reduce individual bias from self-assessments or leniency/central tendency on the part of customers (Landy and Farr 1980; Bracken, Timmreck and Church 2001). If paired ratings show a high percentage at a low performance level for a particular skill, then it means that skill is perceived to be inadequate among the workers. Identifying performance levels from workers' and customers' perceptions can provide key insights to real situations, which can serve as a guide for skill development planning and programming.

To determine performance level per skill, the number of workers and customers that rated the performance of a specific skill at a particular level was computed separately and their percentages derived. Then, the two separate sums were added; the total sum derived was then divided by the total number of respondents (i.e. workers and customers) and multiplied by 100 to get the percentage score for that performance level (equation 3). The level with the highest percentage score is considered the performance level for that skill.

$$SPL = Ws_1 + Cs_1 = \frac{\sum(Ws_1 + Cs_1)}{TNR (240)} \times 100 \quad (\text{equation 3})$$

Where *Ws* represents workers' rating per skill, *Cs* represents customers rating per skill, *TNR* is Total Number of Respondents and *SPL* is skill performance level: while $1=Novice/Very\ Poor$; $2=Advanced-Beginner/Poor$; $3=Competent/Fair$; $4=Proficient/Good$; $5=Expert/Very\ Good$; $6=Master/Excellent$

3.5.5 Paired perceptual rating estimation (PPRE) of skill set performance level

To determine performance level per skill set, the total score for each performance level was computed for workers and customers separately. The two sums (workers and customers) were added together, divided by total number of scores in that skill set and multiplied by 100 to get a percentage score (equation 4) for that performance level. The performance level with the highest score was considered the estimated performance level for that skill set.

$$SSPL = \sum W_{ssA1} + \sum C_{ssA1} = \frac{\sum(\sum W_{ssA1} + \sum C_{ssA1})}{TNSSS (General)} \times 100 \quad (\text{equation 4})$$

Where W_{ss} represents workers' rating per skill set, C_s represents customers rating per skill, $TNSSS$ is total number of scores in skill set and $SSPL$ is skill set performance level: while $_1=Novice/Very\ Poor$; $_2=Advanced-Beginner/Poor$; $_3=Competent/Fair$; $_4=Proficient/Good$; $_5=Expert/Very\ Good$; $_6=Master/Excellent$; $A=General\ Skills$; $B=Haircare\ Skills$; $C=Facecare\ Skills$; $D=Nailcare\ Skills$; $E=Bodycare\ Skills$; $F=Massage\ Skills$

3.5.6 Overall paired perceptual rating estimation (OPPRE) of skill set performance level

To determine overall skill performance level for the informal hair and beauty services workers in Hat Yai, the total score for each performance level was computed for workers and customers separately as above. The two sums (workers and customers) were added together, divided by total number of scores in that performance level across all skill sets and multiplied by 100 to get a percentage score (equation 5) for that performance level. The final skill performance level was then determined as the level with the highest score.

$$OSPL = x_1 + x_2 + x_3 + x_4 + x_5 + x_6 = \frac{\sum(pSS)}{\sum(TNSSSs)} \times 100 \quad (\text{equation 5})$$

Where x represents skill sets, $TNSSSs$ is total number of scores in all skill sets, pSS is per skill set and $OSPL$ stands for Overall Skill Performance Level; $_1=Novice/Very\ Poor$; $_2=Advanced-Beginner/Poor$; $_3=Competent/Fair$; $_4=Proficient/Good$; $_5=Expert/Very\ Good$; $_6=Master/Excellent$

3.5.7 Degree of agreement between workers' and customers' ratings

The degree of agreement measure was used to determine the degree of agreement between the ratings of both groups in order to show whether the two ratings could be statistically matched to derive a single rating (McCray 2013; Barnhart, Haber and Lin 2008; Stemler 2005; Schouten 1985; Robinson 1957). This was adapted from the simple-percent-agreement consensus estimate for interrater reliability (Stemler 2005; Barnhart, Haber and Lin 2008; Robinson 1957).

To determine degree of agreement, all the scores from each performance level across skill sets were added for workers and a total sum was derived. Thereafter, the sum number per skill performance level for workers was divided by the total sum of all levels and multiplied by 100 (equation 6) to get a percentage score for each level.

$$WSPLR = WssA1 + WssB1 + WssC1 + WssD1 + WssE1 + WssF1 = \frac{\sum(pSPL)}{\sum(SPLs)} \times 100 \quad (\text{equation 6})$$

The same was done for the scores of customers. All the scores from each performance level across skill sets were added for customers and a total sum was derived. Thereafter, the sum number per skill performance level was divided by the total sum of all levels and multiplied by 100 (equation 7) to get a percentage score for each level.

$$CSPLR = CssA1 + CssB1 + CssC1 + CssD1 + CssE1 + CssF1 = \frac{\sum(pSPL)}{\sum(SPLs)} \times 100 \quad (\text{equation 7})$$

Where WSPLR = Workers' Skill Performance Level Rating, CSPLR = Customers' Skill Performance Rating, WssA₁ = Workers' Skill Set for General Skills at Novice Level (and so on with other performance levels), CssA₁ = Customers' Skill Set for General Skills at Novice Level (and so on with other performance levels), T \sum SPLs = total sum of all levels; 1=Novice/Very Poor; 2=Advanced-Beginner/Poor; 3=Competent/Fair; 4=Proficient/Good; 5=Expert/Very Good; 6=Master/Excellent; A=General Skills; B=Haircare Skills; C=Facecare Skills; D=Nailcare Skills; E=Bodycare Skills; F=Massage Skills

Therefore, to estimate the degree of agreement, the percentage score of workers was subtracted from that of customers per level to get a difference (equation 8).

$$DoA = WSPLR_1 - CSPLR_1 = \Delta\% \quad (\text{equation 8})$$

Where DoA represents Degree of Agreement; $\Delta\%$ = percentage difference

The percentage difference score indicated the degree of agreement between the two groups' ratings. A percentage difference of 25% and above is considered strong disagreement, 15%-20% is weak disagreement, 10% - 14% is weak agreement, while 0% - 9% is strong agreement.

3.6 Validation

Validation was through data triangulation, multilevel survey, inter/intramethods, peer/member examination, external auditing and a pilot study (Peter-Cookey and Janyam 2016a,b, 2015; Cresswell 2009; Cresswell and Plano Clark 2007; Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009).

4.0 Results

4.1 Respondents Profile

Table 3 presents a summary of the profile of the respondents. Total respondents were predominantly female (74%) and Thai (73%) and most were within the age-range of 30-40 (36%). Educational status was mainly secondary level (34%), while only 8% had no formal education. More than three-quarters of them had lived in Hat Yai for 1-25 years indicating that they had sufficient experience of hair and beauty services in the study area, especially as their age-range shows enough maturity to render in-depth and information-rich observations in the survey. Services are mostly provided in Full Salons (27%) providing all types of services and Haircare only (23%), but most available skills and services demanded are haircare (43%) and massage (33%).

Table 3 Respondents Profile

Characteristic	Description	Workers				Customers				Sum of both samples		
		<i>f</i>	\bar{x}	<i>SD</i>	%	<i>f</i>	\bar{x}	<i>SD</i>	%	<i>f</i>	\bar{x}	<i>SD</i>
Respondents' nationality	Thai	120	1	0	100	75	0.63	0.5	63	175	0.73	0.45
	ASEAN	-	-	-	-	16	0.133	0.34	13	16	0.07	0.25
	Asia	-	-	-	-	7	0.06	0.22	6	7	0.03	0.17
	Europe	-	-	-	-	5	0.042	0.2	4	5	0.021	0.14
	America	-	-	-	-	5	0.042	0.2	4	5	0.021	0.14
Gender	Africa	-	-	-	-	12	0.1	0.3	10	12	0.05	0.22
	Female	93	0.8	0.42	78	85	0.71	0.46	71	178	0.74	0.44
	Male	27	0.23	0.42	23	35	0.3	0.46	29	62	0.26	0.44
Age (years)	<18	4	0.033	0.18	3	-	-	-	-	4	0.02	0.13
	18-20	24	0.2	0.4	20	16	0.133	0.34	13	40	0.17	0.37
	20-30	27	0.23	0.42	23	40	0.33	0.47	33	67	0.28	0.45
	30-40	62	0.52	0.5	52	24	0.2	0.4	20	86	0.36	0.48
	>40	3	0.03	0.12	3	40	0.33	0.47	33	43	0.18	0.38

Educational status	No Formal Education	18	0.15	0.36	15	-	-	-	-	18	0.075	0.26
	Primary	6	0.05	0.22	5	14	0.12	0.32	12	20	0.083	0.28
	Secondary	69	0.58	0.5	58	13	0.11	0.31	11	82	0.34	0.48
	Technical	4	0.033	0.18	5	10	0.083	0.28	8	14	0.06	0.24
	Vocational	8	0.07	0.25	7	23	0.19	0.4	19	31	0.13	0.34
	University	15	0.13	0.33	15	60	0.5	0.5	50	75	0.31	0.47
Service establishment available/in-demand	Haircare only	21	0.18	0.38	18	33	0.28	0.45	28	54	0.23	0.42
	Bodycare only	4	0.033	0.18	3	8	0.07	0.25	7	12	0.05	0.22
	Facecare only	10	0.083	0.28	8	10	0.083	0.28	8	20	0.083	0.28
	Massage only	14	0.12	0.32	12	16	0.13	0.34	13	30	0.13	0.33
	Full Salon	33	0.28	0.45	27	32	0.27	0.44	27	65	0.27	0.45
	Spa/Salon	17	0.14	0.35	14	9	0.08	0.27	8	26	0.11	0.31
Duration of stay (years)	Mobile	21	0.18	0.38	18	12	0.1	0.1	10	33	0.14	0.35
	1-5	59	0.5	0.5	49	34	0.28	0.45	26	93	0.39	0.53
	6-10	14	0.12	0.32	12	14	0.12	0.32	11	28	0.12	0.32
	11-15	14	0.12	0.32	12	15	0.13	0.33	12	29	0.121	0.32
	16-20	11	0.09	0.29	9	16	0.133	0.34	12	27	0.112	0.31
	21-25	19	0.16	0.37	16	17	0.071	0.35	13	36	0.15	0.36
	26-30	9	0.08	0.27	8	18	0.15	0.36	14	27	0.112	0.31
>31	3	0.03	0.12	3	16	0.133	0.34	12	19	0.08	0.28	
Workers area of service/customers regular service received	Haircare only	38	0.32	0.47	32	66	0.55	0.5	55	104	0.43	0.49
	Bodycare only	13	0.11	0.31	11	4	0.033	0.18	3	17	0.071	0.26
	Facecare only	13	0.11	0.31	11	6	0.05	0.22	5	19	0.08	0.28
	Nailcare	11	0.09	0.29	9	9	0.08	0.27	8	20	0.083	0.28
	Massage only	45	0.38	0.49	38	35	0.3	0.46	29	80	0.33	0.47
					Workers: n=120			Customers: n=120			Total Sample size: n=240	

Figure 4 reveals that 36% of IHBSWs obtained their initial skills training from formal apprenticeships, 19% on-the-job, 13% from Government skill development centers, 12% from fashion and beauty schools and 5% and 8% were initially trained from upper-secondary and vocational colleges respectively. This implies that the upper-secondary and vocational colleges do not cater for these occupational skill sets as most of these workers completed secondary level education. Meanwhile, most IHBSWs in the survey had been practicing for 1-2 years (37%) and 10 years and above (22%) and about 27% for 2-10 years combined. The indication is that they have the experience to provide reliable information on the status of informal hair and beauty services and training in Hat Yai.

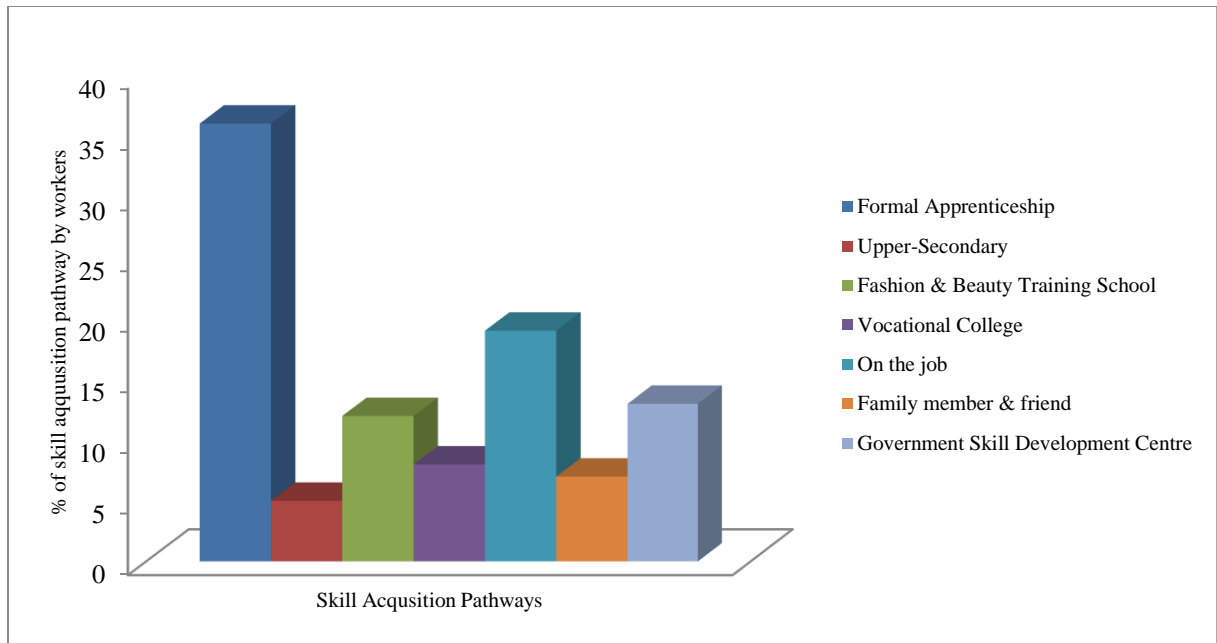


Figure 4 Types of Skill Acquisition Pathways for IHBSWs in Hat Yai

4.2 Challenges IHBSWs face in assessing Skill Upgrading and Suggestions

Table 4 shows some of the key solutions and recommendations from the survey and interviews of the respondents. The perceptual paired response rate revealed that the final ranking matched the original ranking of the respondents. Eight themes were finally selected as major factors challenging skills upgrading of IHBSWs in Hat Yai and they were ranked 1-8 according to level of urgency. Then, suggestions were matched to challenges on how to fix them. Interviews also confirmed these challenges as being major.

All interviewees agree that government; industry and academic institutions need to do more to support the IHBSWs with assessing quality training to upgrade their skills. They argued that government could provide incentives for the workers and informal enterprises to go for skill upgrading training. Government could pay for workers to access skill upgrading or at least reduce costs and also provide quality training centers in Hat Yai. They also suggested that industry could also support training for these workers in specific areas where they need upgrading. IHBSWs and customers alike complain that there are few trainings available for workers to upgrade their skills and where trainings are available,

they are not appropriate and/or of inadequate quality as well as beyond the reach of the IHBSWs affordability.

Table 4 Challenges facing IHBSWs in assessing Skill Upgrading and Suggestions

S/N	Challenges	Recommendations
1	Short training duration	Longer Duration Training
2	Only basic courses available	Include higher-grade skills training
3	Trends/styles change so fast	Training to keep up with the trends/global styles
4	Inadequate training available	Training more focused on needs/demands of customers
5	High cost of training	Government and industry to support IHBSWs
6	Time constraint	More on-the-job training with incentives from government/industry
7	Inadequately skilled trainers	Licensing and Certification
8	Poor quality training	Better-Quality Training

4.3 Impact of Skill Upgrading on Performance

A total of 71% of survey respondents perceive that skill upgrading has an impact on skill performance, while 62% perceive that skill upgrading will improve performance and productivity, 96% perceive that it will improve income and clientele and 66% perceive that it will improve total wellbeing. However, it seems customers are more inclined to this perception than the IHBSWs. This is indicative of the fact that customers desire better or more services than they currently get from the IHBSWs and they perceive that skills upgrading can bring the workers performance up to par excellence. Meanwhile, 66% of total respondents agree that IHBSWs in the study area need skill upgrading, even though the workers are more inclined towards this direction than the customers. Interviews reveal that the customers are less enthusiastic because they do not trust the quality of trainings available to the service-providers, while the workers argue that if they could get better training they would be willing to pursue skill upgrading. This is supported by the fact that 72% of the IHBSWs desired to upgrade their skills while 56% of customers desired upgraded services. But, 52% of customers were willing to pay more for upgraded services, while 44% were ambivalent; and interviews revealed that the quality and type of skill

service will determine the willingness to pay more. Perceptions of skill upgrading impact on income and clientele were the highest (96%) (Figure 5) and this implies that income and clientele-base were seen to be dependent on improved skills performance gained through upgrading skills.

During interviews, respondents argued that skill upgrading will make service quality better, trendier services will be available, customer satisfaction and loyalty will be high, new customers will be attracted and customers will visit more often, which will increase clientele base and then it will add to experience and practice while businesses can stay open, employ more people and afford to pay higher salaries. However, workers were hesitant to go for skills upgrading training because they are often cannot afford the cost and time required. They further argued that they would have to charge more for their services and since there was no guarantee that customers would be willing to pay for services, then their investment would have been in vain and they would lose customers at the same time. But, all respondents were equivocal in their support for the positive impact upgrading skills have on the workers.

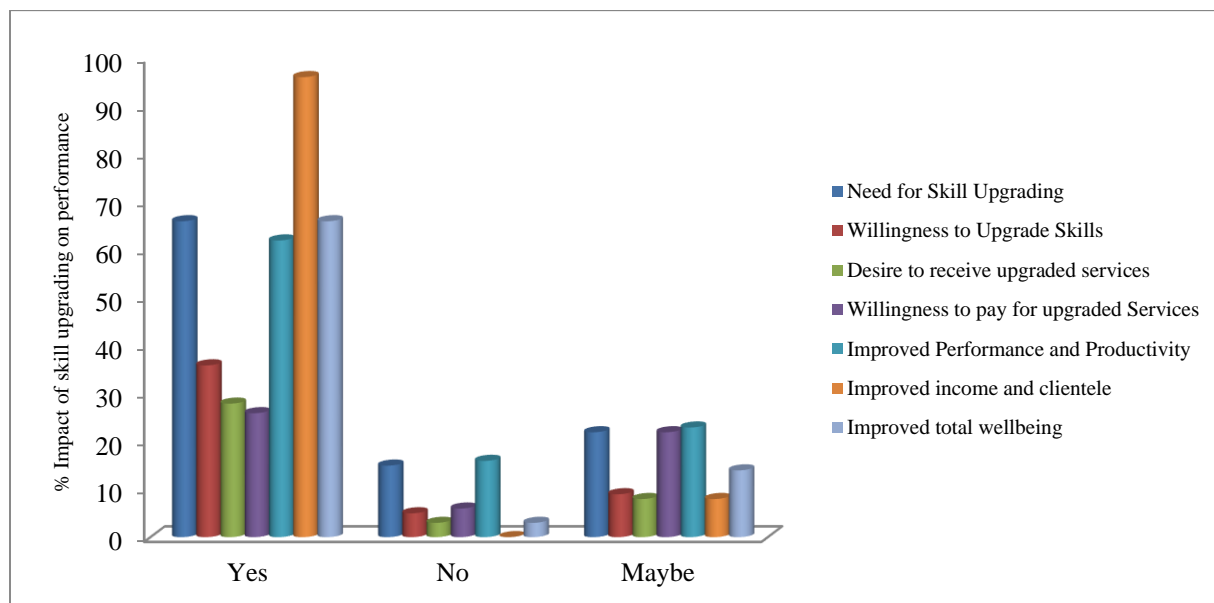


Figure 5 Impact of Skills Upgrading on Performance

4.4 Skills Performance Level

The skill performance rating by both IHBSWs and their customers were paired in order to derive single scores per individual skill for each level. Skills performance was generally perceived to be fair for most skills in the General Skills set, but novice for most skills in the other skill sets (hairecare, facecare, nailcare, bodycare and massage). The results of the perceptual paired ratings estimation (PPRE) shows some specific skills performance levels in the six different skill sets (Table 5). Most skills in the General skill set were rated fair by both groups and the pairing of the assessments also reflected a fair judgement as can be seen in Table 5. However, more customers perceived that IHBSWs were at Very Poor and Poor levels than at Very Good and Excellent levels; contrary to the perceptions of the IHBSWs. For instance, percentage of the PPRE for cutting edge personal styling was 13% for Very-Poor, however, 10% of IHBSWs and 28% of customers perceive performance to be Very Poor (Table 5).

On the other hand, IHBSWs perceive skill performance to be lower than the perception of customers, while PPRs show these other skills more at novice level. Table 5 shows the PPRE from levels 1-6 and the highest rating score was considered as the SPL. For example, business management had 61% as the highest score, which was for 'fair' level and creativity/originality skill also had 'fair' as the level with the highest score. On the other hand, multicultural hair management and make up had 'novice' as the level with the highest score (38% and 43% respectively). Interviews also revealed that customers were highly dissatisfied with performance because they argued that the IHBSWs need more skills training, particularly in new, trendy and more personalized services. Customers want service that attend to their individual uniqueness and treatment conditions, but do not often get such service in Hat Yai. Meanwhile, the IHBSWs argue that they mostly learn new skills from social media like YouTube and Facebook and so have the challenge of really mastering these skills as they should.

Table 5 Paired perceptual selected skills performance levels

Skills	Performance Levels %						Final SPL
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
<i>General</i>							
Business management	8	16	61	19	4	0	Fair
Creativity/Originality	10	17	45	24	6	2	Fair
Cutting edge personal-styling	13	23	49	13	5	0.4	Fair
Consultation/Analysis/Therapy	11	22	55	10	5	2	Fair
Safety & health procedures & practices	6	12	53	23	9	0.8	Fair
<i>Haircare</i>							
Multi-cultural hair management	38	36	18	5	2	3	Novice
Hair pieces fixing/Wig making	41	33	20	3	3	0.4	Novice
Hair weaving/braiding	40	20	20	5	0.8	3	Novice
Hair/scalp treatment	37	29	22	9	5	2	Novice
Cutting edge hairstyling	39	34	17	5	3	3	Novice
<i>Facecare</i>							
Cutting edge facial hair removal	43	20	16	4	2	3	Novice
Multi-cultural make up	44	23	13	5	2	3	Novice
Facial treatment	46	22	16	7	2	1	Novice
Evaluate facial condition	45	22	18	5	4	3	Novice
Face wrinkle removal	43	21	15	9	3	3	Novice
<i>Nailcare</i>							
French/American Manicure/Pedicure	43	19	12	5	3	1	Novice
Global manicure & pedicure	38	22	17	7	3	1	Novice
Nail art and design	40	22	13	5	2	0.8	Novice
Artificial nail fixing/maintenance	40	17	23	5	2	0.8	Novice
Determine treatment/products based on condition	38	22	23	3	2	0	Novice
<i>Bodycare</i>							
Evaluate skin type/condition to determine treatment	42	21	15	6	0.8	0.4	Novice
Apply Body/Face art	50	20	15	3	1	2	Novice
Fixing body accessories	44	20	15	6	0.8	2	Novice
Skin treatment	46	17	15	5	0.8	2	Novice
Plan & manage treatment/therapy	50	22	13	4	3	2	Novice
<i>Massage</i>							
Evaluate clients' physical mental & emotional condition	44	24	22	6	1	0.8	Novice
Determine massage therapy based on individual conditions	43	24	21	8	2	3	Novice
Design/plan/administer massage therapy for clients	42	24	21	7	2	0.8	Novice
Cutting edge massage	51	25	8	0.8	0	0.8	Novice
Electronic massage	43	19	13	3	3	0.4	Novice

Note: 1=Novice/Very Poor; 2=Advanced-Beginner/Poor; 3=Competent/Fair; 4=Proficient/Good; 5=Expert/Very Good; 6=Master/Excellent: SPL = skill performance level

4.5 Skill Set Performance Level

In the case of the PPRE for the skill performance levels of the skill sets, General skills were shown to be majorly at Fair level while all the other skill sets (haircare, facecare, nailcare, bodycare and massage) were at Novice level (Figure 6). This is evident in the fact that most skills had the highest PPRE level rating at either or novice and so it followed that the skill sets will be patterned in the same trend. Interviews revealed that the challenge was more in the fact that customers do not want to spend time and money on services they can do for themselves, but the workers mainly operate with basic skills. For example, Thai customers who were more in number argued that they did not need Thai massage since they can get it at home, but they were willing to pay for health-related massage services like pre-natal, orthopedic, deep tissue and specific massage therapy that addresses their individual conditions. They lamented that most IHBSWs in Hat Yai treat all their customers the same as if all people were the same because they did not have the skill and knowledge to consult and handle for individualized conditions. Other nationals, especially the tourists, complain that most of the workers do not understand how to handle multicultural hair and skin tones and this makes it difficult for the customers to patronize their services.

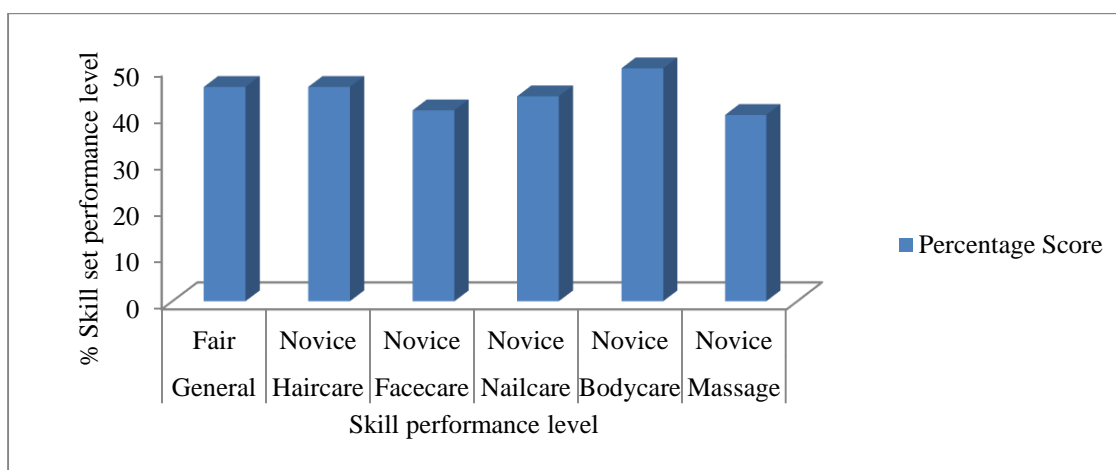


Figure 6 Paired perceptual skill set performance level

4.6 Overall Skill Set Performance Level

The overall results for the PPRE (which include both workers and customers' ratings) revealed that performance is highly perceived to be at novice level (35%), although performance level of General Skills set is considered to be more at fair level (Figure 7).

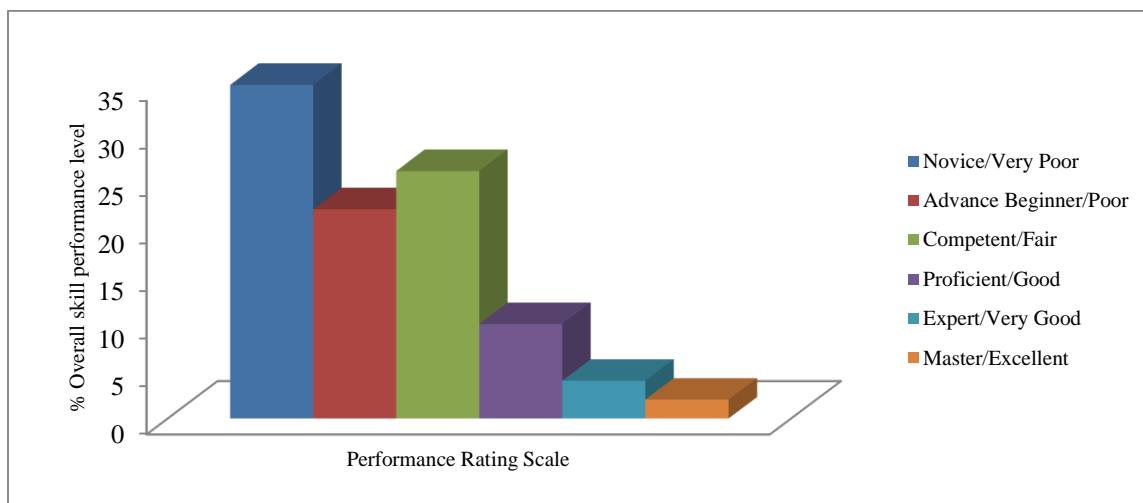


Figure 7 Overall skill performance level

Table 6 also indicates that the IHBSWs perform fairly at General skills but only basic (Novice) at all other skill sets. Interviews confirm this, as customers bemoan the fact that most of the service-providers scattered all over the study area were operating with basic skills because they get only a few weeks of training and then open shop without any further training over the years. The IHBSWs interviewed also stated that they would like to upgrade their skills, but there are no quality and desired skills trainings available to them and in any case skills training cost too much for them in time and finance.

Table 6 Overall Paired Perceptual Rating for Skill Set Performance Level

Performance Levels	Skill Sets						Sum
	General	Haircare	Facecare	Nailcare	Bodycare	Massage	
Novice	346	656	1520	811	1437	1398	6168
Advanced Beginner	750	313	892	433	753	739	3880
Competent	1890	267	733	431	439	775	4535
Proficient	785	98	312	116	145	260	1716
Expert	267	55	145	54	50	171	742
Master	77	43	86	16	38	141	401
						Total	17442

4.7 Degree of Agreement between workers' and customers'

Figure 8 presents a summary of the measure of agreement between ratings of the two groups. The percentage of IHBSWs that perceived performance at specific levels was compared to the perception of customers to determine the extent to which their ratings agree. This will show where the expectations of the customers exceed that of the IHBSWs and otherwise. This also indicates that where there is agreement at a high level, then urgent actions are needed to improve performance. There was weak disagreement between perceptual ratings for very-poor/novice (IHBSWs: 45%-Customers: 22%=23%) and weak disagreement for fair/competent; but all other levels showed strong agreement in perceptual ratings. However, the percentage difference for the total of both assessments was about 7.4% only. This indicates that overall, there is minimal disagreement between the perceptual ratings, which concludes that skill performance of IHBSWs in Hat Yai is mostly at novice level.

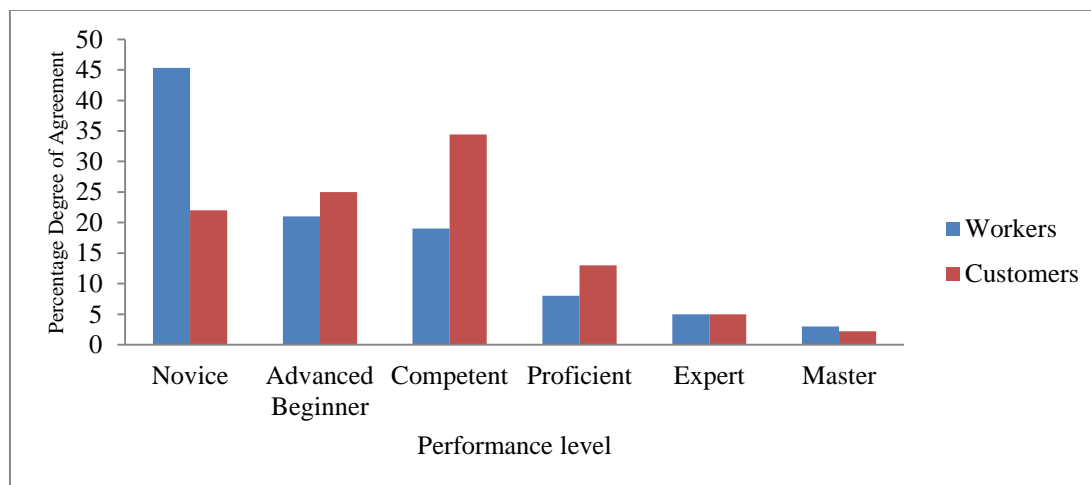


Figure 8 Degree of Agreement between workers' and customers'

5.0 Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Discussion

This study asked how skills upgrading can be used to improve skill performance of IEWs with the objective to determine the skill performance level IHBSWs, Hat Yai, Thailand and make recommendations for appropriate strategies to integrate skill upgrading into skill development programs and policies for Thailand's IEWs To address these issues, the perceptions of IHBSWs in the study area as well as those who use their services (i.e. customers) were explored about the impact of skills upgrading on skill performance and the skill performance levels of IHBSWs. In assessing the skill performance levels of the workers, we used paired perceptual rating estimation (PPRE) (since there were no standards to measure skill performance against) and also to ensure high level of uniformity, a performance rating scale (PRS) from our conceptual foundation, the Dreyfus skill performance level model was adapted. The PPRE was developed by matching ratings of workers and customers to derive a single score.

The PPRE for skill performance levels was developed based on the principle of matching results from multiple raters to derive a single score in order to reduce bias and increase reliability. The consensus estimation of agreement was also adapted to measure the statistical significance by determining interrater reliability through how close or far in

agreement the final consensus of both groups were from each other. It was revealed that the highest disagreement was at the novice level (23%) where more workers rated themselves as novice than customers did. This was still weak disagreement. However, interviews exposed a case of leniency and central tendency bias on the part of the customers because they believed that were been fair to the workers since skills were low mainly due to training quality and availability, which the workers have no control over.

In addition, the use of multiple raters reduced bias as we could easily deduce perceptions of the majority as the reality. Also, when workers rated themselves, they over-compensated less because they assessed from the lens of being in a group and not as an individual; so they were more honest. Furthermore, the mixed method design reduced biases by using interviews to confirm or strengthen survey findings while multilevel sampling, respondent verification of their responses after translation, exposing findings to peers and experts for scrutiny, and a preliminary study to aid research and instruments design contributed immensely to the validation of the study.

The customers' perception served as a control measure to counter the self-assessments of the IHBSWs; and also to gauge the expectations of the customers. Exploring this issue from the perspectives of the IHBSWs and their customers give insight to their understanding and challenges and also contribute to design and develop policy instruments and provisions that capture the specific interests and needs of the IEWs and the expectations of those who use their services (ILO 2011; Rigby and Sanchis 2006). The implication is that when national skill development policies (NSDPs) provide and support skills upgrading for IEWs, it will improve their performance systematically upward from novice to master levels and this in turn will improve productivity, income, total wellbeing and complete its cycle to improved national economy, development and competitiveness. But, this will have to start from an all-inclusive policy design process as well as training program design and delivery.

The study revealed right off that most of the IHBSWs acquired their initial skills from formal apprenticeships, on-the-job and fashion and beauty training schools rather than vocational colleges, upper-secondary and government skill development centers. This is

interesting because the Thai TVSD system is made up of mainly upper-secondary, vocational/technical colleges, university as well as enterprise and skill development centers at various levels (Huang 2012; NESPAP 2016; BIC-MoE 2008; ONEC 2003). There is no formal apprenticeship system for IEWs in any policy instrument and formal enterprise training (e.g. DVT or Workplace training) does not cover IEWs or informal enterprises with less than 100 employees (KOT 2002; Rojvithee 2007). In other words, IEWs are not really captured in the NSDPs of the country (Sparks and Barnett 2010; ILO 2014).

Also, most IHBSWs in the survey had practiced for just 1-2 years, but a good number of them had been practicing for over 10 years, but performance was generally considered to be at novice level. This indicates a dire need for improvement in order to help the IEWs improve their labor and income prospects as well as their self-esteem and societal contributions. On a side note, it was interesting to discover that up to 15% of the IHBSWs were educated to university level and 69% secondary. This indicates that some of these workers actually have higher education, which goes to show that it is not only those with low educational qualifications that work in the informal economy (King 2012). Also, high educational attainment does not equal high skills as even the university graduates still need SU in their occupational domain. This is an area for further research: do higher education equal higher skills for IEWs?

Furthermore, majority of the respondents perceive that the IHBSWs need skills upgrading, although the IEWs themselves were more in favor of this than their customers. Of course, customers indicated, during interviews, that they didn't expect much from the service-providers (even though survey showed that more than half of them desired upgraded services) because the trainings available were not up-to-grade, which explained why they were skeptical about upgrading skills. However, the IHBSWs were emphatic that if they had access to quality skills training that it will improve the type and quality of their services which will increase their clientele base and then income/wellbeing. They strongly desired to learn new trendy and global styles and services as well as to increase the kind of services they can offer. With customers indicating a fair willingness to pay more for

upgraded services, this will support the argument that more training will lead to increased earnings as reflected in our conceptual foundations.

The findings revealed that people generally perceive that skill upgrading greatly impacts skill performance. In fact, a major consensus was that skill upgrading could improve performance and productivity, income and clientele as well as total wellbeing. This definitely answers the research question and indicates that policymakers should give more attention to skill upgrading when planning for IEWs. However, customers were more inclined towards this thinking, perhaps due to the fact that the customers wish for better services than they currently get and feel that upgrading training could lead to better quality services. In other words, they believe that trainings to upgrade the skills of these workers is a good cause, but for the IHBSWs of Hat Yai in particular, the trainings available are not adequate and so may just be an effort in futility. This suggests apathy in customers' expectations of service quality. In any case, the overall consensus is that skills upgrading can improve skill performance of IEWs, but it has to be under the right conditions.

Although overall PPRE show skills performance levels to be at novice levels for most skills and all other skill sets except General Skills, there is some disagreement between IHBSWs and customer ratings. Most customers seem to perceive performance levels for General Skills to be lower than what most IHBSWs perceive, while most customers perceive Facecare Skills performance to be higher than IHBSWs think. But, there is identical agreement for all the other skill sets (i.e. novice performance). Of course, the customers revealed during interviews that they did not expect much from their service providers due to inadequate training provisions and so judged them based on this bias intending to be fair. However, the IHBSWs respond to this by arguing that they do try to learn new skills and improve on old ones through social media and practicing, but there is only so much they can gain since there is no-one to show them how to do things right. The customers also argued that they really do not see the need to patronize these service providers because the services they offer are so common and easy to do at home, but they would be willing to be pay for more advanced services. This, then, shows that if the

IHBSWs upgrade their skills, they will keep old customers and gain new ones, make more money, keep up with the trends and even earn more money (as interviews revealed).

The challenges of training costs and time constraint were also ranked by the respondents as top hindering IHBSWs in their quest for skills upgrading and this has been observed as a global challenge for IEWs (Adams et al 2013; Johanson and Adams 2004). However, there was consensus in the fact that longer duration, advanced and up-to-date trainings were needed as well as trainings that fit with customers' expectations, licensing/certification for trainers and increased support from government and industry, even academia in terms of incentives and other considerations. This implies that the IHBSWs and their customers perceive that government and industry should give more specific attention to them and assist them with cost and availability of training. Subsequently, NSDPs should consider these issues seriously in order to meet the aspirations of IEWs and their national contributions.

5.2 Conclusion

Overall, the study shows that most of the IEWs in the hair and beauty services occupational domain in Hat Yai were primarily novices, which relates to the general concept that IEWs are basically low-skilled with low-productivity. Therefore, skill upgrading for IEWs should be an integral part of skill development programs for IEWs. This same study can be carried out in other occupational domains to determine performance levels in order to aid training design and delivery. However, general perceptions from the survey is that these IEWs need skill upgrading, but certain actions need to be taken by government, industry, the academia and even the workers themselves before positive results can be attained. We argue that NSDPs need to capture these issues in policy provisions so as to include informal enterprises and their workers in the skill development scheme of Thailand. In addition, the Thai NSDPs do not really recognize the role of the IEWs in national economic development and see them as palliatives or stopgaps only. Several studies on building skills in the IE have pointed out the need to have clear, specific and comprehensive approaches (Adams et al 2013; Pina et al 2012; Johanson and Adams 2004). Our findings could

contribute to reforming and updating NSDPs as well as including paired perceptual surveys of IEWs and users of their services in research designs for skills development in the informal economy.

The major limitation of this study is that we had to depend primarily on the perceptions of the respondents since there were no standard rating format for this occupational domain to draw from; however, this challenge was tackled by providing the raters with a performance rating scale guide and then developing the PPRE. Further research could explore performance levels using a standard rating format to see if there will be any convergence or divergence with this study. In addition, further research could also look at the perceptions of IEWs and customers on NSDPs that concern them, their expectations and ratings of such instruments. The workers really rated their skill performance levels low even when customers rated them high; and this indicates a low-self-esteem and occupational respect among the workers. Future research could look into this issue to determine the degree of self-esteem among IHBSWs (and other IEWs as well), causes and remedies. Consequently, we present some recommendations based on the findings of this study:

1. Skills upgrading should be a key aspect of NSDPs for IEWs
2. Skills development for IEWs should be given the same attention as IWs in the formal economy
3. Training program design and delivery for IHBSWs in Hat Yai need to be reviewed
4. Government needs to provide financial incentives for informal enterprises to train their employees as well as for IEWs to be able to afford skill upgrading training
5. Government should consider options that can assist IEWs to access skills upgrading training without losing their jobs or time-off work
6. Related industry can devise ways to support IEWs by supporting their training such as scholarships accessed through contests, internships, free trainings, providing quality and licensed trainers and some kind of rating system that comes with a reward annually. These workers are after all their customers.

7. Government and academic institutions should consider including hair and beauty services into key vocational education programming

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest at all in this paper.

Acknowledgement

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See References Section

PAPER TWO

Reaping just what is sown: Low-Skills and Low-- Productivity of Informal Economy
Workers and the Skill Acquisition Process in Developing Countries
Manuscript submitted for publication to International Journal of Educational
Development

Submission EDEV_2016_4 received by International Journal of Educational Developmen... Page 1 of 2

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Abstract

The objective of this paper is to explore the skill acquisition process of informal economy workers and how it affects their current skills and productivity levels. We used a mixed method and multilevel sampling design with the aid of questionnaires and interviews. We found that trainings provided and skill-levels of workers were basic, and this affected their performance and productivity. We recommend that skill development policies for informal economy workers need to be specific, comprehensive, all-inclusive and peculiar to their challenges.

KEYWORDS: skill acquisition; informal economy workers; productivity; training; skill levels

HIGHLIGHTS

1. The study shows that the quality of skill acquisition process for informal economy workers in developing countries determines the quality of their skill levels.
2. Available trainings are primarily basic levels
3. Inadequate training will lead to low skill levels and then and low productivity.
4. Informal economy workers cannot afford to pay or take time off work for quality skills training.
5. The skill acquisition process for informal economy workers should be a comprehensive, all-inclusive, a balanced mix of all training styles and peculiar to the challenges of the informal economy.
6. Customers' feedback play a key role in assessing IEWs' skills quality and skill demands.

Common Abbreviations Used In the Study

IE	Informal Economy
IEWs	Informal economy Workers
IWs	Informal Workers
SKAQPRO	Skill Acquisition Process
IHBSWs	Informal Hair and Beauty Workers
HBSs	Hair and Beauty Services
SDPA	Thailand Skill Development Promotion Act
DSD	Department of Skill Development

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Informal economy workers (IEWs) are faced with a myriad of challenges, but the hydra-headed vicious cycle of low skills- low productivity-low income has truncating effects on their total wellbeing as well as societal and economic contributions (Adams, da Silva and Razmara 2013; Palmer 2008; Johanson and Adams 2004; Pina et al 2012). This vicious cycle is obviously a product of the conditions that pervade work in the informal economy (IE) such as lack of representation, registration, regulation, legal and social protection, property rights, access to capital and credit, access to quality training and poor governance visibility stifles the voices of these workers and hinders their ability to acquire requisite skills and/or negotiate equitably for better wages and conditions (Adams et al 2013; dvv 2011, 2013; Pina et al 2012; Johanson and Adams 2004; ILO 2014, 2011, 2013b, 2008, 2007, 2004, 2002; Palmer 2008; Silva 2008; Liimatainen 2002; Birchall 2000; Herschbach 1989; Fluitman 1989; Chen 2012; Chen et al 2002). The skill acquisition process (SKAQPRO) of most developing countries have failed to deliver on improving the skill levels of the IEWs (ILO 2008) and this worsens their fate as they already highly vulnerable. This probably explains the phenomenon of a high working poor population in the informal economy (IE) (ILO 2011, 2008; Palmer 2008, 2009), especially women and young adults (ILO 2013b, Pina et al 2012; Chen 2012; WYR 2012; Adams et al 2013; Birchall 2000). It seems that IEWs are not just vulnerable to unemployment, but to underemployment that still leads to the inability to preserve their wellbeing (ILO 2002a-c; Carr and Chen 2001; Chen 2012; Gallin and Jhabvala 2001).

Many argue that the skills and productivity level of a workforce has direct and indirect effects on national and enterprise growth, development and competitiveness (ILO 2015a,b, 2013a,b, 2010, 2011, 2008; OECD 2006; Silva 2008; R4D 2012; Palmer 2008; EC 2009a; Langer 2013; Adams et al 2013; Pavcnik 2002; Johanson and Adams 2004; Chen et al 2002; Haan 2002; Liimatainen 2002). The informal workforce of most developing countries sometimes make up to 80% of the workforce (and 20% in some developed countries) and its grows continues unabated (ILO 2013a,b; EC 2009a,b; Becker 2004; Adams 2008) and the IE shows no signs of declining in spite of decades drive to formalize the sector (ILO 2013a; 2012a, 2003; Adams 2008; ADB 2011). In fact, some studies have concluded that aspects of the IE may never formalize and some enterprises and workers may continue to prefer their informal status – as is seen in some countries where the IE and formal economy co-exist agreeably (ILO 2014, 2011; La Porta and Schleiffer 2009; Chen et al 2002; Chen 2007; Sparks and Barnett 2010; Walther 2013). Therefore, attention given to IEWs should shift from preparing them for formal jobs to equipping them with potential and opportunities to improve their wellbeing, lifestyle as well as individual and collective contributions to their society and collective contributions to society and national economic development.

The IEWs (who own or work directly for enterprises in the IE) are highly vulnerable (Adams et al 2013; Langer 2013; Walther 2013; Johanson and Adams 2004; ILO 2015a,b, 2014, 2013a,b, 2012a, 2011, 2003, 2002a-c; Darvas and Palmer 2014; Chen 2012; Bacchetta 2009; Hussmanns 2004; Bangasser 2000;

Birchall 2000; King 1989; Herschbach 1989; Fluitman 1989) and suffer greater deficits than their colleagues in the formal and industrialized economy because they are not even recognized in the formalization pursuit of national governments and multilateral agencies. The IEWs, whether self-employed or waged workers, will most unlikely be willing to transit to formalization, particularly since their activities are merely subsistence and/or simple products and services delivered at very micro-levels. They are often not captured in national labor surveys and this reflects in the weak mention of them in national skill development policies (NSDPs) (Liimatainen 2002; Chen 2012; Chen et al 2002). This paper focuses on the IEWs in the services subsector as this is an occupational domain where it is erroneously assumed that higher level skills are not required. Most IEWs are caught in the vicious cycle of 'low' as they face the challenges of working and living in the IE (Palmer 2008; King and Palmer 2008) and are unable to support a decent standard of living; and these vulnerabilities perpetuate the vicious cycle (Darvas and Palmer 2014; ILO 2013b; Palmer 2008). They are mostly paid per hour or service and so their income is dependent on how much service they render and how many clients they attend to per day. This indicates that the ability to perform optimally through improved skills to produce quality goods and services that attract more clients and orders would not only increase their income, self-esteem, self-reliance (UNHCR 2011) and wellbeing, but also their ability to negotiate for better deals for themselves. To this effect, this paper focuses on skills as a major driver to improve productivity in conjunction with other drivers in the peculiar context of the IE. Also, in this paper, we view productivity from the lens of worker output per hour (and service) and impact on income and wellbeing.

The purpose of this study is to explore the linkages between low skill and low productivity of IEWs and how the SKAQPRO in developing countries contribute to this vicious cycle. The paper structured includes: introduction, background, methods, results, discussion and recommendations/conclusion.

1.1 Background

Skills are increasingly critical in today's fast-growing world of work and regarded as the highest bargaining tool of the worker (ILO 2012b, 2010; OECD 2013a, 2012; EC 2009a,b; Kwon 2009) as well as a global currency of the 21st century (World Bank 2014; ILO 2014, 2012a, 2002c; OECD 2012; EC 2009a) that could transform lives, generate prosperity and promote social cohesion (OECD 2013a). Governments and development agencies have recognized that one way to tackle poverty and the unemployment crisis in the IE is through skills development (ILO 2008; Palmer 2008; OECD 2006; World Bank 2012a), but skills development alone has not yielded the expected results (Palmer 2007a,b, 2008; Darvas and Palmer 2014; King and Palmer 2007, 2008; ILO 2008, 2013b). Studies and reports have shown overwhelming evidence that skills can strengthen the self-reliance of IEWs (ILO 2015a,b, 2013a,b, 2011, 2010, 2008; Adams et al 2013; Pina et al 2012; EC 2010a,b; Palmer 2008, 2007c; King and Palmer 2008; Silva 2008; Pavcnik 2002), however, lack of access to quality training and the commitment of training-providers to the needs of the IEWs, the inability to afford the cost of these trainings and market constraints as well as other social,

economic and legal obstacles (Langer 2013; Adams et al 2013; Johanson and Adams 2004; World Bank 2014; Pina et al 2012) and poor support incentives from government (Silva 2008; Pavcnik 2002; Liimatainen 2002; Hussmanns 2004; Adams et al 2013; ILO 2013a, 2012a) hinders their productive capacity (Palmer 2008, 2009; King and Palmer 2006a).

This is an indication of the failure of the SKAQPRO for IEWs in developing countries, which may not be unrelated to the policies that isolate skills development from the other drivers of productivity and growth. In this paper, we consider that skills development on its own will not lead to improved productivity and improved productivity is not enough to increase income and boost wellbeing, but it is a major driver for productivity and in turn, growth in other areas when interlinked with all other drivers (investment, innovation, competition and enterprise) (ILO 2008, 2009; Gambin, Green and Hogarth 2009; Leitch 2006; Tamkin 2005; Engelbracht 2003; Mason et al 2007) and designed from an all-inclusive perspective. For instance, the poor productive capacity of the IEWs could stem from inefficiency in workplace organization, which could lead to low productivity and then low income; low income could also hinder workers' ability to access markets, take on more productive work and higher earning ventures as well as attempt to improve their employment quality; and this would weaken their bargaining power; and all these can keep them at the bottom of the ladder (Palmer 2009; ILO 2013b). Also, Adams et al (2013) corroborate that skills can impact positively on their product quality and service delivery; reduce wastage; encourage innovation; improve occupational health and safety; improve work conditions; improve communication skills; increase bargaining ability; enhance decision-making; and add dynamism and creativity to their work. This, of course, depends on the context of the SKAQPRO provided for the IEWs and if it captures the true situation that they face.

Johanson and Adams (2004) argue that in order for any SKAQPRO to be effective, a synergy of approaches towards improving work practices, human and social capital, access to finance and market, proper and adequate infrastructure, information, relevant technology, business-friendly climate and providing the enabling policy and institutional environment (Adams et al 2013; ILO 2013a,c; Palmer 2008, 2007b; King and Palmer 2006b; Darvas and Palmer 2014; Mayombe and Lombard 2015). Acquired skills need to be of good quality and within appropriate contextual conditions (World Bank 2004) to be effective and productive because poorly acquired skills will not result in increased productive capacity (King and Palmer 2006a). It, therefore, makes sense to reconsider the skill acquisition paradigm from just equipping the unemployed/underemployed with basic skills for employment in the formal economy to a shift that includes, at a higher degree, assisting IEWs to improve their social and human capital as well as productivity (Brewer et al 2012; BIS 2010; Brisbois and Saunders 2005; Peter-Cookey and Janyam 2015; Pieck 2000).

IEWs face additional challenges to acquiring the skills they need to improve their productivity because they are often unable to afford the financial cost of trainings, training entry requirements are too high, relevance of skill training, quality of skill training, difficulty in taking time off work for training (Herschbach 1989) and these affect their decision to pursue training in spite of their desire to upgrade their

skills (Walther 2013; ILO 2013b). These are issues that need to be considered in planning SKAQPROs, especially where it concerns IEWs who will most likely not transit to formalization, but still deserve a chance to earn a living income. This implies that skill training placed in the center of a comprehensive strategy with social, political, cultural, economic and other related elements (Fluitman 1989; Adams et al 2013; Pina et al. 2013) could result in improved productivity and income. Fluitman (1989) recognized the need to plan SKAQPROs based on the perspectives of the people rather than just assuming to know their needs and pointed out the importance of exploring and understanding the SKAQPRO from targeted angles. In this paper, we explore the issues from the perspectives of the IEWs in the study area.

Taylor and Ivry (2012) have argued that skill acquisition ‘involves the synergistic engagement of strategic and adaptive processes’, that is, it is not rigid, constrained and stereotypical but dynamic and exploratory (Newell 1991), therefore, SKAQPRO for IEWs should be dynamic, adaptive, all-inclusive and occupational domain-specific before effective skill learning programs can be designed. Therefore, to improve the training delivery for the IEWs, it is essential to do a collective assessment on how they acquire their skills so as to reveal the weak link of an occupational domain in any given area. This will serve as a guide for skill policy development and design of training intervention programs (Kraiger, Ford and Salas 1993).

The SKAQPRO in developing countries’ IE and its impact on the IEWs and their performance, especially in work that has to do with trade and craft as well as services outside the formal and industrial economy have never really being studied. Available studies also mainly focus on pre-employment provisions (e.g. traditional informal trainings like apprenticeship and formal training programs) and not on the skill quality and the impact on income and enterprise growth (Tumen, 2015; Mayombe and Lombard 2015; Chan 2013; Adams 2008; Palmer 2007a,c; Unluhisarcikli 2001; Singh 2000). Research investigations into skill acquisition for IEWs are scarce, and mostly focus on informal employment in the formal economy or industrialized sector, formalization, property rights, poverty alleviation, etc (Adams et al 2013; Palmer 2008, 2007c; Johanson and Adams 2004) and not on IEWs. A literary search on skills for IWs (on Scopus, ScienceDirect, and SSCI: Terms-skills, skills acquisition, IWs: Language-English: Date-09/2014-01/2016) yielded no related publications. Also, most studies on IWs are aimed at the outcome of transiting to formalization or the modern day industrialized/capitalist sector (Chen 2012; Chen et al 2002; La Porta and Shleifer 2009). This paper fill this gap by looking at the skill acquisition and skills levels status of informal hair and beauty services workers (IHBSWs) in Hat Yai (HY) city, Thailand. The objective of this paper is to gain insight into the SKAQPRO of these workers and how it affects their current skills levels. The research questions addressed include ‘how do they acquire their skills and what are their current skills levels?’ The intention is to suggest a way forward for governments and intervention organizations to plan and design effective SKAQPRO for increased productivity.

1.2 Skills and Productivity of IEWs

Speelman & Kirsner (2008) describes skill acquisition as a form of prolonged skill learning that leads to routine and automatic responses in performance of tasks and abilities, given the right conditions. Rosenbaum et al (2001) sees it as attaining abilities to complete tasks from practice and Green (2011, pp. 7)) argues that skill acquisition is ‘conditioned by attitudes and expectations that are imprinted with social norms; while opportunities for skill acquisition are circumscribed by social class’. This implies that the process of skill acquisition is continuous and iterative giving room to add new skills and build on the performance of old skills (Boyatzis and Kolb 1995; Newell, 1991; Anderson 1982; Newell and Rosenbloom 1981; Welford 1970 and Singleton 1978 as cited in Matsumoto 2009). Therefore, any SKAQPRO for IEWs should incorporate practice and experience into its core design as well as consider their expectations and desires and the peculiar challenges of their social and economic status. This will require a comprehensive and embrative understanding of skill and its impact on productivity as well as income and wellbeing by extension.

But, understanding the term ‘skills’ is not an easy feat and has proven a historical challenge (Green 2011; Baum 2008); and there is still not a universally-accepted definition. Particularly, skills have been defined according to the discipline of study (Green 2011); power, gender and social structures (Rigby and Sanchis 2006); cultural, social and political contexts (Steingberg 1990; Blau and Kahn 2000; Rigby and Sanchis 2006); technical job requirements (Braveman 1974 as cited in Steinberg 1990); education and experiential attainment through human capital investment (Becker 1964; Schultz 1961; Mincer and Polanchek 1974 as cited in Steinberg 1990). This could explain the historical congress of opinions that have trailed the concept of ‘skills’ over the years.

Skills are said to be characterized by common and regular features like productivity, expandability and socialability, efficiency, experience, learning, precision, and focus (Green 2011), using a combination of cognitive, perceptual and motor processes (Adams 1987). They are continuous in growth, domain-specific, require constant practice, all-encompassing, goal-oriented and feedback-dependent (Seidi and Shahivand 2012; Matsumoto 2009; Fitts & Posner 1967; Welford 1970 and Singleton 1978 as cited in Matsumoto 2009; Rosenbaum, Carlson and Gilmore 2001; Boyatzis and Kolb 1995; Newell 1991). In other words, skill is primarily acquired through learning obtained by some form of instruction, but the ability to use acquired skills is gained through practice and experience. Skill as human capital indicates the qualification to carry out trade or craft work involving knowledge, judgement, accuracy and manual deftness usually acquired as the result of long training and lies in the use of capacities efficiently and effectively based on experience and practice (Welford 1970, 1976; Guthrie 1952; Teixeira 2002; ILO 2012b; OECD 2012; EC 2009; Adams et al 2013). This implies the ability to develop to a level of mastery and excellence acquired by learning to perform various tasks with different degrees of proficiency. This conceptualization of skill embeds it in the individual, restricts it to jobs and tasks as well as physical mastery or ability with or without corresponding knowledge (Aggarwal 2010; Clarke and Winch 2006).

This notion of skill has been contested because it seems to objectify and individualize the concept to the point of missing out on its social connotations (Green 2011; Winch 2000; Rigby and Sanchis 2006). The arguments indicate that skill cannot be regarded as merely inherent qualities and attributes of individuals, but more as a social construction in conjunction with technical attributions influenced by and structured by societal contexts and seasons (Green 2011; Rigby and Sanchis 2006; Winch 2000; Tilly 1998 as cited in Allais 2012). Although, Winch (2000) considers skill as ‘physical capital’, that is individual attributes, he argues that it can only be understood by placing it within the social context of its existence because in as much as it could be said to be the property of individuals, the skills are also social assets contained in a collective community of an occupational domain. Tilly (1998 as cited in Allais 2012) describes skill as a social product and a negotiated identity, which is more inherent in the relationship between workers and employers than in characteristics of individual workers – since the skill and knowledge people bring to the workplace is considered a highly prioritized human capital (Winch 2000). Rigby and Sanchis (2006) take this further as they recognize that the prominent actors in the social construction of skill are the employees and employers and these different actors have different concepts of skills. The employees’ concept is that of ‘effective skill’, which include a combination of knowledge, skills and experience acquired over pre-employment and career period while the employers’ concept is ‘nominal skill’, seen from the narrow viewpoint of particular job requirements. These disparities could and have led to conflicts (Rigby and Sanchis 2006; Baum 2008) due to inequities that reflect existing structures of power (Rigby and Sanchis 2006).

Bradley et al (2000) suggested some criteria for defining skill as individuals’ formal qualifications, training requirement of a job or an individual’s ability to perform complex task. But, this has even further simplified the concept of skill to qualifications and job tasks and leaves out the challenges of obstacles to accessing training, quality and availability of skill training, acceptability of skills by employers and customers. In fact, Baum (2008) points out that the Bradley et al (2000) criteria are just parts in conceptualizing skill and exist alongside the social constructions of other contexts like tradition, gender and ethnicity. Green (2011) called his attempt to find a consensus the ‘PES concept of skill’: P=Productive-value of productivity; Expandable-improved through training and development; and Social-socially determined. He claimed that this concept captures the economics, psychological, political and social notions of skill. The German concept of skill (Beruf) indicate an association of knowledge, practical skills as well as social identity and recognition of an individual’s relation to a particular occupation or industry making it occupational domain-specific (Aggarwal 2010; Allais 2012; Clarke and Winch 2006).

For IEWs, it really doesn’t matter how skills are defined. What matters is that they are provided with the kind of capital that they can trade with to improve their income and wellbeing, whether it be social, physical or human capital. Particularly in the service sector, skills levels are vital to their productivity, performance, income and wellbeing, which is pivotal to their success. Majority of them earnings directly depend on the quality of their products and services whether as owners of their own informal micro-

enterprises and/or waged workers who are paid per hour or service (Mayhew and Neely 2006). They depend on their customer base for their income and job satisfaction, which affects their wellbeing in what they can afford and their self-esteem. For instance, the level and quality of their skills will determine how they perform the services they offer and this in turn affects their performance, which influences the number and status of clientele they attract. In addition, the more clients they attract, the more income they earn and the more services they can offer, the more customers they attract and then more income. This also affects their self-esteem and job satisfaction, especially when there is customer satisfaction and increased clientele. Self-employed IEWs often need to complete specific jobs by themselves from start to finish (Grundwald 2002) and so require skills and knowledge in vast and diverse fields that are occupational domain-specific as well as generic to business and work climate. The extent to this effect cannot be explored in this paper because it is not the purpose of the paper, but suffice it to say that in as much as skills alone will not improve productivity, performance, income and wellbeing; it plays a pivotal role in the social process that leads to better lives for the IEWs.

In essence, skill acquisition for IEWs goes beyond the common assumptions of policy-makers and intervention actors. This will require an all-encompassing social structure that creates the enabling environment and reduces inequities in power and social class. An understanding of 'skill' as it relates to IEWs will help to shape SKAQPROs that are relevant and specific to their peculiar contexts and could improve skill levels and productivity (Ashton and Sung 2006). For the purpose of this research, we define skills as the ability and knowledge (know-what and know-how) embedded in an individual to carry out or perform tasks and duties of a given job or activity in an occupational domain, acquired through learning, experience and practice, in a productive and sociable manner, which can be built upon and mastered to any given level – i.e. the ability and the knowledge to perform. This is drawn from the perspectives of workers, employers and the users of their services and it is based on the findings of a pilot study (Peter-Cookey and Janyam 2015). Skills level is the progressive placement (high, average and low) of an individual(s) based on ability and performance as well as certifications attained. This study assesses skills collectively rather than individually, therefore, we are referring to the ability of a group of heterogeneous individuals in a social and occupational group of the economy and their skills per task (ILO 2012b), which include practical skills and knowledge. We argue that practical skills without the pre-requisite knowledge are inadequate to improve productivity and performance.

However, the linkages of skills to productivity, performance, income and wellbeing are tenuous and have stirred up strong debates. Development studies research and policy-makers have held on to the view that skills development has strong ties with productivity and income as well as national economic development and competitiveness (Darvas and Palmer 2014; ADB 2004; Palmer 2008, 2007c; King and Palmer 2008, 2007; OECD 2006; World Bank 2012a; Adams et al 2013; Johanson and Adams 2004; ILO 2015a,b, 2013b, 2011, 2007a,b, 2000; Liimatainen 2002). Sianesi and Van Reenen (2003) asserted that

human capital levels are strongly related to average labor productivity and Mason et al (2007) add that human capital plays a significant role in determining productivity levels. Webber et al (2007) also discovered in their study that high skills had statistically significant and positive effects on labor productivity and low skill workers had a negative effect on labor productivity. Also, high levels of skill and education have been linked to high levels of productivity and economic growth (Hanushek and Woessmann 2010; Taylor, Haux and Pudney 2012; Blanden et al 2010; Harmon et al 2000), but the links to income are not exactly direct, especially since demand and supply for higher skill workers could affect earnings up or down for low skill workers (Taylor et al 2012). Notwithstanding, raising the skills of the low skill workers could improve their income because they can increase the standards of their products and services (Sianesi and Van Reenen 2003; Shapiro 2006). There is the challenge of obstacles of social and power relations which could serve as hindrances to low skill workers (Belzil and Hansen 2007, 2002; Taylor et al 2012), but evidence does show that skills have direct impact on income with regards to employment potential and wages earned (Walker and Zhu 2003; Chevalier et al 2004; Taylor et al 2012). Productivity and wellbeing will, however, depend closely on levels of skill utilization (Van den Broeck, Schreurs, Guenter and van Emmerik 2015; Van Ruyseveldt and van Dijke 2011; Deci and Ryan 2000; Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, De Wille and Lens 2008; Van Ruyseveldt, Verboom and Smulders 2011; Hobfoll 2002; Ouweneel, Leblanc and Schaufeli 2012; ONS 2012, 2011; NEF 2009; Morrison, Cordery, Girardi and Payne 2005). However, Akerboom and Maes (2006) call out that the connections between skill utilization and wellbeing may not be as simple as it seems and may require deeper reflections. The indications are that improved skills enable higher productivity, which could lead to job/life satisfaction, self-esteem boost, enhance social networks, reduce strain and generally improve total wellbeing, but ONS (2012) argue that this could depend on age, gender, social status, quality of employment, health and other related contexts.

When addressing skills and productivity of IEWs, we need to understand that the angles differ from the formal economy context of paid employment (Palmer 2008) because simply increasing skills may not result in improved productivity (Mayhew and Neely 2006; Keep and Neely 2006; Leitch 2006; Gambin et al 2009) if the prevailing conditions in the IE are ignored (Palmer 2009, 2007a-c; Adams et al 2013) and considering skills in isolation could yield negative results (Craft and O'Mahony 2001; Gambin et al 2009). IEWs income is dependent on the quality of their performance, and so, in order to improve their income, they need to be more productive (ILO 2005) by performing better and operating on higher levels. In as much as skill is a major driver for improved productivity, it must work within a synergistic combination of the other productivity drivers and only where the intricate interactions of these drivers are recognized and exploited will there be productivity in the long-run (Mayhew and Neely 2006; Keep and Neely 2006; Gambin et al 2009; ONS 2012). Particularly, investments in skill training could have great impact when it comes from an understanding of these interactions, the work environment, production processes, policies, and organizations (Keep and Neely 2006; Gambin et al 2009). In addition, the SKAQPRO must be grounded in strong equitable

business and social climate that support skill utilization (ILO 2008; King et al 2005; Palmer et al 2007). Palmer (2008) suggests that a SKAQPRO that improves access, relevance and quality of training programs will be better equipped to ensure resulting upgrade in productivity.

Consequently, increasing skills of IEWs to improve productivity could go a long way to enhance their income and wellbeing, but this must work within the broader circle and mix of economic, political, social, cultural and personal contexts as well as creating opportunities for skill utilization (King et al 2005; Palmer et al 2007; Tamkin 2005; Engelbracht 2003; Mason et al 2007). Policy and institutional challenges will need to be addressed to produce the kind of SKAQPRO that leads to improved skills and productivity, particularly in the areas of policy coherence and integration; training quality and relevance; training-providers capacity to reach out to IEWs; access to quality training; improved training delivery; inclusion of vulnerable groups; enhanced equitable outcomes; and recognizing existing skills provisions and acquisition processes (ILO 2013b).

SKAQPROs in developing countries have failed and need to be improved by taking cognizance of the social contexts in the IE and the multiple pathways for skills training (ILO 2008; Palmer 2008). In this paper, we look at the skills of IEWs as human and social capital and productivity is viewed from the lens of per hour or performance quality (ILO 2008; Gambin et al 2009). The intention is to explore how the SKAQPRO of IEWs can impact their skill levels and ultimately productivity. This paper will address this issue from the perspectives of IEWs in the informal hair and beauty services (IHBSs) in Hat Yai, Thailand along with the enterprise owners, customers and training providers.

2.0 METHODS

2.1 Research Design

The study employed concurrent mixed methods (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003a,b; Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Cresswell, 2009; Cresswell et al 2003) to explore and understand the SKAQPRO of IHBSWs in Hat Yai and how this impacts their skill levels in order to make empirically based recommendations for change. The design is mixed in data collection and sampling. The rationale for this strategy hinges on its flexibility and allowance of multiple evidences and data sources enabling multiple interpretations for triangulation (Cresswell, 2009, 2007, 2003; Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2009, 2003; Stake, 2005, 1995; Gillham, 2000) and tremendous insights into the IHBSWs' SKAQPRO (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

The research was conducted after a pilot study (Peter-Cookey and Janyam 2015) about the skills of IHBSWs in Hat Yai, which identified skill acquisition and performance levels as areas of concern. An in-depth study, which built on the findings of the pilot study, was then conducted to explore skill acquisition, upgrade and perception of skills performance on income and total wellbeing. This research paper is a part of the broader research study that focuses on assessing the SKAQPRO of IEWs. A thorough review of literature and documents/archival records was conducted to understand pertinent and related issues.

2.2 Conceptual Foundations

The conceptual foundations used for this study is derived from the Shu Ha Ri skill acquisition model in conjunction with the three stages of skill acquisition and the ISCO-08 skills levels scale (ILO 2012b) systematically aligned in synergy with the human capital theory (HCT) (Unger et al 2011; Matanda 2008; Schultz 1993, 1971, 1961; Becker, 2002, 1993, 1975, 1964; Mincer 1996, 1974, 1958) and complex dynamic system theory (Stirling 2014; Fusella 2013; Fogel 2011; Bishop 2008; Scoones 2007; Thelen and Smith 2006; Thelen 2005; Chan 2001; Holland 1995; Eidelson 1997). The intention is to build a conceptual and theoretical direction that elaborates on the relationship between SKAQPRO and current collective skill levels of IEWs for assessment. This theoretical background indicates that effective skills development requires a synergy between all forces, processes and connections to be able to address the complex dynamics of the IEWs' socioeconomic environment with adaptable solutions relevant to individuals and communities. This, we believe, shall lead to improved productivity (performance) and income through the cyclical flow of learning and relearning (Tough 1971) from systematic intervention and training programs; i.e. to improve skills levels/performance, the SKAQPRO must also be improved.

The process of skill acquisition has been described in three stages (Fitts 1964; Fitts and Posner 1967). The first stage is the cognitive (learning and understanding) and then the associative (practice and experience) followed by the autonomous stage (automatic and intuitive); much like moving from 'conscious, slow and error-prone to unconscious, fast and error-free (Taatgen 2002). According to Anderson (1982), the cognitive stage leads to declarative knowledge acquired through interpretation, the associative leads to knowledge compilation, which transits from declarative-to-procedural, and autonomous leads to procedural knowledge, which is the application of the compiled knowledge in skilled performance.

The Shu-Ha-Ri skill acquisition Japanese model follows these stages: the shu (obey and observe), ha (break away from) and ri (let go or detach from) (Table 1). Considered highly in Japanese learning development, but not widely used in research, it describes the skill learning process up to mastery and owning of the skills (Galen, 2011; Miller, 2008; Digenti, 1993) and the steps that students go through when climbing the skill ladder from beginner-to-master level in acquiring specific skills in many of Japan's traditional arts and education and is embedded in the relationship between the student and master as well as the culture and social strata (Miller 2008, Galen, 2011; Yokota, Narita and Hamada 2014; Asai, Hayashi and Minazaki 2011; Khampa 2011) , which makes it a unique style to base a SKAQPRO for IEWs on.

The Shu (cognitive) is where most fundamental and basic instructions that need to be memorized and rationalized are taught as declarative knowledge when the learner is trying to understand the skill. The Ha (associative) is where the rules and instructions learned in the Shu as declarative knowledge are slowly compiled and translated into procedural knowledge through experience, practice and personalizing them. Ri (autonomous) is the stage where procedural knowledge is produced intuitively, creatively and spontaneously

by submerging oneself into the process in order to gain mastery of the skill. At this point, the process then begins afresh again as skills are upgraded.

Table 1: Shu Ha Ri Skill Acquisition for IHBSWs

Level	Meaning	Description
<i>Shu-Basic</i> Cognitive-Declarative	to protect, obey or observe	Only fundamentals and basics are taught through study and imitation to learn and gain confidence. E.g. sanitation/sterilization; hygiene/safety; psychology of beauty; science of hair and beauty care; tools and equipment; understanding hair texture, skintone/skintype; human anatomy; etc.
<i>Ha-Intermediate</i> Associative-Knowledge-Compilation	to collapse, break from or break down	Follows the rules learned in the Shu stage, and then diversifies the lessons, naturally moving to the next level, applying what was learned to different situations and arriving at a unique personal understanding. E.g. understanding face/body structure/system in hair and beauty therapy; apply face/body art; apply anatomy/nerves/muscles knowledge to massage therapy; hairstyling/cutting/color management; nail art/acrylic/gel application; apply make-up and facial treatment; eyelash/eyebrow management; etc.
<i>Ri-Advanced</i> Autonomous-Procedural	to let go, detach, submerged or be far removed	The final stage, where creativity, innovation and spontaneity replace imitation. Ability to draw on personal experiences and adapt intuitively to changing circumstances and conditions. E.g. hair/scalp treatment; face/skin treatment; nail/foot treatment; hair/make-up design; face/body art design; develop massage therapy plans; hair and make-up management; personal make-overs; consultation/counselling; salon management; etc.

At final mastery, the rules are applied unconsciously from a freedom perspective rather than a slavish imitation through inherent understanding and wisdom (Digenti, 1993). The process is iterative and cyclical, where completion leads to a new beginning and overall mastery per skill through a lifetime (Figure 1). Skills levels will be determined by adopting the ILO's ISCO-08 (ILO, 2012b) (see Table 2).

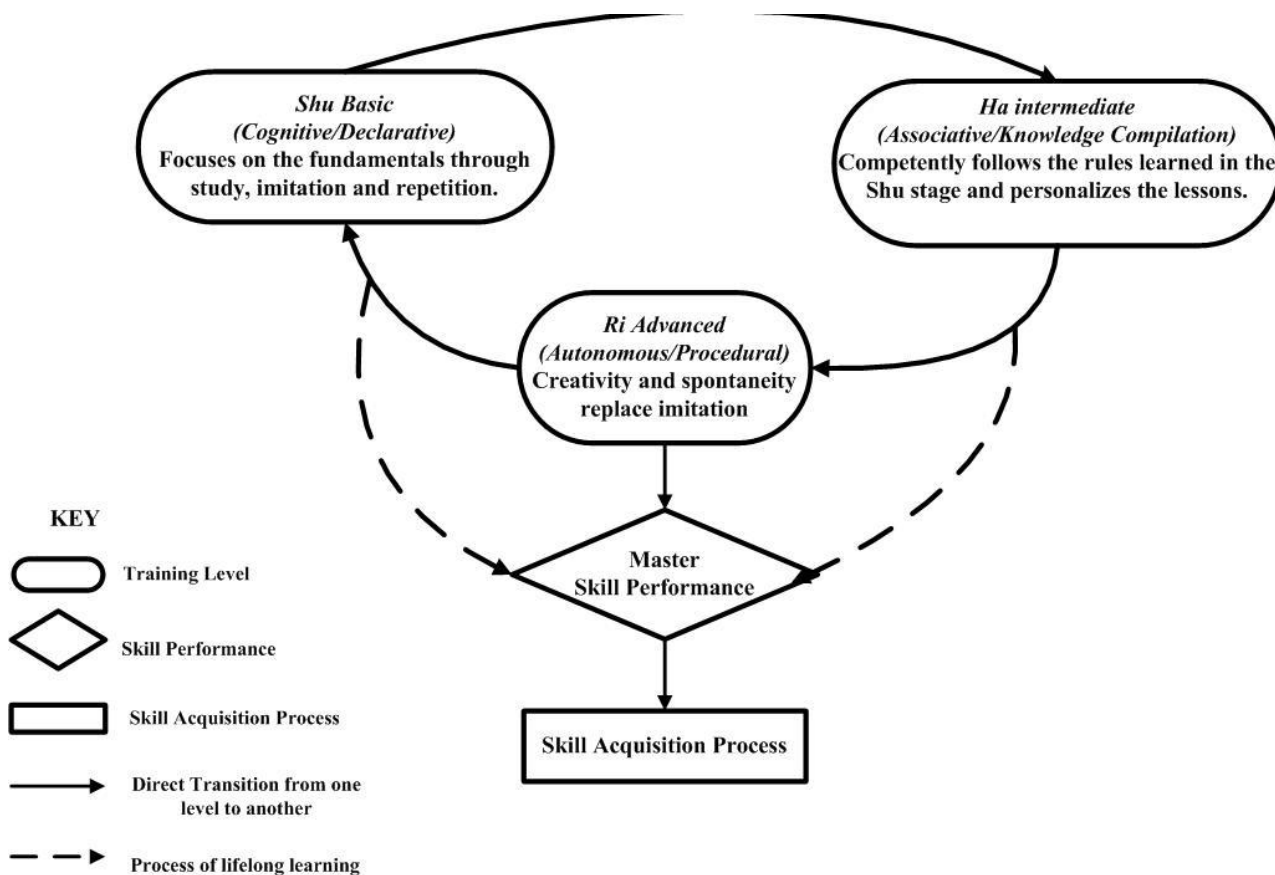


Figure 1: The Study’s Conceptual Foundation (Illustrated by Author)

Table 2: Skills Levels for IHBSWs

Skills Levels Scale	Tasks	Task Examples
1: Entry Level Skills	Simple routine physical/manual	Safety procedures, social interaction, cleaning, hairwashing, assembling equipment, identifying colors and skin tone, identifying materials/tools, identifying skin condition, foot/nail preparation, etc
2: Entry Level Skills/Apprenticeship	Machine & electronic equipment operation	Hairdressing, safety practices, haircutting, client management, hair trimming, massage posture, preparations, foot massaging, nail cleaning/coating, skin preparation, etc
3: Further Training (Informal/Formal)	Complex technical & practical (specialization)	Hairstyling, hair treatment, nail treatment, nail art/fixing, face/foot care, massage therapy, haircut designing, hair fixing and braiding, skin treatment, equipment maintenance, etc

4: Further Training/Formal Education	Complex problem-solving, decision-making, innovation & creativity	Shop management, customer relations, training, hair design, make-up design, beauty therapy, counselling, consultancy, etc
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2.3 Scope

The scope of this study covers informal hair and beauty services workers (IHBSWs), IEWs in the trade and craft sector providing creative and personal care services. They are informal because they work in the IE of developing countries, have all the features of IWs, are mostly self-employed and own-account workers (with operations of very few employees, if any) or work for micro-enterprises and have no social or legal protection. They are very common in developing nations and can be found literally on most urban centers' streets (Kagone and Namusonge 2014; Kamau and Bwisa 2013; Mpye 2013). This research focuses on them because of the potential for job creation in the IE; popularity with vulnerable groups; its vibrant, intrinsic and timeless nature (Allen et al 2011; Kass 2011; Bennie et al 2010; Lerkpollakarn and Khemarangsarn 2009; Twigg 2009; Lee et al 2007; Solomon and Rabolt 2002); plus, it is most unlikely to succumb to formalization.

They found under the National Statistics Office (NSO) occupational classifications like service workers, shop and market sales workers, and craft and related trade workers using the ILO ISCO-08 classification (NSO 2016, 2014; ILO 2012b) and based on this, they can be hypothetically assumed to number up to five million out of the 55.7% labor force of Thailand (ILO, 2012c; NSO 2016, 2014, 2013, 2012, 2010; Source ASEAN 2010). But, most trainings available for them (like other developing countries) are basic and not adequate to attract and keep a viable clientele (IBISWorld 2014a,b; RAPS 2014; SAS 2011; PBA 2011), and they are not properly and adequately captured in relevant national plans hence almost invisible to policy-makers. In 2008, approximately 50,856 of the unemployed desired to develop these skills; an approximate 1,932,834 of the population 15 years and above desired these skills; and an estimated 16,857 unemployed persons desired that the government would provide skill development support for them (NSO 2008). Studies on the skill set required for this target group is globally sparse and almost non-existent. Most studies cover marketing (Shahbazi and Akareem 2013; Thongplean 2012; Kuyram 2013), challenges of the workers at workplace and in training (Mpye 2013; Hsiao and Baines 2013), relationships between workers and customers (Oliveira and Neto 2014; Tudin and Tambaki 2012; Cohen 2010), service quality and customer satisfaction (Tabassum and Khan 2013; Khan and Tabassum 2011, 2012), emotional labor (Torien and Kitzinger 2007), business sophistication and growth (Makibelo 2014; Onsongo and Muturi 2015) as well as gender and entrepreneurship (Palaneeswari and Devi 2012; Cham 2011). Some reviewed the erroneous perception that skills in this occupation are of low requirements (Yeadon-Lee 2012) and pointed out the expert status of salon workers while Konishi (2010) connected the loyalty and revisits of customers to higher skill service-providers and Lee et al 2011 pointed out the need for individually honed skills and technical expertise, continuous learning and workplace culture.

2.4 The Study Area

Thailand's informal workforce is generally challenged by low-skills and productivity (ONESDB 2012; Maclean et. al 2013; ADB 2013a/b; ADB/TWS 2013) and this impacts negatively on IEWs (World Bank, 2012). There is an expedient need to improve their skills, especially those in the services subsector, as they are a major contributor to income generation and national development (NSO 2014; ILO 2013b/c, 2012b, 2004, 2002b; ONESDB 2012; World Bank 2012; OECD 2009; Thanachaisethavut et. al 2008; Thai Health 2010; KOT 2007, 2002; Richtigter 2006).

Hat-Yai is a major city in the south of Thailand and was chosen based on its metropolitan and heterogeneous population. This is because it is an urban center in a developing nation (Adams et al 2013; Langer 2013; ILO 2013a; IMF 2015; World Bank 2015; UN 2015) with a large foreign visitor population, as well as its convenience of proximity (Tashakkori and Teddlie 2003a,b; Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009, 2007; Cresswell 2009). It is a municipality in Songkhla Province, Southern Thailand (Figure 2) located near the border of Malaysia and the business heart of Songkhla, the largest metropolitan area in the South and third largest in the country (Kuncharin and Mohammed 2014, 2013) as well as the largest municipality in the Songkhla Province with a population of 158, 128 (HYC 2011). It is estimated that 356, 917 foreigners live, study and work in southern Thailand; considering the number of foreign students and staff in Hat-Yai's universities, it can be safely assumed that a good number of these foreigners are in Hat Yai (Sciortino & Punpuing, 2009; IOM, 2011). Aside from being a major city in southern Thailand, Hat Yai is also the top tourist attraction for ASEAN tourists, especially those from Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia. More than 400,000-600,000 Malaysians come to Hat Yai on weekend visits annually mainly for shopping, sight-seeing, thai-massage and other personal services (Tepsing 2014; Jariyachamsit, Sakul & Wongleedee, 2012; Kuncharin & Mohamed, 2014, 2013).

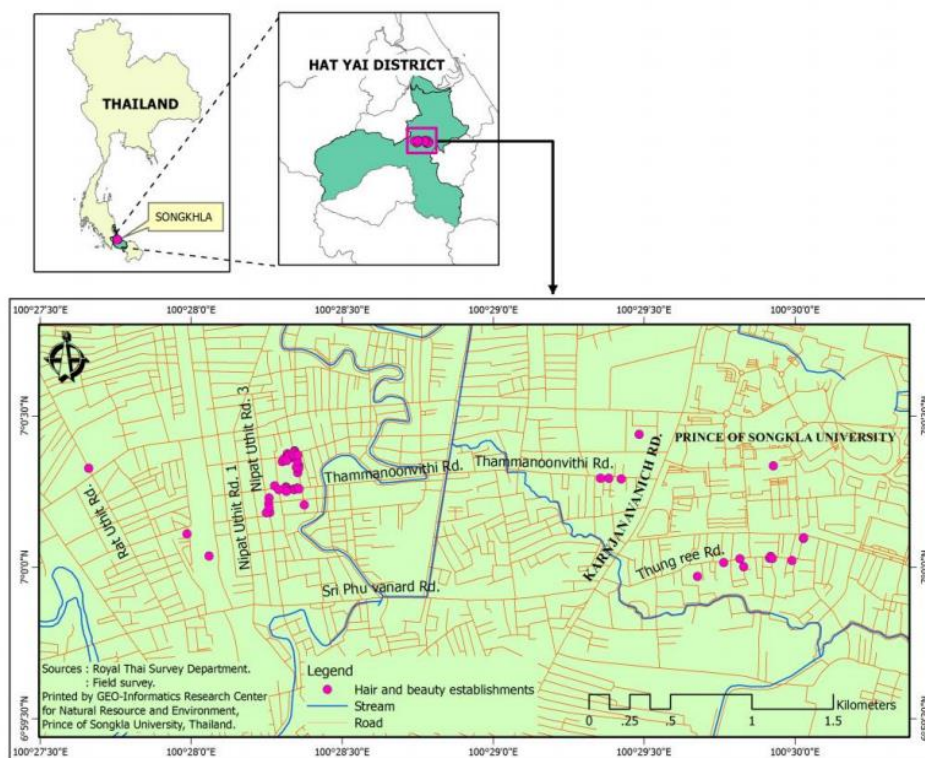


Figure 2: Map of Hat Yai and the city center

2.3.1 Skill Acquisition Process (SKAQPRO) of IHBSWs in Hat Yai

The current SKAQPRO for IHBSWs in Hat-Yai as deduced from this research is represented in Figure 3. There are three strands of trainings available for the IEWS: formal, informal and self-learning. Each strand has different types of instructional methods available to trainees as well as different categories of training providers. For example, the self-teaching strand (which the workers use to learn emerging trends) has Facebook/YouTube, fashion and beauty magazines/books and practice as instructional methods while training providers include the internet, colleagues/employers and family/friends. Certification is currently by the Department of Skill Development (DSD) of the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare (for training of IWs) through pre-employment and upgrading training; Office of the Vocational Education Commission (OVEC) (formally, Department of Vocational Education and Training) of the Ministry of Education, which is responsible for formal vocational training certifications (OVES, 2012; Rojvithee, 2007; Silpa-Archa, 2010). However, the DSD is responsible for implementing the Skills Development Promotion Act (SDPA) (KOT, 2002) and for the development and administration of the National Skills Standards and Testing System as stipulated in the Act for anyone who wants to have their skills standard certified. The DSD is also responsible for training, retraining and upgrading of skills for IEWs.

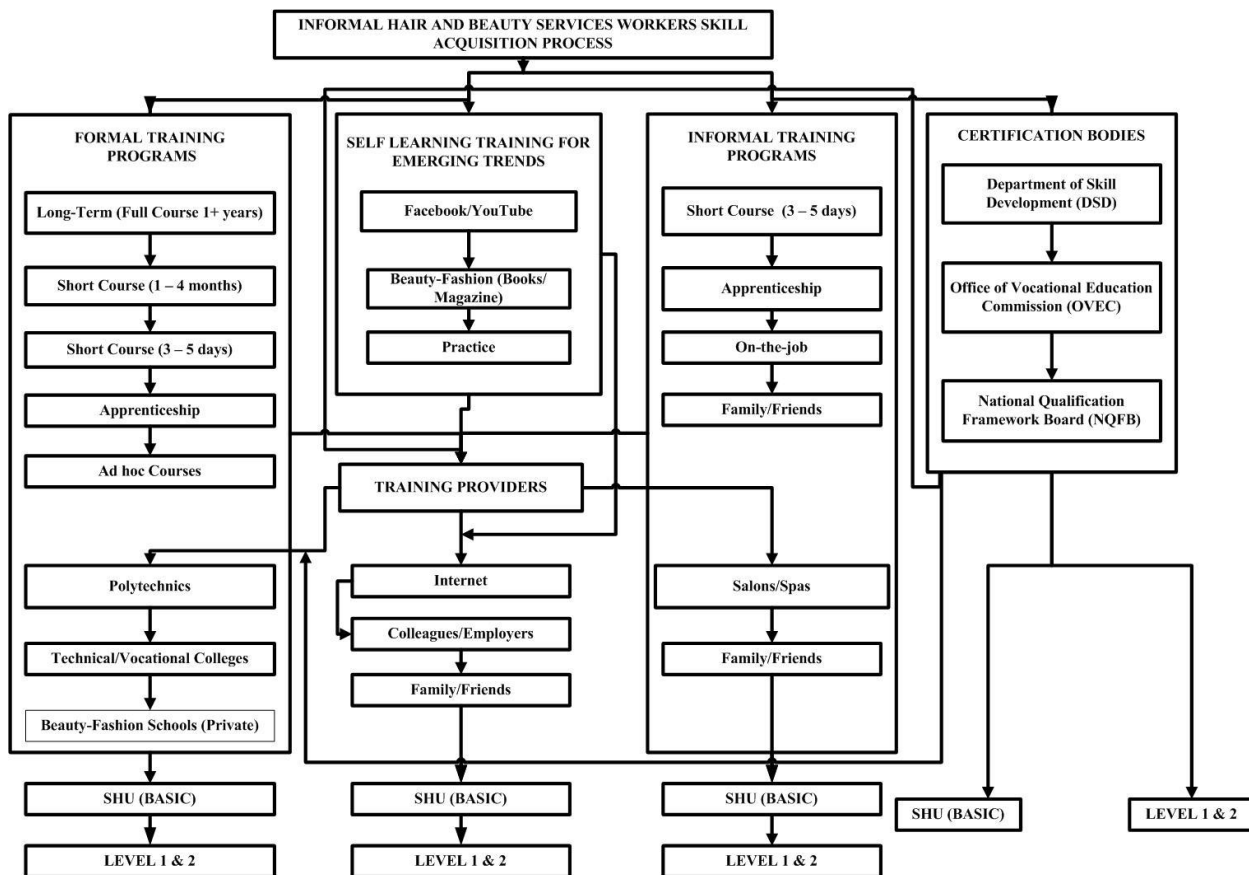


Figure 3: Current Skill Acquisition Process (SKAQPRO) of IHBSWs in Hat Yai, Thailand

The main goal is to improve productivity, employability and promote self-employment as most participants to the DSD trainings were self-employed IEWs; and focus is on manufacturing, services and commercial (DSD, 2014a,b; Puntrik, 2010; Silpa-Archa 2010; Rojvithee, 2007). The DSD also administers the Skills Development Fund provided for in the Act to disburse loans to trainees and trainers and fund training activities/promotion. The aim of the DSD trainings is to produce multi-skilled workers and improve existing skills development system to make Thai-IEWs globally competitive (Huelser & Heal, 2014; KOT, 2013; Wailerdsak, 2013).

There is also the National Professional Qualification Institute (NPQI) under the Office of the Prime Minister, which develops professional qualifications system and competency standards for occupations to international best practices. The Institute also assesses professionals and awards qualifications and certifications at vocational and professional levels (TPQI 2014b). However, TPQI has only attempted to develop certifications and standards for hairdressing (professionals, trainers and training institutions) (TPQI 2014a) and these are not yet available. Assessment of the process and its impact on the skill levels of the workers is that all strands of available training are at basic level of Shu and the IEWs skill levels were 1 and

2 (Table 1 & 2). The certifications are also only available for Shu and levels 1 and 2. One training provider organizes special ad-hoc training demonstrations for primary school pupils (Figure 4).



Figure 4: Showing Songkhla Polytechnic College ad-hoc training session demonstrations with primary school pupils: (I) Nail Art (II) Herbal Face Treatment (III) Hair Weaving

2.4 Data Collection

Data collection was mixed and cross sectional taking place simultaneously from October 2015 - February 2016 (Bernard, 2000; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003a/b). In order to discover congruence by converging results through triangulation (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003; Cresswell, 2009), *intramethods* (using of closed/open ended questions in survey instruments) and *intermethods* (concurrently mixing several methods like survey, interviews and observations) were used in this single study (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003a/b; Cresswell et al, 2003). The primary data collection method was a mixed and multilevel questionnaire survey, interviews, observations and documents/records (i.e. secondary data) designed to gain deep and wide understanding without losing inference quality and representation (Kemper et al, 2003; Yin, 2003).

2.5 Sampling

There was no established sampling frame from which a representative sample could be drawn and so we used a multilevel and identical mixed methods sampling by collecting data from IHBSWs, customers, business owners and trainers to increase the power of inferences drawn from the data, which ensured that participants were drawn from the same sample for the quantitative and qualitative investigations (Kemper et al, 2003; Onwugbuezie & Collins, 2007; Teddlie & Yu, 2007; Kuzel 1999). For example, single survey instruments of self-administered questionnaires that contain both closed and open ended questions yielding concurrent results for quantitative and qualitative data were served on the IHBSWs (first level), their customers (second level), business owners (third level) and training institutions (fourth level). This included a probability (quantitative) sampling technique (single cluster sampling) and a non-probability (qualitative) sampling technique (mixed purposeful sampling).

The cluster for this work was determined through a pilot survey, which noticed that there were a lot of hair and beauty operations in the city center and were largely patronized by locals and tourists. The idea

was to narrow the sampling field down from large heterogeneous chunks to small homogeneous ones to make sampling easier (Bernard, 2000), reduce bias and increase representation (see Figure 2 for sample-cluster-locations). The mixed purposeful sampling approach (Onwugbuezie and Collins 2007; Teddlie and Yu 2007) was used to select information-rich samples from the clusters for in-depth study and the results were all converged (Palinkas et al 2013, 2011; Patton, 1990, 2002; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). In essence, we selected only those samples that were strictly connected to hair and beauty services (HBSs). For this research, HBSs included haircare, facecare, nailcare, bodycare and massage. Specific skills to be assessed were selected based on global requirements for these services (EU 2013; MES 2007; ONET 2010a/b/c/d/e; BLS 2015a,b,c,d; ServiceSkillsSA 2008; ASCP 2010; IBISWorld 2014a,b; RAPS 2014) (see Appendix 1 for specific skills assessed).

2.5.1 Questionnaire Survey

A multi-level survey was conducted concurrently with questionnaires containing open and close-ended questions. The surveys covered 71 HBSs-establishments, 120 IHBSWs, 120 customers, 20 business-owners and four vocational skill training institutions. HBSWs were selected from service operations along the clusters as well as some selected salons in other areas based on suggestions from customers surveyed and interviewed while customers were selected from the salons around the cluster, tourist groups, non-Thai groups and university students. Business-owners were selected based on suggestions from customers, survey visits and willingness to participate, while the training institutions were selected based on the workers suggestions and being government registered.

Structured self-administered questionnaires were developed by the researcher to obtain the socioeconomic demographics of the respondents, their skill levels, acquisition process, customer and employers' satisfaction, skill performance and perception of HBSs in Hat Yai. The questionnaires were presented in Thai and English formats, however, only 50 were completed in English by non-Thai customers. Different sets of questionnaires were designed for each level of respondents. Likert scale questions were included to determine the perception of the respondents towards the skills acquisition rating and skill levels of the IHBSWs in Hat Yai. The questionnaires were designed based on the results of a pilot study and verified by three-member-panels for each level; corrections were made and confirmed before being administered in the major study. The multilevel survey provided comparable data, which enhanced credibility, trustworthiness and reliability (Bernard, 2000; Johnson & Turner, 2003; Onwugbuezie & Collins, 2007; Patton, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Denzin & Guba, 2005).

2.5.2 Interviews

30 customers and workers were interviewed, 2 business-owners and 3 training providers were interviewed. An interview guide was developed for the structured interviews and the questions were exploratory, closed/open and in-depth so that topics could be probed and explored effectively without the interviewer losing focus. Questions covered perceptions and expectations on skill levels, training, performance and recommendations for IHBSWs in Hat Yai. The closed/open questions were used in order to support descriptive and interpretive validity, credibility and reliability (Bernard, 2000; Johnson & Turner, 2003; Onwugbuezie & Collins, 2007; Patton, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Denzin & Guba, 2005). The researcher conducted all interviews personally with the aid of Thai native translators where necessary. All workers', business owners' and training providers' interviews were conducted in their workplaces, while customers were interviewed in salons, over lunch and drinks, and in their homes. All respondents were interviewed in their preferred language and interviews were audio-recorded where possible and note-taking. All those interviewed gave their written consent.

2.5.3 Observations and Secondary Data Reviews

Personal observations of the researcher added more insight to the investigations. As a participant or direct observer, the researcher presented herself as a customer in various capacities or sat in while customers were receiving services with permission to record the activities textually and audio-visually. These observations took place concurrently with some interviews and questionnaire administration which reduced time, increased validity and depth of understanding. Also, secondary data like websites, policy documents, training brochures, curricula, qualification frameworks, reports and other documents were reviewed to add credence and validation to the data obtained from the field, as well as to corroborate and provide more information. These data support descriptive/interpretive validity, credibility, reliability and transferability (Onwugbuezie & Collins, 2007; Johnson & Turner, 2003).

2.6 Data Analysis

We utilized mean, frequency and percentage for descriptive analysis of the quantitative data for the results. Thematic analysis was used for interviews, observations and other qualitative data to find common themes and sub-themes, which were then matched and triangulated with the findings of the quantitative analysis (Onwugbuezie & Teddlie 2003; Onwugbuezie & Collins, 2007; Yin, 2003; Gillham, 2000; Erzberger & Kelle, 2003; Cresswell 2009; Bernard, 2000). Themes were selected based on the research questions, objectives, conceptual lens as well as emerging themes from the results and then presented under the following headings: respondents' profiles, skill acquisition process, skill levels rating and customer satisfaction. Results were validated through triangulation of data from multilevel surveys, interviews and observation, peer/member examination (by presenting findings to peers and some participants), external

auditing (through an independent/uninvolved investigator) (Cresswell 2009; Cresswell and Plano Clark 2007; Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009) and the pilot study.

3.0 RESULTS

3.1 Respondents' Profiles

The sample consisted of more females (74%) than males (27%). The total mean age was within the range of 30-40 and above (70%). The IHBSWs were within the age range of 30-40 (52%) while business owners (31%) and the customers (34%) were within the range of >40. On the other hand, majority entered into work at the age range of 26-30 (33%) while 25% were at the range of 21-25 years. Also, customers are majorly within the age range of 20-30 (32%) and >40 (34%) indicating that most consumers of IHBSs are either young adult or middle-aged females. This was also noted during observation/interviews visits to salons and spas.

Most of the respondents were university (34%) and secondary school graduates (26%) and only 15% had no formal education. However, only 15% of the workers were university graduates while 35% of business owners and 51% of customers were university graduates; but, only 30% of business owners and 7% of workers attended vocational/technical/polytechnic colleges. The survey revealed that the majority of the respondents had lived in Hat Yai for 1-5 years, but most of the workers had recently relocated to the city from other parts of the country and neighboring countries. However, most of the non-Thai customers (38%) were tourists, which explain the fact that 26% of them had lived in the city for only 1-5 years.

In total, majority of the respondents had a monthly income of \$280-421 USD (mean: 21%) while only 7% earned a monthly income above \$1121. However, 38% of the workers earned below \$280 and only 3% earned above \$1121, 25% of business owners earned a monthly income of \$281-421 and 10% earned above \$1121 and while 51% of the customers spend on the average below \$71 monthly on hair and beauty services, 7% spend above \$353. However, only 31% of the workers attend to 2-4 customers per day and 18% attend to 1-2 customers per day while 15% attend to 4-6 and 11-15 customers per day; and most workers are paid per service (47%) and hourly (26%). 50% of business owners state that they have more than 10 customers per week and above 15 per weekend and 40% of these customers are tourists. Observations revealed that most of these customers come over the weekend and often times the salons get zero customers during the weekdays. Some of the customers interviewed argued that most people don't feel the need to visit them because they don't think their services are necessary since they (customers) can do it for themselves.

The survey covered 8 types of establishments (exclusively haircare, facecare, bodycare and massage, full salon, full spa, spa/salon and mobile). Most of the workers surveyed served in haircare only (18%) and full salons (21%) while 25% (haircare) and 21% (full salon) of the customers visited them. Meanwhile, 18% of workers and 10% of businesses were mobile, and 11% of customers used mobile services. Although, 25% of businesses surveyed were spa/salon, only 14% of workers and 7% of customers worked in

and visited them. One government skill development center, one polytechnic college, and two vocational colleges were surveyed. They are all registered to provide vocational skills training. Massage (35%) and haircare (32%) were the commonest skills of the IHBSWs while nailcare (9%) was the least acquired skill; but, most of them worked with two or more of the skill sets. Majority of these workers were fulltime (71%) employees (60%). (Table 3)

Table 3: Respondent Profiles

Characteristic	Description	Business Owners		Workers		Customers		% Mean
		#	%	#	%	#	%	
Respondents nationality	Thai	-	-	-	-	80	62	-
	Asean	-	-	-	-	16	12	-
	Asia	-	-	-	-	10	8	-
	Europe	-	-	-	-	6	5	-
	America	-	-	-	-	6	5	-
	Africa	-	-	-	-	12	9	-
Sex	Female	15	75	93	78	89	68	74
	Male	5	25	27	23	41	32	27
Age (years)	<18	-	-	4	3	-	-	3
	18-20	1	5	24	20	20	15	13
	20-30	3	15	27	23	41	32	23
	30-40	5	25	62	52	25	19	32
	>40	11	55	3	3	44	34	31
Work entry age	<16	-	-	14	12	-	-	-
	17-20	-	-	27	23	-	-	-
	21-25	-	-	30	25	-	-	-
	26-30	-	-	39	33	-	-	-
	<31	-	-	10	8	-	-	-
Educational status	No Formal Education	-	-	18	15	-	-	15
	Primary	-	-	6	5	15	12	9
	Secondary	2	10	69	58	14	11	26
	Technical	5	25	4	5	10	8	13
	Vocational	6	30	8	7	25	19	19
	University	7	35	15	15	66	51	34
Duration of stay (years)	1-5	2	10	59	49	34	26	28
	6-10	2	10	14	12	14	11	11
	11-15	5	25	14	12	15	12	16
	16-20	5	25	11	9	16	12	16

	21-25	2	10	19	16	17	13	13
	26-30	2	10	9	8	18	14	11
	>31	2	10	3	3	16	12	8
Monthly income (USD)	<280	2	10	45	38	10	8	11
	280-421	5	25	32	27	16	12	21
	421-701	5	25	25	21	20	15	20
	701-981	4	20	10	8	32	25	18
	981-1121	2	10	4	3	41	32	15
	>981-1121	2	10	4	3	11	8	7
Monthly spending (USD)	<71	-	-	-	-	67	51	-
	71-141	-	-	-	-	22	17	-
	141-212	-	-	-	-	10	8	-
	212-282	-	-	-	-	12	9	-
	282-353	-	-	-	-	10	8	-
	>353	-	-	-	-	9	7	-
Service establishment available/in-demand	Haircare only	2	20	21	18	33	25	21
	Bodycare only	2	10	4	3	10	8	7
	Facecare only	-	-	10	8	12	9	6
	Massage only	3	15	14	12	20	15	14
	Full Salon	4	18	33	27	32	25	23
	Spa/Salon	5	25	17	14	9	7	15
	Mobile	2	10	21	18	14	11	13
Workers area of service	Haircare only	-	-	38	32	-	-	-
	Bodycare only	-	-	13	11	-	-	-
	Facecare only	-	-	13	11	-	-	-
	Nailcare	-	-	11	9	-	-	-
	Massage only	-	-	45	38	-	-	-
Workers' Pay Contract	Hourly	-	-	31	26	-	-	-
	Daily	-	-	9	8	-	-	-
	Weekly	-	-	4	3	-	-	-
	Monthly	-	-	20	17	-	-	-

	Per Service	-	-	56	47	-	-	-
Work contract	Fulltime	-	-	85	71	-	-	-
	Part-time	-	-	14	12	-	-	-
	Freelance/Mobile	-	-	21	18	-	-	-
Work status	Employee	-	-	72	60	-	-	-
	Owner-Worker	-	-	25	21	-	-	-
	Owner-Employer	-	-	23	19	-	-	-

3.2 Skill Acquisition Process

36% of the respondents acquired their work skills through apprenticeship and interviews revealed that these apprenticeships were done within salons and spas. 19% and 17%, however, were trained on-the-job (OJB) and at a fashion and beauty training school, while government skill training centers provided for only 13% of the survey participants. Only a small proportion learnt their skills from technical/polytechnic/vocational colleges; indicating the small role of vocational institutions in this occupational group (Figure 5).

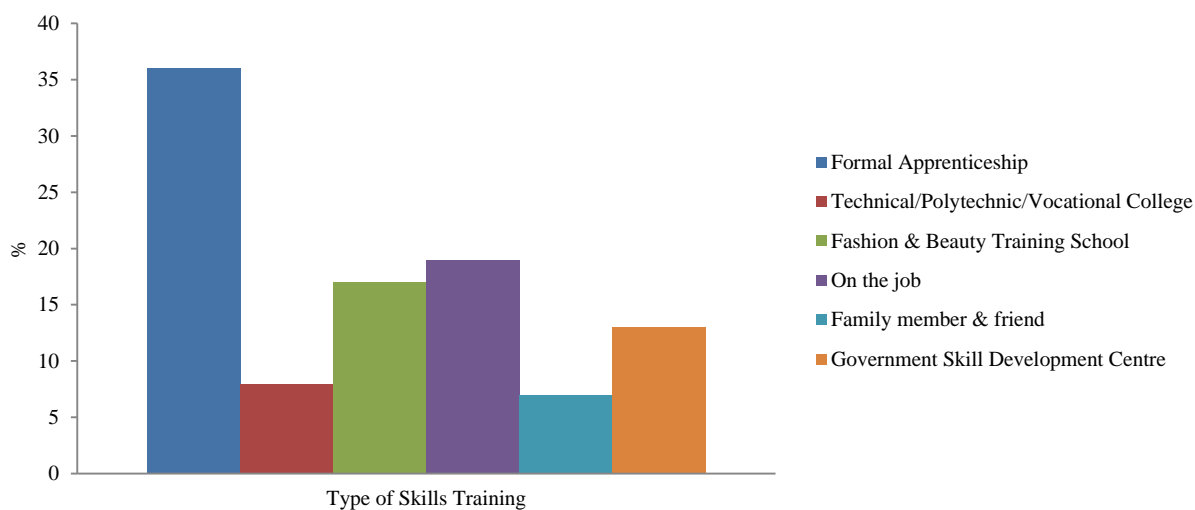


Figure 5: Skill Training Providers

It was observed that most of the formal hair and beauty services training providers in the study area and environs only offer basic courses of not more than six weeks duration (majority were short courses of a maximum of 150hours) (Table 4) for pre-employment with the expectation that the candidates will continue to self-learn through practice. This was deduced from documents and website reviews. One of the institutions had no related programs at all even though their student demonstration hotel provided massage services to the public; and another planned to introduce a short course in facecare. They had no plans to include advanced and professional trainings in the near future. The trainees from these programs are not professionally certified; they only need to register and pass the skills standard test to qualify to practice. This is a basic certificate with which they often get employment or open their own enterprise.

Table 4: Available Training Programs in the institutions surveyed

Training Provider	Available Training	Duration	Level
Provider A	Hairdressing	1-6 weeks	Basic
	Haircutting/Barbering	1-6 weeks	Basic
	Thai/Foot Massage	6-16 weeks (none in 2016)	Basic
	Make-up	Coming Soon	Basic
Provider B	Hairdressing	150 hours	Basic
	Haircutting/Barbering	150 hours	Basic
	Thai/Foot Massage	6 weeks	Basic
	Make-up/Face Treatment	150 hours	Basic
	Nail coating/fixing	150 hours	Basic
Provider C	Not Available	Not Available	Basic
Provider D	Hairdressing	1-6 weeks	Basic
	Haircutting/Barbering	1-6 weeks	Basic
	Thai/Foot Massage	6-16 weeks	Basic
	Make-up/Face Treatment	1-6 weeks	Basic
	Nail coating/fixing	1-6 weeks	Basic

When it was suggested that they could plan for such programs in the future, they seemed to think it was beneath their status. The other institutions, especially the government owned, complained of inadequate funding and claimed that they were constrained to settle for short courses with only basic provisions to transfer limited skills. But, they believed that they gave candidates enough introductory skills, which the graduates could then improve through self-learning. Sadly, none of these institutions were interested in providing IHBSs programs in the future, even the ones that currently do, are reducing the number and will not offer advanced programs because there is not enough funding. One of the officers, however, thought that their institution was capable and willing to arrange advanced programs if they got more funding from government. The current funding hindered the recruiting of qualified trainers, provision of quality training materials and tools as well as increase the training duration.

Interviews also revealed that some skills are acquired from online media such as Facebook, YouTube as well as fashion and beauty books and magazines, watching other more experienced colleagues and simple regular practice. These self-learning acquisition processes seem to be more prevalent among the IHBSWs who have practiced longer, while the other options are for learning basic skills. Understandably so, as 61% of the IEWs surveyed only had 1-6 months of cumulative training and 26% had only 18-24 months

(Figure 6) while 60% of them acquired just basic certified training, 23% had no certification at all and only 8% and 9% had intermediate and advanced certified training respectively and these were for Thai-massage skills (Figure 7).



Figure 6: Cumulative Training Duration

Most of the IHBSWs surveyed obtained their trainings from the institutions surveyed as well as through apprenticeships and on-the-job. When asked about apprenticeships, the workers said there was no formal apprenticeship or on-the-job and system; individual salons determined their process and no certification is granted. The workers desired that the government should help develop these systems so they could benefit as well as increase funding for IHBSs programs.

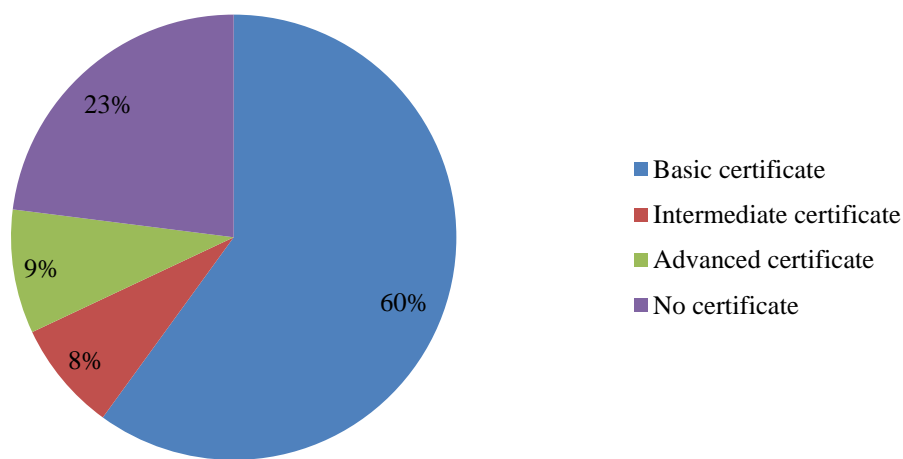


Figure 7: Skill Training Certificates

During interviews and observations, customers' frustrations were so palpable, and sometimes the helplessness of the workers was heartbreaking. The customers were completely fired up when asked about the SKAQPRO of the IHBSWs in Hat Yai. One woman flew into an angry rant for about three minutes as she described the annoyance of having so many IHBS operations in the city and most of them only have basic skills. Then, she took a breath and added that in fairness to the workers, the training available to them were grossly inadequate in quality, content and relevance. Another soft spoken customer praised the workers because she believed they were doing the best with what they had. She however, wished they could learn more and better skills because she hardly ever got anything more that she had always gotten and she was over 40 years and had lived in the city for more than 20 years. A male customer said it was like courting disappointment to expect more from the IHBSWs and so he made do with whatever they could offer. They all perceived that if these workers had better training, they would do even better. There was also a consensus that the SKAQPRO was weak, training duration too short, contents not relevant, trainers not well-equipped and to cap it up, quality trainings were too far away and expensive.

Enterprise-owners also complained that it was difficult to get workers with higher level skills in Hat Yai even though they would be willing to pay more for their services. Furthermore, the own-account workers argued that they could not afford to close down their salons to take time to go for training even if they could afford the cost. They explained that the salons were their only source of income; and the mobile workers felt even more vulnerable because they depended on the salon operations and the goodwill of customers within their location. One of the IHBSWs responded to the above angry customer (because these interviews were conducted during self-administration of questionnaires to workers, customers and enterprise-owners) soothingly and tearfully confessed that she would love to get more and better skills, but there are no advanced skills training available to them.

All the workers interviewed agreed with the customers and enterprise-owners that the SKAQPRO is inadequate, especially in training duration and they were not taught enough about what they needed to know and so had to resort to social media and under studying more experienced colleagues, but not in an apprenticeship. One worker said she wished she could learn better hair color skills and another nail art and enhancement skills, but such trainings were not available in Hat Yai or close by. To learn these type of skills or any advanced skills, they would have to go to Bangkok; and that was just out of the question for them. In addition, learning from social media like Facebook and YouTube was a huge challenge because the materials are mostly in English, which they hardly understand. Customers also added that some of these workers learn on-the-job from people who have only basic skills to transfer and then raise some money to open their own shop.

All the respondents agreed that the SKAQPRO available to IHBSWs in Hat Yai was inadequate and the workers were handicapped because of this. They recommended that training providers should include specialized and personalized programs that include in-depth knowledge on how to deal with individual

conditions and global trends as well as current technologies and treatment procedures. They also added that government needs to support training providers with funding and supply of qualified trainers as well as financial incentives for workers and enterprise-owners to access and provide training. They also suggested that related and relevant industry should support the training of IHBSWs by providing quality trainers and scholarships, considering that these workers are their regular customers.

3.3 Skill Levels Rating

The mean average for IHBSWs work skill levels from the survey was 68% for basic, 19% for intermediate and 13% for advanced. 68% of IHBSWs indicated that skill levels were basic and customers (81%) and business owners (56%) agree (Figure 8). This can be explained by the scarcity of trainings above basic skill levels and the short duration of most of these courses (Table 6). 35% of the IHBSWs have learned new skills within the past 1-2 years and 17% 2-4 years ago while more than 40% have not received any training in the last 4 years.

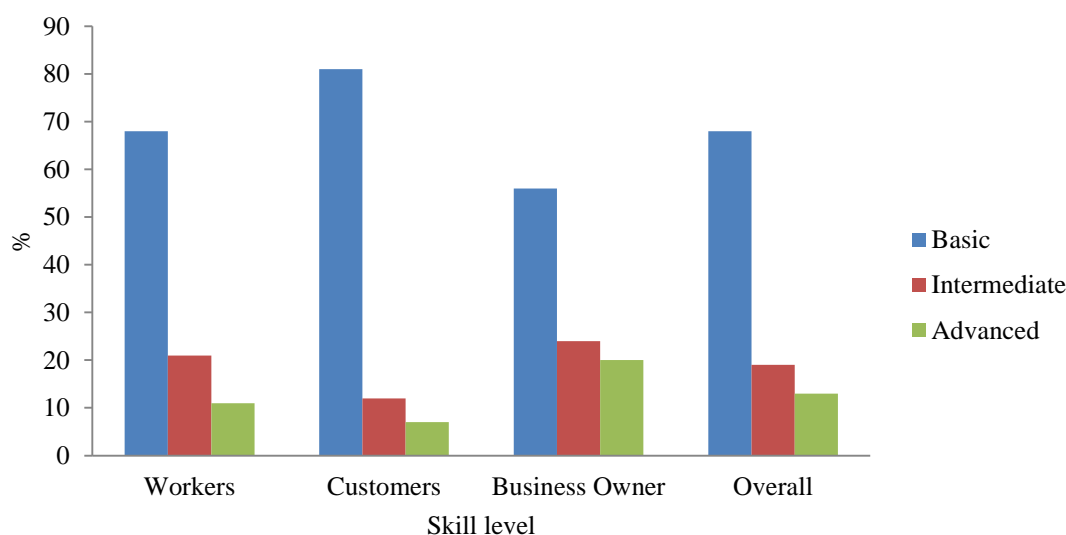


Figure 8: Workers Skill Levels Rating

Meanwhile, only 39% have 1-2 years working experience and practice with training while 37% have been working within the same period without training. In fact, 12% have worked without training for 6-8 years while only 22% have been practicing their skills after training for over 10 years. Those with training did so 1-2 years ago (35%) and over 10 years (14%) (Figure 9). They also bemoaned the slow economy, which they believe affects their clientele and government expenditure on training.

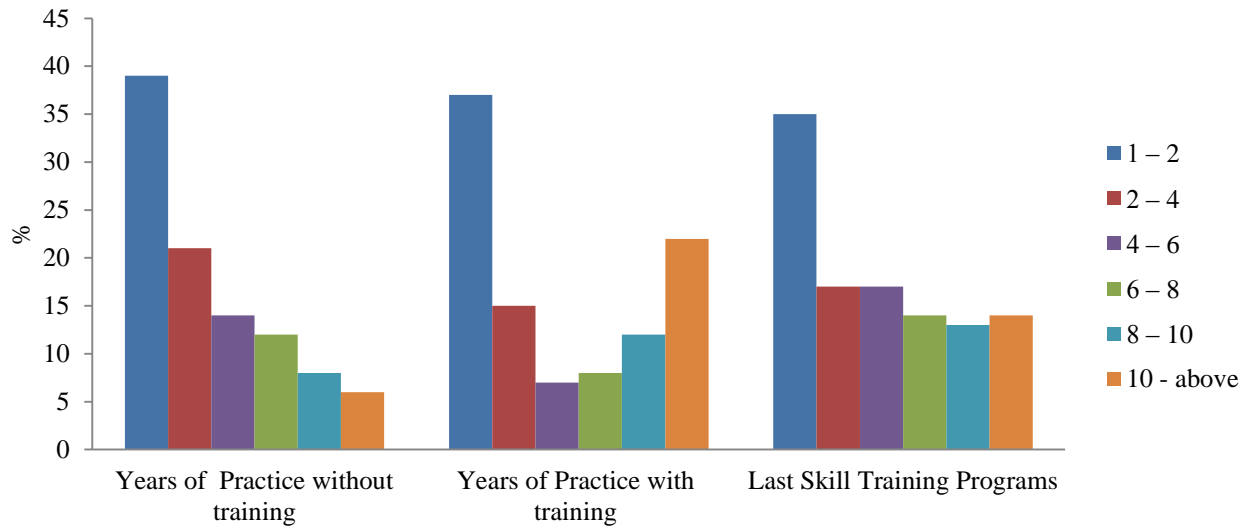


Figure 9: Years of practice/training interval

The survey also revealed that the adequacy and availability of skills are weak. For instance, the mean average for available skills, as indicated by the IHBSWs, customers and business-owners, was 44% and 60% desired to gain new skills (Figure 10). Interviews and observations support these findings as customers mainly had low expectations and so do not really know what they can demand because the servings are slim.

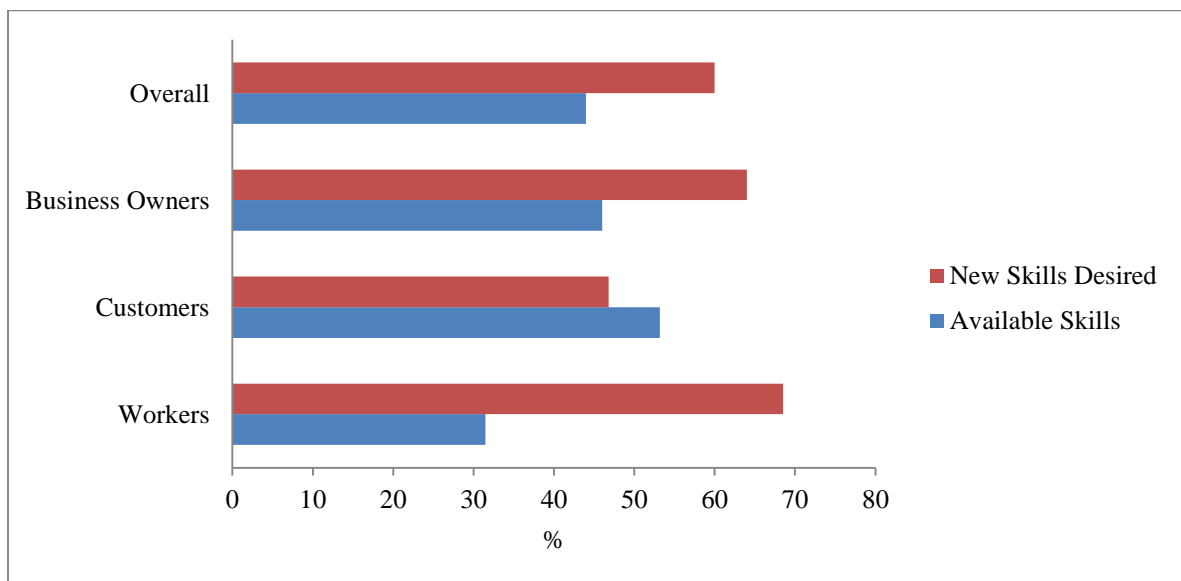


Figure 10: Available/Desired Work Skills/Services

All customers and enterprise-owners agreed that Hat Yai's IHBSWs skill levels were primarily basic. They were fair to the workers, though, and blamed it on the level and quality of their skill training. The workers aspired to increase their skill levels as they argued that more and better skills will help them to boost their clientele, income and self-esteem. However, observations show that hair services salons in the city center were very busy over the weekends when the city is flooded with tourists, but extremely slow during the week. The workers wished that the 'weekend Rush' will last all week. This suggests that customers are mainly foreigners (farangs) and locals hardly patronize these salons, except, of course, during university graduations or wedding ceremonies (as was observed and confirmed during interviews), which are occasional. But, most customers preferred to take care of their hair and beauty care at home since the salons do not offer anything different. One worker painfully described her experience on a daily basis and how hard business was. We were currently in her salon on a Wednesday afternoon and it had been quiet all morning and she confirmed that it would not change until Friday evening. She said 'if you come in on Friday evening, I won't even have time for you'. But, then it is the same for all the other salons and so she only gets a fraction of the crowd, then, it is back to the doldrums of the week day. She believed that if she had higher skills, she would be able to attract more regular and loyal customers who will come during the week also.

Some elite salons were, however, recommended to the researcher as the places to go for specialized and personalized services. It was discovered during observations that the workers in these salons were trained in Bangkok and outside Songkhla and for longer durations such as nine months to three years. These workers refused to be interviewed, but participated in the questionnaire survey. Furthermore, the workers were not aware of any occupational associations relevant to their work even though there is one in Bangkok, which could not be reached on the address obtained from the website. However, skincare and massage services had associations, but they were beyond the reach of the IHBSWs and so could not represent these levels of workers. Nonetheless, these associations generally provide the same common programs to their members. The workers, customers and enterprise-owners perceived that the IHBSWs low skill levels affect their performance, attitude, relationship with customers, self-confidence, self-esteem and even non-work areas; and this in turn affects customer satisfaction and loyalty, which could result in loss of income. The workers lamented that they were always sad to see customers walk away because they could not meet their needs; and one customer claimed that disappointing service will affect his decision to return again. Most of the workers pointed out that salons with high skill level workers charged more and were busy all week and only work on appointments. Enterprise-owners particularly bemoaned the basic skill levels of workers, but were hesitant in hiring high skill workers (even though they were willing to pay higher wages since it could increase clientele) because these workers do not stay long and often leave with loyal customers. And so, these enterprise-owners sought to increase their own skills as well.

3.4 Customer Satisfaction

During interviews, majority of the customers expressed dissatisfaction with IHBSWs service quality and attention to standards, arguing that most of them are not professional. Some of the customers claimed that there are a few salons, for instance, with highly skilled workers ‘who know what they are doing’, but these are mostly the franchised salons. In fact, a few of the interviewees were vehement in their protest as they said these IHBSWs just go and get a few days or weeks of training and then open salons/spas without really knowing what they were doing. It was also observed that a lot of foreigners who visited some of these salons left disappointed because they could not receive the service and quality they required. This gives support to the survey results, which indicated that a large number of the customers surveyed sometimes get their hair and beauty services from outside Hat-Yai even though 31% never do. But then, according to 51% of the respondents (customers), Hat-Yai IHBSWs never exceed expectations and 38% believe that their services never match up to global standards while 29% often change their service provider due to dissatisfaction (Figure 11).

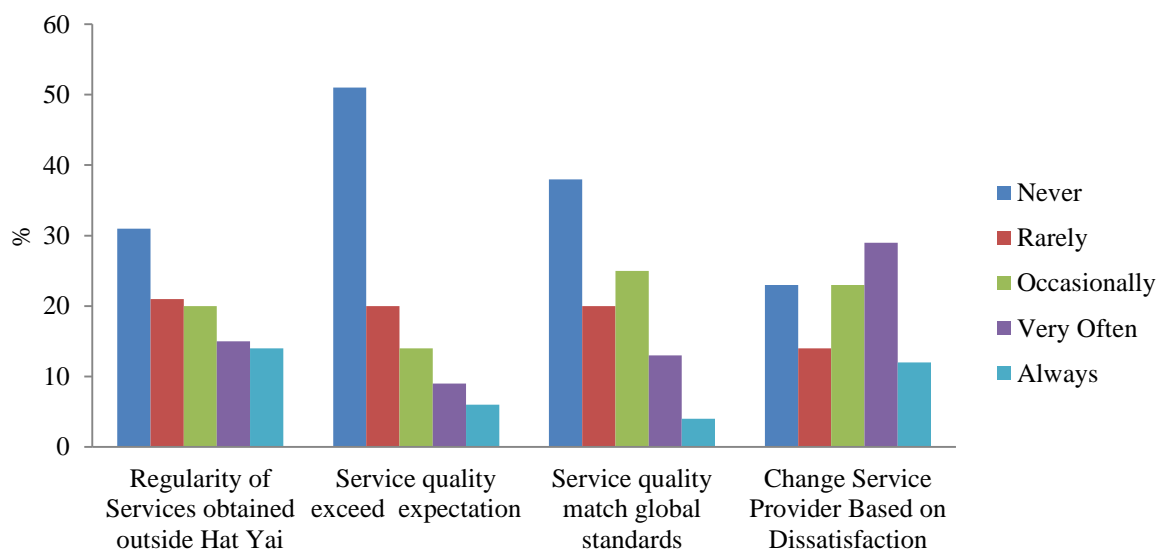


Figure 11: Customers Rating of Service Quality

On the issue of rating IHBSWs understanding of service quality and standards, customers were quite equivocal during interviews. They agreed that most of these IEWs do not have an understanding of the intricacies of their work. They also pointed out that these workers use tools and materials as well as chemicals they do not understand. An interviewee explained that matching skin tone to color and treatment as well as determining hair treatment per individual condition is a non-available skill. In fact, all interviewees wished that they could receive hair treatment services in Hat-Yai. These closely match the survey results, which indicated that most of the respondents do not perceive the IHBSWs understand the issues of service quality and standards, but were neutral on overall satisfaction while agreeing that the IHBSWs need more and better

training. Interestingly, 17% and 31% of the customers surveyed agree and strongly agree that they would be willing to pay more for higher quality and standard services; only 12% disagreed while 18% were neutral (Figure 12). Interviews also revealed that customers were willing to pay more, especially for hair treatment, hand/foot/nail treatment and facecare.

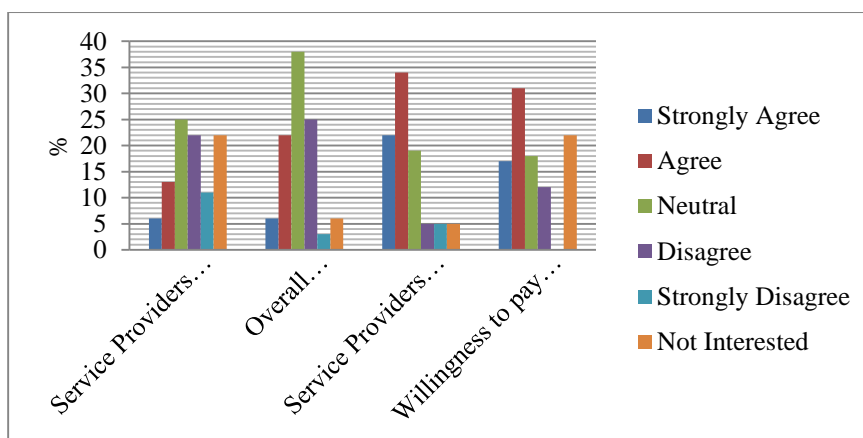


Figure 12: Customers' perception of Informal Hair and Beauty Services Workers understanding of quality control and assurance

The customers claimed that for the levels of skills training available to the workers, their services were often satisfactory. They perceived that the workers productivity will increase if they could acquire better skills as they would be able to offer more services, their performance quality will rise and customers will be regular and bring their friends. This will lead to increased income and self-esteem. But, their current skill level was seen as a hindrance by all the respondents. They were of the opinion that if one did not expect too much then one could be surprised. But, it was difficult to compare performance because most of the workers performed the same type of services at the same skill levels. And so, customers based their loyalty on workers' attitude, salon environment, customer treatment and recognition as well as personal relationships. The workers and enterprise-owners were not happy that they were unable to keep regular customers and all customers interviewed agreed that they got their services from wherever is closest to them at the time since they were all the same. If a service-provider offered more services with higher quality, they all agreed that they would pay more and visit more regularly. Most of the foreign customers were dissatisfied because the workers were often clueless as to how to handle non-Thai hair and beauty conditions. Therefore, farangs often settled for simple hair shampooing and conditioning or manicure and pedicure; otherwise, they did their business at home. Also, some Thai customers were of the opinion that they would not pay for services like common Thai or Chinese massage that they could easily get at home, but would pay and love to get specialized and personalized massage services that offered health-benefits in specific conditions. Generally, customers complained that the workers did not know the 'why' and 'what' as well as the connections to the 'how', which affects the quality of their performance and skill levels.

Also, results from interviews, surveys, observations and documents/archival records revealed that the IHBSWs desire to receive better quality training, but challenges of training cost, provision, quality and time constraints hold them back (See Appendix 2). Training providers also indicated that they would be willing to deliver advanced and professional trainings if they had the funding to do so.

4.0 DISCUSSION

The challenge facing IEWs with acquiring proper skills are major. They cannot afford training for these skills and cannot take time off work for training. This ties the workers in a vicious cycle of low skill to low income. For instance, quality and advanced skills training cost a lot of money, require high input of time and dedication and in any case such trainings do not exist nearby and so the cost of travel and upkeep is included. IEWs barely earn above the minimum wage in any situation and so have been automatically cut off from these trainings no matter even if they are available. This means that they usually have to make do with limited training, which affects what they can do, offer and earn. In other words, quality of productivity, performance, income and total wellbeing suffer. What makes it worse is that these basic skill workers become the trainers of the apprentice, on-the-job learner and, even the formal training provider. The training institutions surveyed said that they recruited trainers from the community and these trainers were certified to train by the Director of the Institution only. Therefore, basic skill ‘experts’ are training would-be workers; this merely perpetuates the vicious cycle IEWs have to work in. Furthermore, when IEWs are considered to have low education levels and not presumed to be ‘not so smart’, skill training providers try to get away with unsuitable and inadequate types of training. With the sociopolitical and cultural contexts in the IE, the voices of IEWs are often ignored, their needs not considered and their opinions not sought. Hence, training providers get away with inconsideration and poor quality provisions, especially outside the capital city. The IEWs are, then, forced to work with basic skills and branded unprofessional, not because they like it that way, but they really have no other choice beyond the SKAQPRO available to them. This is even a bigger challenge for IEWs like the IHBSWs who offer services in areas that are easy to ignore, but increasingly require higher-level skills to stay in work. These workers need urgent help with their skills situation and they assume that nobody cares because the focus of government is on industry, hospitality and tourism. We believe, however, that they are a part of the hair/ beauty, tourism and hospitality industry. Ultimately, giving attention to their skills development could help to improve their productivity, wellbeing and socioeconomic contributions. This can add to efforts to make them self-reliant and even exportable as skilled workforce to other countries. They can also deliver services to the 67 million population domestic market, and at least 11 million per year tourism market. However, it is intrinsically obvious that the skill development in focus in Thailand is on the industrialized sector and so those outside of the formal economy are not so well provided for.

The findings of this research indicate that the skills of the IHBSWs in Hat-Yai are basic at entry and in practice as trainings and certifications available are all at basic levels. Also, most of the customers,

employers and the workers agree that skills levels of the workers are mainly basic (i.e. Shu), but some of them still lack the fundamental understanding of their work. They also related this to the quality of training the workers receive and lack of professional certifications. In fact, a lot of these workers practice without any training for years. Obviously, if the majority of the IHBSWs are still at Shu level, then, it figures that they are far from achieving mastery of their skills and so their productivity will be low. In other words, basic skill acquisition process will only produce low-skilled and low-productive workers. The implication is that most of these workers are still working with their entry-level basic skills and these are the same skills they pass on to their protégés or apprentices. This agrees with the conclusions of one of the hair training schools in Bangkok, “most education providers will only focus on the basic skills – and basic skills will only teach you to become a ‘basic’ hairdresser” (Siwakorn 2013). This is indicative of the fact that in training, we ‘reap just what we sow’.

The study found out that most consumers of these services were both young adult or middle-aged females and a third of the customers surveyed were foreigners who were mainly tourists. Most of the foreign customers complained that the IHBSWs were often not able to handle their cultural differences as well as global trends. The researcher witnessed in one of the salons as some Malaysian female tourists requested for French manicures with some nail art and the ladies in the salon had no idea what they were talking about. After minutes of describing with the aid of visuals, the tourists left disappointed and that was not the first place they had tried. This researcher tried for a haircut, but none could handle my short African natural curls. Finally, one lady barber did a fair job and during interviews, she revealed that she learned these types of skills from YouTube and Facebook videos. In fact, most customers (Thais included) complain that the services provided are inadequate and they would rather help themselves than pay money for it. Most of the salons and spas visited that had a high clientele were pricey with highly skilled, licensed and certified workers (mostly massage workers) and these were franchises or branches of establishments in Bangkok or other cities like Phuket and Chiang Mai. Also, most of the workers above 30 years and with more years of practice after training were observed to get more clientele. This is indicative of the fact that practice helps the workers to hone their acquired skills and grow a loyal customer base.

We also found out that each worker attends to limited customers in a week and are usually paid per service, consequently, the more customers, the more money they earn. During interviews, the workers believed that if they had more and better quality skills then they will get more customers, more money and more respect. The customers also corroborated by adding that they visit the service provider with better and diverse skills more often and are willing to pay more for quality services. As a matter of fact, they do pay more as is evidenced in the busy establishments in the city who charge higher than the others, but still have more clientele. These salon/spas operate on appointments and customers are willing to wait for their turn and pay extra rather than go to the other ‘stroll-in-whenever-you-like-and-pay-less’ salons. Although, some older customers thought the skills levels were high for hairdressing, the younger customers were mostly not

satisfied because they wanted trendier services; but they all agreed that hair treatment skills were low. On this point, the customers all agreed that more training, appropriate equipment and capital should be provided for the workers. This shows the key role customers play in assessing IEWs' skills as supported by studies showing how service quality affects customer satisfaction and willingness to pay (Shahbazi and Akareem 2013; Thongplean 2012; Khan and Tabassum 2011; Konishi 2010). This implies that policymakers and research investigators need to take customers into cognizance when planning skill acquisition programs and research for IEWs.

Our findings also revealed that funding for the training providers were inadequate, which affect the training quality. Most of these trainings are funded by the Skill Development Fund, which prohibits charging fees. But, the training providers complain that the fund cannot cater for anything above basic training and even then, it is not enough. This relates to studies of Mayombe and Lombard (2015), King and Palmer (2007) and Owusu-Mensah (2007), which show that inadequate funding affects quality of training due to poor or unavailable training tools, equipment and qualified trainers. There is generally almost no funding for informal/non-formal training options in developing countries and evaluation of their impact is almost non-existent (dvv 2011). Adequate funding is required to provide the kind of training that will equip the IEWs with productive and effective skills as they cannot give what they don't have. Our findings also indicate that most IEWs acquired their skills through apprenticeship, on-the-job and self-learning. This supports studies in Morocco where 80.4% of IWs acquired their skills on-the-job, and in Ethiopia, 67.9% through self-learning and 3.54% through apprenticeship/on-the-job training (dvv 2011).

As has been stated earlier, the IEWs skills situation is hindered by sociopolitical and cultural elements, which leave them at the mercy of skill development providers as well as government agencies. The SKAQPRO is designed based on assumptions from the formal workforce, aimed at moving IEWs to the formal economy and does not consider these informal jobs as worthy of attention (this can be seen by exploring labor surveys and skill policies). In short, IEWs are left out of SKAQPROs even when they are designed for the IE. The workers have become apathetic and really do not expect the government to come to their aid. This is seen as the workers try to improve their skills through social media without much success. Assessment of the study's SKAQPRO and its impact on skill levels showed that all strands of available training are at basic (Shu) level, and the IEWs skills and certifications were at (Shu) levels 1 and 2 (ISCO-08) (see Tables 1 & 2; Figure 3). Therefore, the SKAQPRO currently available to IHBSWs in Hat Yai is basic and can only produce, at best, level 2 skilled workers because what is sown is what is reaped. We also believe that this is responsible for the low-skills and low-productivity evidenced in our study. Interestingly, the workers, customers and enterprise-owners agree that low skills make the workers unable to perform optimally and to expectations of their customers. SKAQPROs should be reviewed because when training is basic then skill performance and productivity will be low. They should be made more practical, systematic, holistic, relevant and all-inclusive so as to capture all elements (social, political, cultural and economic)

within the real context of working in the IE in order to be effective. This should also be captured in policy instruments, institutions and program implementation.

HBSs increasingly require high-skills and the use of high-tech equipment that need more than basic skills (PBA 2011; SAS 2011). Most researches on this group of IEWs do not even address the SKAQPRO and their skills and productivity levels (Kagone and Namusonge 2014; Mpye 2013; Kamau and Bwisa 2013; Kuyram 2013; Cohen 2010; Essah 2008; Schewer and Daneshvary 2000). In fact, they are not captured in national labor surveys as most surveys do not make provisions for self-employed or enterprises with few employees (vander Pol 2011), while occupational classifications fail to reflect these job levels.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Recommendations

5.1.1 Improving the Skill Acquisition Process

Building from the conceptual lens, we propose a systematic and all-inclusive SKAQPRO with formal, informal, on-the-job and self-learning elements (Adams 2011; Palmer 2007b), which provides potential and productive capacities that can positively impact income and total wellbeing. Global Monitoring Reports (GMR) on Education for All (EFA) largely focus on formal training alone, perhaps due to the availability of data, and most skills and employability policies and discussions still put emphasis on formal training even for vocational skills, while IEWs learn in a plethora of ways (Darvas and Palmer 2014; UNESCO 2014, 2012; ILO 2012b; OECD 2012; dvv 2011; Adams 2011; UNHCR 2011; Palmer 2007; King and Palmer 2006a-c). Schooling and skill accumulation is not necessarily the same thing; therefore skill acquisition goes beyond just formal training instructions (Blankenau and Camara 2006). This is in agreement with the findings of this study that skills are actually acquired through a mix of methods in the IE.

We believe that providing training should not be restricted to any form whether formal or informal or even self-directed since it has been successfully argued that education and experience are blended in our learning process (Sawchuk 2008; Andersen et al 1995). In other words, the SKAQPRO for IEWs should be designed to include formal education with classroom instructions, non-formal/further education like professional workshops and courses, informal education/training like apprenticeships/on-the-job training and self-directed/informal learning through experience, practice and all other forms that do not include an external instructor (Livingstone 2005 as cited in Sawchuk 2008). In any case, just like Tough (1967) suggested, adults acquire most of their skills and knowledge through self-learning, by experience and/or practice, but even then assistance is sometimes required from an external source indicative that not all learning is formal (Jennings and Wargnier 2015). This relates to the 70:20:10 rule of Eichinger and Lombardo (1996), which suggests that people acquire 10% of skills and knowledge through formal training and education (classroom instruction, courses, workshops, seminars, reading, professional qualifications/certifications and eLearning), 20% through other people (coaching, mentoring, partnering and social/professional networks) and 70%

through practice, on-the-job and other experience-building activities (Jennings and Wargnier 2015; Vallejo and Wehn 2016).

In other words, the SKAQPRO should not be restricted to one particular form of training style but should include a balanced mix that incorporates all forms of learning to create a synergistic system. This is essential when planning training for workers in the IE who often find it difficult to access training due to cost and time constraints. For example, graduates of formal training often lack the practical skills gained from apprenticeship while graduate apprentices have no theoretical knowledge of the processes and/or systems of their work (McLaughlin 1989). Therefore, an all-inclusive approach to training programs will provide both theoretical and practical knowledge and ability needed for proficiency in acquired skills. This is essential when planning training for workers in the IE who often find it difficult to access training due to cost and time constraints. And so, for policy-makers and development agencies to develop appropriate and effective skill acquisition programs to counter the low skill levels of IEWs, they need to first assess the current SKAQPRO to determine its level of delivery and impact on skills levels and then design a system with a balanced mix of training methods that captures the unique niche of the specific occupational group in view and the peculiar concerns of working in the IE. Ultimately, the voices of the IEWs, their employers and customers as well as their opinions and situations must be factored into any SKAQPRO design as against the former top-down approach because nobody understands the plight of the people more than they do.

5.1.2 Policy and Institutional Reforms:

The first and most vital recommendation is that governments, multilateral agencies and researchers should engage the IEWs directly and in depth in order to understand what is really going on in this their complex and dynamic world. Things are different in the IE from the formal economy, and things in the industrialized enterprises are different from things in the micro-enterprises of the IE. Therefore, developing skill policies for all workforces that simply mention the informal workforce without giving them a priority placement and specific focus means that they continue to remain in obscurity and the vicious cycle of low skills. In addition, skill policies that intrinsically appreciate the characteristics of the IE and are synergistically connected to other relevant policies like employment and enterprise development, social security and workers' welfare, human and gender rights, youth and child protection/rights, access to infrastructure, market and capital, rights of the vulnerable (e.g. people with disabilities, minorities, elderly, migrants, etc), culture and ethnicity, investment and competitiveness as well as national and citizenship identity among others will be more effective.

Hence, in the long-term, we recommend policy and institutional reforms, which are pivotal to moving IEWs from the fringes of poverty to a higher, if not wealthy, livelihood. These proposed policy reforms should specifically attend to the challenges of the IEWs face in skill acquisition and address the concerns of a uniform and acceptable apprenticeship and on-the-job, training systems for informal

enterprises. The policy could also address the issue of quality of training provided, relevance of training content and qualifications of trainers; and this could also be done through the avenue of licensing and certification: that would not overwhelm the already shackled IEWs. This policy could also make provisions for funding skill training providers of advanced level programs with criteria that covers the quality and relevance of content and delivery as well as training personnel and materials. Furtherance to this, the policy could also make provision for financial assistance to IEWs in order to support them to access quality training without losing income or their jobs/businesses, while also supporting micro-informal-enterprises to provide on-the-job training as well as apprenticeship programs. Finally, the policy could also outline a system of collaboration between relevant government agencies, training providers, IEWs occupational associations and relevant industry to support skills acquisition in the IE. In the medium term for Thailand, a Special Unit could be created specifically for addressing issues of IEWs. This Unit will exist to liaise between all departments in the Ministry and other agencies that have something to do with the IEWs as well as coordinating the interactions between the IEWs and government. This Unit could also work with industry, training institutions, researchers and multilateral agencies on matters that concern the conditions of IEWs. The Unit could be part of an Office handling matters on informal workers generally, while the Unit is focused on those informal workers directly in the IE. For effective management and reduced bureaucracy, the Unit could be situated in the Office of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare.

5.1.3 Funding for Skills Development of IEWs

Considering that policy and institutional reforms could take a while, we recommend that in the medium term, a budgetary provision (IEWs Funding Scheme) specifically for supporting skills development for the IEWs be provided to aid the IEWs in acquiring needed skills so they could benefit a lot from some organized financial assistance. Such scheme should be designed with the key characteristics of IEWs in mind and not mixed with other forms of workforce training compensation, which IEWs cannot benefit from anyway. One way could be to increase funding to training institutions that cater to IEWs. This proposed funding should specifically target skill training programs that are particularly geared towards work found primarily in the IE. We also recommend that funding should target skills programs in the core work areas of IEWs to encourage training institutions to offer these programs. Also, funding could be directed to paying for quality certified and licensed trainers as well as training materials, content and venue, curricula development and delivery method. And so, training providers will have to meet the above criteria among others to access this fund.

This budgetary provision should also target enterprise-owners to develop and deliver apprenticeships and on-the-job trainings. This will serve as incentive for them to provide these services to their employees and others. Micro-enterprises in the IE already deal with a lot of challenges and cannot afford the cost of training others, especially employees that could eventually leave, therefore, they need incentives

to create the needed environment. Enterprise-owners could be paid something for every worker that is given official time off work to get training; and they could be funded and supported to start off their small enterprise training programs. Of course, certain criteria would be necessary to access funding such as license and certification of enterprise-owners skills, quality of the workforce who will be training, years of practice and the type and grade of services provided among others. This is much like the incentives given to big companies in the formal economy to train their workforce in the Skill Development Promotion Act (2002). Furthermore, allowances could be provided for IEWs who need to leave work for a long period of time to go for training. For example, tax deductions for those workers fully enrolled for courses in accredited training programs as well as allowances within the minimum wage for the financially-challenged (GHK 2010d). This could go a long way to encourage these workers to seek skills training.

This proposed funding scheme should not be the responsibility of government alone. With the challenge of budgetary allocations getting smaller and social needs of citizens on the rise, it will be near impossible for government to carry the financial weight of such a funding scheme alone. Government could source for funding from donor and multilateral agencies, mandate and encourage private companies, especially big corporations, to contribute to the scheme as part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) and encourage individuals and charity organizations to make contributions to support the empowerment of the IEWs (GHK 2010d). These partners could support the scheme in areas like paying for trainees' fees, paying for quality trainers and materials, supporting curricula development and delivery design, providing training-the-trainer courses for free or at cost, etc. Now, there is the risk of such a scheme being hijacked again by proponents of formalization and corruption, but perhaps allowing the IEWs to take a place in the cockpit might give them some level of control in the process.

5.1.4 Skill Certification System

A certification system that enables assessment and certification of skills obtained regardless of form of learning should be set-up, whereby certificates of achievement, experience or practice could be awarded (GHK 2011a-f). To achieve this, occupational and skills standards that are within the scope of the IEWs work should be developed. Using the same standards operative in the formal economy will only shortchange the IE, workers will not be able to afford or attain to the requirements and it will not even be relevant to their context. Clearly, an understanding of work requirements in informal-micro-enterprises and the expectations of their customers would be necessary in developing standards for certification and licensing criteria.

5.1.5 Industry Participation

Hair and beauty industry should be more attentive to the IHBSWs as their big-time customers. They can organize or support trainings and other experience-building activities (such as seminars/workshops, contests, festivals, etc) towards helping to build up their skill mastery and total wellbeing.

5.1.6 Occupational Associations and Networks

IEWs should be encouraged to set up and join occupational associations and networks that could liaise with government, industry and other partners on their behalf as well as direct progress in their work practice and conditions. And these could be involved in the SKAQPRO as well as liaise with training institutions to plan/design/deliver trainings programs. Also, this could enhance professionalism and introduce peer-rating into the IE.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The conclusions of this research revealed three key findings indicate that workers cannot afford the cost of training and the cost of taking time off work as this will affect their income; only basic training is available to workers and inadvertently basic trainings will only produce basic skills because you can only reap what you sow; and inadequate funding of training institutions affect the quality, type, relevance and provisions of programs they offer. These affect the skill and productivity levels of the workers as well as perpetuate their struggle in the vicious cycle of low skills-low performance-low productivity -low income-low wellbeing. The workers and their customers suggested that the government, industry and academic institutions work together to develop and provide trainings that enhance their practice and professionalism. Since customers are willing to pay for improved and quality services, this will go a long way to increase the earnings and total wellbeing of the workers, therefore helping policy makers to maintain the poverty reduction rate and reduce unemployment in the country. The workers find a way to access information through the internet, print media and other experienced colleagues and this indicates that if these were incorporated into the SKAQPRO of government programs, it will be appreciated and accepted, especially when it captures the sociopolitical and cultural elements of people interactions. Also, the customers bemoaned the levels of training available and suggested that training providers should improve the kinds of training they offer; just as the workers complained that higher-level skills trainings are not available to them. This will go a long way to strengthen the skills of the IHBSWs and also make them more resourceful, productive and exportable.

Finally, we conclude that there is a significant connection between the quality of SKAQPRO and the skill and productivity levels of IEWs, which in turn affects their skill performance, income and total wellbeing. This implies that correcting the low-skill palaver in the IE will require skills training policies and designs that are comprehensive, all-inclusive, holistic and systematic. We also suggest that a SKAQPRO assessment be conducted before any skills acquisition program is designed for IEWs, and these assessments should include customer assessments in order to capture the skills-in-demand and what customers are willing to pay for.

Considering that the IHBSWs are uniquely representative of IEWs in developing countries like Thailand, we assume that the results of this study can be relevant to other countries. Further research into the issue of skill acquisition for IEWs is necessary as they make up a large chunk of the workforce of developing countries and this is not going to change for a while. It is imperative, therefore, for policy makers to find a way of ensuring that these workers are better equipped for productivity and income generation. To this end, a holistic and systematic SKAQPRO aimed at providing an all-round training design for IEWs occupations and professionalism is essential. Further research on what this will look like is also required. Also, further research on what skills and productivity mean to IEWs who are paid per hour/service and mostly self-employed is required in order to make closely related conclusions. Research on funding for IEWs' skill training and financial support for workers, licensing and certification schemes as well as other incentives for enterprises is also required. It is important to keep in mind that basic training always equals basic skills; you cannot make a silk purse out of sow's ear because you will only reap just what you sow.

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See References Section

APPENDIX 1: Informal Hair and Beauty Services Skills Assessed

General Skills	Haircare skills	Facecare skills	Nailcare skills	Bodycare skills	Massage skills
Safety & health procedures	Hair and scalp inspection/treatment	Laser facial hair removal	Evaluate hand & feet as well as nail condition	Evaluate skin type & condition to determine treatment	Evaluate clients' physical mental & emotional condition
Reception management	Determine correct hair& scalp treatment	Threading facial hair removal	Determine treatment/products based on condition	Tanning & waxing	Determine massage therapy based on individual conditions
ICT	Choose correct product& procedure for individual hair& scalp	Electrical facial treatment	Apply nail treatment as well as for hands & feet	Extraction & exfoliation	Design, plan & administer massage therapy for clients
Business management	Hair shampoo & conditioning	Evaluate facial condition	Hand & foot massage & moisturizing	Peeling, wrapping & scrubbing	Hydrotherapy & aroma therapy/hot stone massage
Accounts/finance	Apply hair & treatment appropriately	Determine treatment/product based on individual condition	Determine nail polish & design based on individual skin condition, tone & personality	Body & face art application	Pre-natal massage
Active communication	Coloring, bleaching, color or hair tinting	Facial waxing & toning	Clean, trim & file nails	Tattooing	Sport massage
English language	Cut, trim and shape hair & hair prices & wigs based on customer instructions	Facial cleansing & scrubbing	Polish, buff and shape nails	Fixing body accessories	Acupuncture/acupressure
Decision-making	Cut, trim and shape hair, hair pieces, wig based on individual hair tip and facial feature	Thermal facial treatment	Creates, design & apply nail art	Steaming & stretching	Swedish massage
Problem-solving	Maintain & design hair pieces & wigs	Electronic facial hair removal	Apply acrylic or gel artificial nails	Create & design body/face art	Deep tissue massage
Critical/analytical thinking	Fix hair pieces, wig & accessories	Galvanic and peeling facials	Maintain, repair & enhance artificial structures	Plan & manage treatment & therapy	Vibro-massage
Leadership/team working	Suggest hairstyles based on individual facial features & personalities	Face wrinkle removal	Electronic manicure/pedicure procedure		Manual/physical massage
Creativity/originality	Create original hairstyles from own imagination	Apply facial masks/packs	French & American manicure/pedicures		Electronic massage
Presentation	Thermal hair styling	Recognize skin type for makeup			Chinese/Japanese massage
Listening/speaking	Managing long hair	Design makeup style & product based on skin type/tone facial feature & personality			Foot, face & neck massage
Organizational	Hair perming/waxing	Manage multiracial make-up			
Active learning	Hair straightening/curling waving	Color management & design			
Teaching/training	Managing multicultural hair	Day time party make up			
Good judgement	Trendy haircuts/styles	Night time party make-up			
Initiation/visualization		Movie/TV/Theatre make up			
Customer handling/		Fashion/catwalk make-up			
Planning & coordination		Bridal make-up			
Personnel management		Fantasy make-up			
Art & design		Celebrity/glamour make-up			
Chemistry/biology		Waterproof make-up			
Social/behavior		Create & design make-up styles			
Standards		Eyebrow/eyelash management			
monitoring/evaluation					
Therapy/counselling					
Maintaining workstation					
Cleaning/sterilizing work tools					
Consultation/advice					

APPENDIX 2: Some highlights of survey, interviews, observations and document/archival record reviews

Themes/Questions

Skill Acquisition Process

How do informal hair and beauty services workers acquire their skills?

What kinds of skills training are available?

What do you think of the skill acquisition process?

How does this affect the informal hair and beauty services workers' skills?

Skill Level

What are the current skills levels of the informal hair and beauty services workers?

Challenges

What are the challenges of the informal hair and beauty services workers in this regard?

Suggestions

Do you have any suggestions or recommendations?

Findings

Some of them took short training courses; some did only apprenticeships while others did both. Others learn new skills from online media like YouTube, Facebook and videos. They also learn from their colleagues, books and magazines. There are some who learn skills on the job and/or from family members/friends without any formal training and maintain the skills through practice.

Only Basic skills training of 3 days to 3 weeks in hairdressing, haircutting/barbering, Thai/foot massage, nail coating/fixing, makeup/herbal face mask/scrub treatment. Some of these trainings are ad hoc demonstrations. Most of them are not formal. Some salons/spas offer on-hand short trainings (3days-1 week) on specific skill areas. Trainings are designed to introduce trainees to the basics while expecting them to gain more knowledge and experience through self-learning and practice. Most trainers have intermediate skills and none with advanced skills and no professional certification. No vocational institute or training school offers full time formal training programs. Skills training institutions have no relationship with the professional associations.

The training courses are too short and only at basic level. There is no professional skill training available. New skills are often learned only through Facebook and YouTube. Required trainings are scarce and mostly not adequate for customers' demands. The trainings available are too short to deliver professional skills. It is only through practice that skills can be improved. The skill acquisition process is inadequate and only produces so many low-skilled workers. The skills training need to be improved. Skills training should include attitude, behavior, communication, safety, treatment and management skills. Some of the workers are very good in basic hair and beauty care, but they need to learn new skills and understand the procedures of the work. They need to acquire more appropriate skills. They need to be more professional, too many of them lack professional skills. This is why they get few customers because the customers don't feel that the workers have any outstanding skills and they can easily do for themselves at home whatever is offered in the salons. Most foreigners complain that workers do not have the skills to handle multicultural (non-Thai) demands. Most of the workers cannot handle high trends like nail art, dreadlocks, hair braiding, hair treatment, individual conditions and treatment massage (like prenatal, orthopedic, deep tissue) and anything specific. Majority of the workers are at Basic skill level. Some of the workers believe that they are experts, but still need to learn new skills because they are only very good at doing one thing. They are very good at basic skills like hair shampooing/conditioning, hairdressing/trimming, nail buffing/trimming/coating/fixing and face scrub/masking. The workers want to learn skills in all spectrum of the hair and beauty services skill set.

The workers want to learn new skills but trainings are scarce, cost more than they can afford and there is no time because they cannot leave their workplaces as that would mean loss of income. They want to add to their skills because trends are ever changing and they want to be up-to-date. They are willing to attend trainings if it will not affect their income and if it is affordable. But, customers complain that most of the workers are lazy and do not try to learn new skills or practice old skills regularly. But, the workers fear that if they spend money on acquiring new skills, they will not get a return on such investments because they cannot raise prices since customers will not pay (because they say the economy is bad). But, the customers say that they are willing to pay more for high quality and in-trend services. Most of the workers have peak days of Friday to Sunday and off-days from Monday to Thursday; and most of these customers over the weekend are tourists. However, most of these workers have very low English language skills. Customers complain that there are too many salons with just basic skilled workers. But, there are some franchised salons/massage parlors from Bangkok and otherwise who have highly skilled and certified workers; but they are few.

Workers need to practice their skills more and try to gain experience through self-learning. Workers need attitude, social and communication skills in order to keep customers. Hair and beauty services is a very challenging area of work and requires dedication and commitment to skill learning because it works with changing times and trends, which means that workers need to always be learning new tricks and skills. It is better to first master the basic skills before trying to learn the higher order skills; and any skill can be mastered through practice. More training should be provided for professional skills; and training duration should be extended. Intermediate and Advanced certificates should also be awarded. Training institutions can offer advanced and professional trainings if they are well-equipped and funded. More training should be arranged and training costs reduced, and training should include practice sessions. Training design should involve the professional hair and beauty services workers and other relevant organizations. Also, training providers need to collaborate with professional associations, private sector, government and academic institutions to improve the skill acquisition process. This will benefit all

PAPER THREE

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Abstract

Skills upgrading for informal workers is key to the development of the informal economy in any nation and so bridging the skill gaps will essentially improve the gains of other interventions and total wellbeing of the workers. Thus, the objective of this paper was to identify the current skills upgrading needs of informal economy workers and the consequences thereof from the perspectives of the informal economy workers and their customers. The scope of the study covers informal hair and beauty services workers in Hat-Yai, their customers and training-providers. A mixed-method design was used with multilevel sampling of the three groups in the scope. Data collection included quantitative and qualitative approaches of multilevel surveys and interviews as well as observations using open/closed-ended questionnaires and interviews, and observation checklist. The study found out that only one skill set out of six (Haircare), didn't show any overall gap while 52 skills out of total of 85 had high gaps. This knowledge will help policy-makers, trainers and program managers of skill development for informal workers to identify which skill areas to focus on for training and how to improve training design as well as contribute to research on skill quality/demands for this occupational domain.

Keywords: skill upgrading needs, informal economy workers, skill gaps

Introduction

1.0 Background

The beauty and personal care industry of Thailand is one of the important sectors of the country, while the spa and wellness services is a key contributor to the Thailand tourism sector and a major contributor to national GDP (Source ASEAN 2010). It is capable of exporting skilled workers to countries like the USA (and Australia), with over 18, 000 operating spas and 32 million active spa goers (PBA 2011). The informal hair and beauty services workers (IHBSWs) make up the non-manufacturing sector in the informal economy. They are informal economy workers (IEWs) in the trade and craft sector providing creative services in hair and beauty care. They are called informal because they work in the informal economy (IE), especially in developing countries, have all the features of informal workers (IW), are mostly self-employed and owner-account workers (with operations of very few employees, if any) or work for micro-businesses and have no social or legal protection. They are very common in developing nations and can be found literally on most urban centers' streets (Kagone and Namusonge 2014; Kamau and Bwisa 2013; Mpye 2013).

This research focuses on them mainly because there are so many of them in our study location (Hat Yai municipality) and the popularity with women, youth and vulnerable groups; the potential for job creation in the IE, vibrancy and being intrinsically embedded into society in a timeless fashion (Allen et al 2011; Kass 2011; Bennie et al 2010; Lerkpollakarn and Khemarangsarn 2009; Twigg 2009; Solomon and Rabolt 2002); as well as the fact they are most likely not going to succumb to formalization (Chen 2012; Chen et al 2002; La Porta and Shleifer 2009). They consist of hairdressers/stylists, barbers, makeup artists, body artists, masseuse, nail/foot care and face/skin care providers. Thailand's IHBSWs may be found in Thai National Statistics Office (NSO) occupational classifications groups like *service workers, shop and market sales workers, and craft and related trade workers* using the ILO ISCO-08 classification (NSO 2016, 2014; ILO 2012b) and it thus can be assumed that they are about *five million* of them in the informal economy

workforce of Thailand (ILO, 2012b; NSO 2016, 2014, 2013, 2012, 2010). The importance of skills upgrading for this category of workers has been globally recognized with regards to how of studies had shown that these workers were plagued with low-skills, low-productivity, low-income, low-self-esteem and low access to funding and required training (ILO 2012b, 2008; EC 2009; OECD 2009, 2006; Palmer 2008; King and Palmer 2008; Adams et al 2013; Langer 2013; Johanson and Adams 2004; Adams 2011; Pavcnik 2002; Liimatainen 2002).

But, most trainings available for the IHBSWs in Thailand (like other developing countries) almost exclusively target pre-employment candidates at basic level rather than the large population of IEWs (Peter-Cookey and Janyam 2016; IBISWorld 2014a,b; RAPS 2014; SAS 2011; Johanson and Adams 2004; Adams et al 2013; Peter-Cookey and Janyam 2015). Also, even though they make up a good chunk of the Thai creative industry (ILO 2013c; NSO 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015) in their extensive capabilities and potentialities, and they are not properly and adequately captured in relevant national plans hence almost invisible to policy-makers (NSO 2014; ILO 2012a). In 2008, approximately 50, 856 of the unemployed desired to develop these skills; an approximate 1, 932, 834 of the population 15 years and above desired these skills; and an estimated 16, 857 unemployed persons desired that the government would provide skill development support for them (NSO 2008). The Thai Skill Development Promotion Act (KOT 2002) is silent on skills development for informal workers and the skill-acquisition-process (SKAQPRO) for trainings was not defined (Peter-Cookey and Janyam 2016).

On the other hand, skills and productivity of Thailand's well over 70% informal workforce (NSO, 2016, 2014) has remained low (ONESDB, 2012). Improving skills to increase prospects for better jobs, and specialized strategies for skills training for small and medium enterprises would help their growth and increase the prospects of the IWs (Maclean et. al, 2013; ADB 2013a,b; ADB/TWS 2013; Chen et al, 2002). The skill shortage in Thailand creates a disturbing challenge for informal workers (World Bank, 2012). There is an expedient need to improve their skills, especially those in the services subsector, as they are a major contributor to income generation and national development

(NSO, 2014; ILO, 2013a,b; ONESDB, 2012; World Bank, 2012; Thanachaisethavut and Charoenlert 2006; ILO, 2004; Thai Health, 2010; KOT, 2007, 2002) as well as the country's growing economy, competitiveness and employment rate (ILO, 2013c; ADB 2011; World Bank, 2012; ONESDB, 2012; Thai Health, 2010; Richter, 2006).

Therefore, building the skills of IEWs is a key to move them to higher income and a better life and reduce poverty and unemployment (Pina et al 2012; King and Palmer 2008); in essence, helping people in the informal economy improve their labor prospects must go beyond helping the unemployed find jobs by also including helping incumbent workers opportunities to upgrade their skills (Brewer et al 2012; OECD/OCDE 2011; BIS 2010; Brisbois and Saunders 2005).

Thus, IHBSWs in Hat Yai are mainly operating on basic skills and even the training available to them, are exclusively basic level skills (Peter-Cookey and Janyam 2016). It is essential to help these informal economy workers grow their skills so that they can earn more income and improve their self-esteem. To this effect, it becomes evident to seek ways to help these IEWs to acquire the required skills to function properly and profitably in their economic activities, especially since learning new skills can make them relevant in a globalized economy.

1.1 Research Problem

Studies have identified skill quality as one of the major sources of customer satisfaction in hair and beauty care services (Shahbazi and Akareem 2010; Cohen 2010; Konishi 2010), but none have focused on the skills status of the IEWs that work in the subsector preferring to relationships, entrepreneurship, marketing mix, customer satisfaction and the likes (Kagone and Namusonge 2014; Mpye 2013; Kamau and Bwisa 2013; Kuyram 2013; Shahbazi and Akareem 2013; Thongplean 2012; Khan and Tabassum 2011; Kass 2011; Konishi 2010; Essah 2008; Parveen 2006; Lee et al 2007; Schwer and Daneshvary 2000). Most studies on the IHBSWs in Thailand have been on service quality and marketing mix, and none on their skills quality (Kuyram 2013; Thongplean 2012). However, Peter-Cookey and Janyam (2016) noted that majority of IHBSWs in Hat Yai are working with only basic

skills, while training available to them are also mainly at basic level. They also revealed that the workers are challenged by time, training costs and availability as constraints and so cannot easily access skill upgrading training; and this has affected their customer-base and income. In addition, most of the customers in the study complained that there are too many IHBS operations in the city with workers who only have basic skills that they have acquired from trainings as short as six weeks only. It was evident that these IHBSWs need to upgrade their skills, which could improve their income and self-esteem (UNCHR 2010; ILO 2012). Studies on the skill set required for this target group is globally sparse and almost non-existent, and this is one area this paper aspires to fill.

Although, several studies on building skills in the informal economy have pointed out the need to have clear, specific and comprehensive approaches towards upgrading the skills of informal workers (Adams et al 2013; Pina et al 2012; Johanson and Adams 2004), available studies mainly focus on pre-employment provisions (e.g. traditional informal trainings like (apprenticeship and formal training programs) (Tumen, 2015; Mayombe and Lombard 2015; Chan 2013; Adams 2008; Palmer 2006a,b; Unluhisarcikli 2001; Singh 2000) rather than incumbent workers and certainly not on the skill quality and the impact on income and enterprise growth. Also, studies and reports have pointed out the need to improve and upgrade the skills of Thai IEWs generally, especially in the services subsector (like the IHBSWs) as they are a major contributor to income generation and national development (ILO 2013a-c, 2012c, 2004; ONESDB 2012; OECD 2012; World Bank 2012; Thai Health 2010; Thanachaisethavut and Charoenlert 2006; Richgter 200). Furthermore, Silpa-Archa (2010) pointed out that training of IEWs should include multi-skills provision, be market-driven and reflect current technology and trends. He went on to suggest that the existing skills development system for IEWs be improved to equip Thai IEWs to benefit from the ASEAN labor mobility (Huesler and Heal 2014; Wailerdsak 2013).

The questions this paper seeks to answer are: what are the skills upgrading needs (i.e. gaps)? What are the consequences of these gaps? And what are some of the factors challenging skills upgrading for the IHBSWs in the study area? Therefore, the objectives of this paper is to identify the skills upgrading needs (i.e. gaps) of the IHBSWs in Hat Yai,

the consequences of these gaps and some of the major challenges of skills upgrading for these workers; and to make recommendations for providing access to these skills based on the perception of the workers, their customers and their training providers. It is based on the proposition that learning new skills and perfecting old ones while on the job can improve productivity and then performance, ultimately affecting income and total wellbeing of the individual positively and the pathway to this outcome will involve a systematic process. The paper is presented in the following format: introduction/background, methods, results, discussion, conclusion and recommendations.

Materials and Methods

Research Design

The study used the mixed methods design (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003a,b; Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Cresswell, 2009; Cresswell et al 2003) to determine the skill upgrading needs of the IHBSWs in Hat Yai, the consequences of these gaps and challenges to skill upgrading. To this regard, data collection and sampling were mixed as well as the interpretation. This is based on the fact that the mixed method allows for flexibility and multiple evidences and data sources enabling diverse interpretations for triangulation and in-depth assessments (Cresswell, 2009, 2007, 2003; Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2009, 2003; Stake, 2005, 1995; Gillham, 2000; Baxter & Jack, 2008). An in-depth document review was also conducted.

A pilot study was first conducted for an exploration on the current skill status of the IHBSWSs in Hat Yai as well as perceptions of their skill performance (Peter-Cookey and Janyam 2015) and this paper is a follow-up. This research paper focuses on identifying skill upgrading needs (i.e. gaps) and consequences. Hat Yai was chosen as the study area based of its metropolitan and heterogeneous population, it is an urban center in a developing nation (Adams et al 2013; Langer 2013; ILO 2013a; IMF 2015; World Bank 2015; UN 2015) with a large foreign visitor population, as well as its convenience of proximity (Tashakkori and Teddlie 2003a,b; Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009, 2007;

Cresswell 2009). We utilized mean, frequency and percentage for descriptive analysis of the quantitative data for the results. Thematic analysis was used for interviews, observations and other qualitative data to find common themes and sub-themes using frequency counts, which were then matched and triangulated with the findings of the quantitative analysis (Onwugbuezie & Teddlie 2003; Onwugbuezie & Collins, 2007; Yin, 2003; Gillham, 2000; Erzberger & Kelle, 2003; Cresswell 2009; Bernard, 2000). Some qualitative data were quantitized through frequency counts based on subthemes. Themes were selected based on the research questions, objectives, and emerging themes from the study. A simple analysis of subtraction and addition were used to determine skill areas that need upgrading.

Results

Objective: To determine the skills upgrading needs (i.e. gaps) of informal hair and beauty services workers (IHBSWs) in Hat Yai

Question: What are the current skill gaps (upgrading needs) of IHBSWs in Hat Yai? And

3.0 Respondents' Profiles

Most of the total respondents were Thai (73%) with a sum mean of 0.73 (SD=0.45, n=240); while the mean of the Thai customers that participated in the study was at 0.63 (SD=0.5, n=120) and the IHBSWs were all Thai. The sample as a whole were predominantly female with a mean of 0.74 (SD=0.44, n=240); for the IHBSWs mean of females was 0.8 (SD=0.42, n=120) and for customers sampled, mean was 0.71 (SD= 0.46, n=120). The sample as a whole were relatively young adults of age-range 20-30 with a mean of 0.28 (SD=0.45, n=240) and 30-40 with mean of 0.36 (SD=0.48, n=240). However, the IHBSWs were predominantly within the age-range of 30-40 with mean of 0.52 (SD=0.5, n=120) while customers were within the age-range of 20-30 and >40 (\bar{x} =0.33, SD=0.47) respectively. Sum mean of educational status of the total respondents was majorly secondary level at 34% (\bar{x} =0.34, SD=0.48, n=240). For the IHBSWs, secondary level was also the highest (58%) with a mean of 0.58 (SD=0.5, n=120), however, customers

were mainly with university level education (50%) with mean of 0.5 (SD=0.5, n=120). Meanwhile, haircare (43%) and massage (33%) services had the highest usage/service in total; however, there are more IHBSWs in massage (38%) than in haircare (32%) while customers use more of haircare (55%) than massage (29%) services. Also, 27% of total respondents either serve in or patronize Full Salons (that provide all services) while 23% are with exclusively haircare salons, 13% exclusively massage and spa respectively, 14% for mobile services, but none for nailcare. But, 27% of IHBSWs practice their skills in Full Salons, 18% in exclusively haircare and mobile services respectively and 16% and 14% in massage and spa services. However, only 27% of customers patronize Full Salons, while 28% go for exclusively haircare salons, 10% for mobile services and 13% for exclusively massage.

Only three out of the four surveyed government-registered training-providers had programs for hair and beauty services. They were all at basic level with duration of 1-6 weeks. These training programs include hairdressing, haircutting/barbering, makeup/face-treatment, nail-coating/fixing and thai/foot massage. Meanwhile, interviews with representatives of the institutions revealed that only pre-employment trainings were provided because it was expected that learners will continue to self-learn through experience and practice. They explained that training duration was short due to low funding which makes them unable to train for advanced skills and professionalism, even though they would love to and are quite capable of doing so. They, however, have no intention of including advanced or professional courses in the future. Also, the trainers are not certified to any standard qualification to train, they only need to have passed the standard test of the Department of Skill Development (DSD) to qualify. Training candidates receive a basic certificate with which they go job-hunting or open their own operations.

3.2.1 Skill Upgrading Need per Skill

To determine skill upgrading needs of the IHBSWs in Hat Yai we took differences of means per skill between customer responses and IHBSWs responses to survey questions on skills that are available and skills that are desired. This is based on matching IHBSWs

self-assessment with customers' assessment of skills. First we work out for individual skills and then for each skill set.

Sum mean and standard deviation for each skill per skill set were computed for workers and customers' assessment. Results of IHBSWs' responses were matched to customers' responses on available skills and desired skills on four different levels and the differences were computed. To determine skill upgrading need (gaps), differentials of each match were added to derive a final score per skill.

Skills like hair-styling (-0.82) and hair-cutting/barbering (-0.23) compared to cutting-edge hair-styling (-1.5) and cutting-edge hair-cutting/barbering (-1.42). Also, facial hair removal was at -0.63 while cutting-edge facial edge removal was -1.37. Meanwhile, evaluate hand/feet/nail condition (-1.14), determine treatment/products based on individual condition (-1.04) and determine nail polish/ design based on individual skin condition, tone & personality (-1.34) all had related final scores. Evaluate skin type & condition to determine treatment (-0.79), Cleansing/Scrubbing (-1.47) and Steaming/Wrapping (-1.37) also had final scores. Design/plan/administer massage therapy for clients (-1.37) and pre-natal massage (-0.68) had final scores. Tanning was at 0.02.

We then assume that a differential from -0.75 (75%) indicates need for skill upgrading (i.e. skill gap). Related skills like English language (-0.86), communication (-1.07) and listening/speaking (-1) all had high gaps. Analysis/counselling (-1.25), consultation/advice (-1.49) and Therapy (-1.61) also showed high gaps. Safety and health procedures and practices (-0.92) as well as chemistry and biology (1.48) also showed high gaps. Other related skills were multicultural hair management (-1.56), cutting-edge hair-styling (-1.5) and cutting-edge hair-cutting/barbering (-1.42) with high gaps. Color management and design (-1.09), facial treatment (-0.74) and personality make-up (-0.77) also had high gaps. Determine nail polish/ design based on individual skin condition, tone & personality (-1.34), artificial nail-fixing/maintenance (-1.61) and French/American manicure (1.83) also had high gaps. Other related skills were evaluate skin-type and condition to determine treatment (-0.79), skin waxing/peels (-0.85), cleansing/scrubbing (-1.47) and steaming/wrapping (-1.37). Deep tissue massage (-1.23), hydrotherapy & aroma

therapy/hot stone massage (-0.76), orthopedic/sport massage (-1.16) and acupuncture/acupressure (-1.79) also had related high gaps.

3.2.2 Skill Upgrading Need per Skill Set

Now to determine skill upgrading need (gap) per skill set, first, sum mean and standard deviation per skill set were computed (for workers and customers' assessment) by summing up all scores for skills. Sum mean of both samples per skill set (for workers and customers' assessments) were subtracted from each other to determine difference per *skill set*. To determine the skill set with the highest gap, sum mean of both samples were added on separate levels and added together again, We assumed that a final score of -0.6/0.6 (60%) indicates a high gap for that skill set. Final Scores were: General: 0.6, Haircare: 0.19, Facecare: -2.15, Nailcare: -0.69, Bodycare: -2.067 and Massage: -1.83.

Qualitative data was used to support the above results by asking respondents in the survey and during interviews to state the skill areas that most need upgrading according to urgency. The results were then thematized and quantitized by frequency count to produce a form of ranking, which placed new styles and cuts, hair treatment for individual hair and condition, Nailcare, creativity and originality and understanding hair products, especially for individual hair and condition at the top 5.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to identify skill upgrading needs (gaps) of IHBSWs in Hat-Yai and explore the consequences of these gaps from the perspectives of the IHBSWs, their customers and business-owners. This study also illustrates a simple analysis design of subtraction and addition using differential in means to determine skill upgrading need areas. It is assumed that this is a simple type of analysis that the IHBSWs and other IEWs can easily adopt at their level. The mixed method and multilevel approach was used for the study design to obtain multiple sources of information for corroboration and convergence, gain in-depth insights to the issue as well as to validate findings.

4.1 Training Provision

The analysis of available training revealed that only pre-employment basic training courses are available within reach of Hat Yai's IHBSWs; there are none for incumbent workers seeking to grow their skills. These trainings are of short duration, besides only a few of the government-registered vocational institutions offer these programs. One of the training-provider surveyed, a vocational institution in the Provincial capital, offered no IHBS programs in spite of the fact that the College has a massage demonstration/service unit (neither do they have any intention to offer these programs in the future). Inadequate funding was identified as a major hindrance to type of training that can be provided and the duration as well as lack of certified trainers also affects the quality of training. This is in agreement with studies like Mayombe and Lombard (2015), Langer et al (2013), Adams et al (2013), Pina et al (2012), dvv (2011), Chen (2012), King and Palmer (2007), Owusu-Mensah (2007) and Johanson and Adams (2004), which show the impact of low funding on training availability and quality. There is very little funding for informal training options (dvv 2011). Even the customers complained during interviews that too many IHBSWs are operating with just short-duration basic courses and so their performances are not standard or professional.

Nevertheless, most of the training-providers are willing to provide skill upgrading programs and think they are capable of doing so. However, they argue that they were not adequately equipped or funded for such trainings. This is understandable because if they have to deliver these specialized professional training programs, the administrative cost alone will be high and this will reflect in the training fee and in the end most of the IHBSWs will not be able to afford it. And even though they try to offer some specialized programs, they can only offer short-term ad-hoc/crash basic courses of 3-6 weeks, expecting the trainees to build up on their skills through self-learning, experience and practice. The IHBSWs try to overcome these challenges by picking up skills from how-to-do demonstrations on social media like YouTube and Facebook as well as books and magazines. But, is also difficult, especially if the foundation course they took was only at basic level. In addition, the costs of accessing and using these resources in money, time,

effort and emotional impact (after failing through several attempts to self-learn a skill) can be a deterrent that make most of these IHBSWs not even bother to try. It is evident that any skill gap challenge of the IHBSWs in Hat Yai can be traced to the level and quality of training available to them at close reach. The IHBSWs, their customers and business-owners all agree that skill upgrading is necessary, but the challenges are too daunting for the workers to tackle themselves. The workers and business-owners appealed to government and private organizations to assist with training costs, availability/quality of training and resources.

4.3 Identifying Skill Upgrading Needs (Gaps) Areas

This study revealed some individual IHBS skills and skill sets that need upgrading among the sampled IHBSWs in Hat Yai city. This agrees with studies that have shown the level of skill shortages in the informal economy is quite high (Pina et al 2012; Adams et al 2013; Langer et al 2013; dvv 2011).

i. General Skills

This skills set only had a small margin for overall gaps. This indicates that the workers and customers did not really put much importance on these skills. However, these skills are foundational and provide the worker with what is required to benefit from self-learning resources. Interestingly, most of the trainings provided in the sampled training-providers do not have these programs. Nevertheless, some individual skills stood out with high gaps: skills like English language, communication and listening/speaking had relatively high gaps, indicating the need to equip the IHBSWs with better communications skills, especially as Hat Yai is a cosmopolitan and tourist city. Also, a lot of these eLearning resources are in English language (like on YouTube and Facebook). Also, analysis/counselling, consultation/advice and therapy had high gaps, in addition to safety/health procedures/practices and chemistry/biology. This trend shows a need for workers to have a deeper understanding of the services they provide in order to render personalized services to the customer (something the customers really desire) and

ensure the safety and health of both themselves and their customers. But, the most interesting gaps were in creativity/originality and cutting-edge personal styling. Both workers and customers perceived that there is a high need for skill upgrading in this area. This is understandable because these two areas are what set excellence and mediocrity apart. And this is an area that needs more than self-learning can offer.

ii. Haircare Skills

Haircare was the only skills set that did not show any gap at all. A review of the Department of Skill Development's training program schedule from 2014-2016 revealed that hair dressing and barbering had a higher occurrence than any other IHBS, except massage. However, although skills like hair-styling and hair-cutting/barbering had low gaps, cutting-edge hair-styling and hair-cutting/barbering as well as multicultural hair management had very high gaps. In essence, it seems trainings that keep up with new trends and technologies are required for the haircare skills set; not surprising that new hair styles and cuts ranked number 1 in what customers feel needs urgent intervention. Also, for a tourism focus area like Hat Yai and Thailand, skills to manage multicultural hair are needful. But, the highest gap was in hair/scalp treatment, which also ranked number 2 as skill areas customers feel need urgent attention. Survey results were validated by interviews and observations, which revealed that customers are so not satisfied with hair/scalp treatment services, especially as observations show that more than half of those who came in for treatment left disappointed. These are not areas that can be acquired by self-learning alone either.

iii. Facecare Skills

An analysis of both IHBSWs and their customers perspectives showed that facecare skills set had a high skills gap. This is probably indicative of the fact that over 50% of the skills reviewed had high gaps. Evaluate facial condition connects back to the gap of related skills of analysis/consultation/therapy in the General skills set; although facial treatment was only relatively high. But, multicultural makeup,

personality makeup and correctional makeup indicate a need for makeup skills that are unique and specific for individual types and conditions. On the other hand, cutting-edge facial removal (like threading, laser, etc) was perceived to be in-demand but not available.

iv. Nailcare Skills

Observations revealed that this skills set is not really high in demand, but, when it is requested for, there is almost always no availability, especially nail art design/application and artificial nail fixing/maintenance. This can be assumed to be related to the fact that most people prefer not to pay for a service they feel they can do for themselves. But, then customers ranked Nailcare as the number 3 skill area that needs urgent attention. A closer look at the individual skills revealed that some skills that have to do with personalized services were considered to have a high gap and trendy skills like nail art design/application, artificial nail fixing/maintenance and French/American manicure stood out with high gaps. The indication is that nailcare skills need to upgrade to higher levels that involve more than just coating nails to yield a high demand and/or more pay.

v. Bodycare Skills

Bodycare skills set also had a very high gap, probably due to not being in high-demand due to inadequate skills to attend to personalized conditions. Body/facial treatment and professional analysis and advice for individual conditions, ranked number 11 and 15 on the list of urgent areas for skills upgrading. Analysis of customers' and workers' assessment of skills available and desired revealed high gaps in body/ face art, fixing body accessories, skin treatment and plan/manage treatment/therapy. This is also indicative of the need for new and trendy skills as well as personalized services.

vi. Massage Skills

Most people, especially locals, are not really interested in paying for massage; talk less of paying more than a small amount. But, they will pay for more for health-related massages based on observations. But, these are the massage skills that have

high gaps: analysis/evaluation/plan/therapy and particular skills like pre-natal, orthopedic/sport massage and deep-rooted massage. Also, cutting-edge massage skills, vibro and acupuncture/acupressure together indicate that skills beyond Thai massage are required for IHBSWs in Hat Yai to practice their trade profitably.

The human capital theory (HCT) postulates that more and better skills could lead to better jobs, more productivity, income and total wellbeing (Cueto 2014; Unger et al 2011; Matanda 2008). In essence, if more and better-quality skills could lead to improved income and total wellbeing (World Bank 2014, 2012; ILO 2015a,b, 2012a, 2011, 2008; Chen 2012), then it becomes expedient to help the IHBSWs to improve the skills they work with. According to Pina et al (2012), actions that address major skills gaps in the informal economy should focus on reforming school-based programs and improving non-school programs. But, when evaluation of the impact of skills gap on IEWs is almost non-existent (dvv 2011), then it is difficult to know what or how to reform and improve to achieve maximum effect. One way to do this will be through focusing on areas that they are deficient and helping them to access quality training and resources. Hat Yai's IHBSWs, according to this study, require skill upgrading in some specific areas rather than broad coverage of skills training.

Table 10 Showing Skills that require upgrading in Hat Yai's IHBSWs

General	Haircare	Facecare	Nailcare	Bodycare	Massage
Therapy/Analysis/Consultation/Advice	Hair/Scalp Treatment	Cutting-edge	Evaluate hand/feet/nail condition	Evaluate Skin Type/Condition to determine treatment	Evaluate Clients' Physical/Mental/Emotional Condition
Creativity/Originality	Multicultural Hair Management	Facial Hair Removal	Determine treatment/products based on individual condition	Specialized Skin Treatment Techniques	Determine Massage Therapy based on individual conditions
Chemistry and Biology	Hair Pieces	Correctional Makeup	Determine nail color design based on individual skin condition/tone/personality	Create/Design/Apply Body/Face Art	Design/administer massage Therapy for clients
Safety/Health Procedures/Practices	Fixing/Wig-making	Multicultural Makeup	Individual skin condition/tone/personality	Fixing Body Accessories	Health-related Massage: pre-natal, orthopedic/sport and deep tissue
Cutting-edge Personal Styling	Hair Weaving/Braiding	Personalized Makeup	Artificial Nail	Plan/Manage Treatment/Therapy	Cutting-edge Massage
English	Cutting-edge Hair-cutting/Barbering	Facial Treatment	Fixing/Maintenance		

4.4 Consequences of Skill Upgrading Needs (Gaps)

Studies have shown a relationship between low skill quality of informal workers and their income, productivity (which indicates performance), total wellbeing and civic participation. The implication is that the consequences of not having the required skills result in low-income, productivity, total wellbeing and development for these workers. In this present study, we sought to explore the consequences of the identified skill upgrading needs on the IHBSWs in Hat Yai from the perspectives of the IHBSWs, customers and business-owners. In agreement with previous studies, we discovered that IHBSWs could earn less income, which could affect their income and total wellbeing (Darvas and Palmer 2014; Palmer 2008; King and Palmer 2007; ILO 2008, 2014, 2015a,b; UNESCO 2014, 2012; World Bank 2014, 2012; Pina et al 2012; Haan 2002; Liimatainen 2002).

Observations revealed that the IHBSWs got more customers over the weekend and as was observed and confirmed by literature, most of these people were tourists from Indonesia, Malaysia, China, Singapore and outside Asia. To fully tap into this market, Hat-Yai's IHBSWs need to upgrade their communication skills, particularly, English language as well as the quality and types of skills they can deliver. Customers were increasingly disappointed when they could not get the services they require, especially specialized services and this led to many of them leaving the salon. Each customer that walked away was a loss of income. The IHBSWs were not happy as they watched customers turn away from their salons and they often tried to convince the person to go for something within their capacity (often basic and common), but the customers always declined. No specialized services were observed and these are the kind of services that customers are even willing to pay more for. Interviews reveal that consequences like losing customers, losing income, feeling terrible, low self-esteem and confidence, poor attitude, customer dissatisfaction and bad business. This corresponds with studies in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and ASEAN (Adams et al 2013; ADB 2011; Adams 2011, 2008; Darvas and Palmer 2014; Pina et al 2012). Plus, some studies have linked service quality to customer perception, satisfaction, loyalty and willingness to pay (Chieochankitkan and Sukpatch 2014; El-refae 2012; Khan and Tabassum 2011).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Overall, this study suggests that IHBSWs in Hat Yai have major skill gaps, except in Haircare, which also records high gaps in hair/scalp treatment. The consequences of these gaps could be summed up as loss of income, low-productivity (performance), loss of customers, and self-esteem. It is, therefore, evident that skill development interventions for these workers need a change in policy and training design to strengthen the provisions available to them to earn a living wage and be a positive contribution to society.

Some recommendations for intervention drawn from this study as follows:

- I. Specific policies and plans for upgrading of skills for incumbent IEWs will make a huge difference
- II. Development of skill upgrading program design that captures excellence, professionalism and particular skill upgrading areas highlighted in this study
- III. Develop skill standards for the level of performance expected of IHBSWs
- IV. Encourage and assist IHBSWs to form associations where peer rating can be used and affordable training also provided
- V. Training institutions and professional associations related to IHBSWs should work together to plan and design training programs
- VI. Encourage and support the private sector and academic institutions to work with IHBSWs to access affordable training, resources and opportunities to grow their skills
- VII. Support training providers to provide professional and specialized courses
- VIII. Government-supported training-providers need to be better funded; while the hair and beauty industry should support the training programs for IHBSWs because they are regular customers (GHK 2011d) as part of their corporate social responsibilities. They can do this by providing funding for trainees and training providers, materials, training the trainers, paying for quality trainers and supporting ancillary activities
- IX. IHBSWs can be financially-assisted through tax deductions and allowances, especially for those who have to leave work to learn (GHK 2011d)

Limitations of the Study/Future Research

The mixed method and multilevel approach of the study generated an in-depth understanding of the skill upgrading needs from the point of view of the IHBSWs, their customers, business-owners and training-providers. However, the simple subtraction and addition method working with differential of means to determine skill upgrading needs may seem inadequate. But, considering that we were dealing with personal perspectives based on assumptions, and not measuring against any known standards, the design was adopted to make explaining it to the IHBSWs easy. But, a further analysis weighing available and desired skills perspectives of IHBSWs and customers against performance ratings by both groups is also underway. These results could be matched for convergence or divergence in future studies. Also, future studies could look at developing skill standards for this occupational domain and then go further to assess skill gaps based on these standards when accredited.

Moreso, due to the fact that there was no sampling frame for the study area, the generalizability of the study may be biased for the whole of Thailand or the south. However, it can be strong enough to stand for Hat Yai municipality. Future studies could be carried out to cover several other locations after a sampling frame has been provided by the Municipality or Province.

Conclusively, this study reveals skill areas that need urgent attention to policy makers and training-providers so that quick arrangements could be taken to address them. This will improve the ability of the IHBSWs to perform optimally and in turn gain more customers, earn more money, enjoy a better life and be confident to work in their chosen occupation anywhere in the world. The study also draws the attention of policy-makers and academic researchers to this category of IEWs for direct action. In the field of research, it strengthens the role of the mixed method and multilevel research in development studies, which can capture information on the same phenomena from different angles to give deeper and more comprehensive insights.

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See References Section

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Graduate School Thesis Research Support Grant

Work – Position and Address (If Possible)

Vice President/Co-Founder: EarthWatch Research Institute, No. 3, Chief David Nna Layout, Off Artillery PH/Aba Expressway, Rumuogba, Port Harcourt, PMB 5940, Rivers State, Nigeria

Part-Time Lecturer (First Year Introduction to Philosophy of Science/Logic and Critical Thinking): School of Medical Laboratory, Rivers State College of Health Science and Technology, Km 6, Ikwerre Road, P.M.B.5039, Rumueme, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

Executive Director/Training Manager: EarthWatch Consultants Nigeria Ltd, Labake Hotels Complex, 3 Odu Street, Rumuodaolu, Off Rumuola PH/Aba Expressway, Port Harcourt, PMB 5940, Rivers State, Nigeria

List of Publication and Proceeding (If Possible)

(a) Master Conference Proceedings Publications

Peter-Cookey, MA & Janyam, K, 2016. Skills Upgrading Needs of Informal Hair and Beauty Services Workers in Hat Yai Municipality, Thailand. Paper presented at the 40th

National Graduate Research Conference (NGRC) at the Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai Campus, Thailand. October 20-21, 2016.

Peter-Cookey, MA & Janyam, K, 2015. Exploring the Need for Skills Upgrading for Informal Workers in the Informal Economy. Paper presented at the 13th International Conference on Social Science Research (ICSSR) at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), Bangkok, Thailand. December 18-19, 2015

(b) Master Peer Review Articles

Peter-Cookey, MA & Janyam, K, 2016. Skills Upgrading for Performance Improvement of Informal Economy Workers in Thailand (Manuscript under review), Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences[KJSS]. Elsevier Platform

Peter-Cookey, MA & Janyam, K, 2016. Reaping just what is sown: Low-Skills and Low-Productivity of Informal Economy Workers and the Skill Acquisition Process in Developing Countries. (Manuscript under review), International Journal of Educational Development [IJED]. Elsevier Platform

(c) Others Paper Presentations

Peter-Cookey, MA, 2008. Mainstreaming True Gender Equality into the National Development Plan of Vision 20/2020. Paper presented at the 3rd international Conference on Science and National Development, College of National Science (COLNAS), University Of Agriculture Abeokuta, Nigeria, 2008.

Peter-Cookey, MA, 2012. A Review of National/State Policies, Legislative and Regulatory Framework for Sanitation and Waste Management Systems in Nigeria (2012): Presented at the Africa Leadership Forum's Capacity Building Program for Parliamentary Staff, Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria, 2012

Peter-Cookey, MA, 2012. Review of the Rivers State Water Sector Draft Bill (2012), Presented at the Public Hearing for the Rivers State Water Sector Law, Rivers State House of Assembly, Port Harcourt, Nigeria, 2012
