

ปัจจัยที่มีผลต่อความพร้อมและความตั้งใจในการเคลื่อนย้ายแรงงาน ของบุคลากรวิชาชีพท่องเที่ยว

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บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาปัจจัยที่มีผลต่อความพร้อมและความตั้งใจในการเคลื่อนย้ายแรงงานของบุคลากรวิชาชีพท่องเที่ยวเข้าสู่ประชาคมอาเซียน ระเบียบวิธีวิจัยที่ใช้คือ การวิจัยเชิงปริมาณ ใช้วิธีการสำรวจ โดยแจกแบบสอบถามให้กับบุคลากรวิชาชีพด้านโรงแรมและที่พัก ตำแหน่งพนักงานบริการ ส่วนหน้า จำนวน 400 คน และบุคลากรวิชาชีพสาขาการเดินทางด้านตัวแทนท่องเที่ยวและบริษัททัวร์ จำนวน 400 คน สถิติเชิงพรรณนาที่ใช้ในการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลเชิงปริมาณ ได้แก่ ค่าความถี่ ค่าร้อยละ ค่าเฉลี่ยและค่าส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน สถิติเชิงอนุมานที่ใช้ในการทดสอบสมมติฐาน คือ ค่าสัมประสิทธิ์สหสัมพันธ์แบบเพียร์สัน และการวิเคราะห์ในรูปแบบของโมเดลสมการโครงสร้างแบบกำลังสองน้อยที่สุดบางส่วน

ผลการวิจัยเชิงปริมาณ พบว่า สมรรถนะโดยทั่วไป สมรรถนะที่เกี่ยวกับหน้าที่ การรับรู้วัตถุประสงค์ การรับรู้คุณสมบัติและปัจจัยผลักดันและดึงดูด มีผลกระทบทางตรงอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติต่อความตั้งใจในการเคลื่อนย้ายแรงงานเข้าสู่ประชาคมอาเซียน นอกจากนี้สมรรถนะโดยทั่วไป สมรรถนะที่เกี่ยวกับหน้าที่ การรับรู้วัตถุประสงค์ และการรับรู้คุณสมบัติ มีผลกระทบทางอ้อมต่อความตั้งใจในการเคลื่อนย้ายแรงงานเข้าสู่ประชาคมอาเซียนผ่านความพร้อมของบุคลากรอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ระดับ 0.01

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FACTORS AFFECTING READINESS AND INTENTION FOR LABOR MOBILITY OF TOURISM PROFESSIONALS

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to study the factors affecting readiness and intention for labor mobility of tourism professionals toward the ASEAN Community. The research methodology was the quantitative research using survey as a research instrument. The questionnaires were distributed to 400 professional hotel staffs who work in front office positions and 400 professional travel agencies and tour operations. Descriptive statistics used in quantitative data analysis included frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. Due to hypothesis testing, inferential statistics used were Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM).

The quantitative research results revealed that generic competencies, functional competencies, perceived objective, perceived qualification, and push and pull factors statistically had significant direct effects on intention for labor mobility toward the ASEAN Community. Besides, generic competencies, functional competencies, perceived objective, and perceived qualification had significant indirect effects on intention for labor mobility toward the ASEAN Community through readiness of tourism professionals at a significance level of 0.01.

Keywords: Readiness, Intention for Labor Mobility, Tourism Professionals, ASEAN Community, Competencies, Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs)

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Introduction

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN, was established in 1967 with aims and purposes as to accelerate the economic growth, social progress, and cultural development, to promote regional peace and stability, active collaboration, and mutual assistance in various fields, to provide assistance of training and research facilities in the educational, professional, technical, and administrative spheres, to collaborate on utilization of agriculture and industries, the expansion of trade, the improvement of transportation and communications facilities, and the raising of the living standards, and lastly to maintain cooperation with existing organizations (Association of Southeast Asian Nations, 2021; ASEAN-Thailand Secretariat, Department of ASEAN Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, 2019). ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) establishment in 2015 set purposes to be a stable single market and production based, a competitive region, an equally developed region and is integrated into the global economy (Department of International Trade Negotiations, Ministry of Commerce, 2018).

Tourism industry plays an essential role in ASEAN economic growth by generating large national revenues and being a main sector for employment in service business. Tourism significantly generates economic development across the ASEAN regions. Statistical numbers of foreign visitor arrivals to all ASEAN countries showed that it has been rapidly increasing to approximately 143 million visitors in 2019 comparing to only 81 million visitors in 2011. In 2020 under the COVID-19 pandemic all over the world, there was still 29 million visitors visited ASEAN countries (Association of Southeast Asian Nations, 2021). ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) marked an important milestone in ASEAN economic integration agenda in several key achievements, but one highlight related to workforce was the adoption of common frameworks, standards, and mutual cooperation in various professional areas (ASEAN-Thailand Secretariat, Department of ASEAN Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, 2019). ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Tourism Professionals (MRA-TP) proposed key objectives as to facilitate mobility of tourism professionals, to exchange information on best practices in competency-based education and training for tourism professionals, and to provide opportunities for cooperation and capacity building across ASEAN countries. (The Official Investment Promotion Website of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, 2021)

To provide services under the same standard throughout the region, the service providers should have essential competencies related to work tasks to prepare and build readiness and competitiveness for tourism professionals. Therefore, the researcher would like to study the effects of core competencies, generic competencies, functional competencies, perceived objective, perceived benefit, and perceived qualification of Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs) for ASEAN tourism professionals, push and pull factors on readiness of tourism professionals and intention for labor mobility toward the ASEAN Community.

Research Objective

To study the factors affecting readiness and intention for labor mobility of tourism professionals toward the ASEAN Community.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual research framework was drawn as follows:

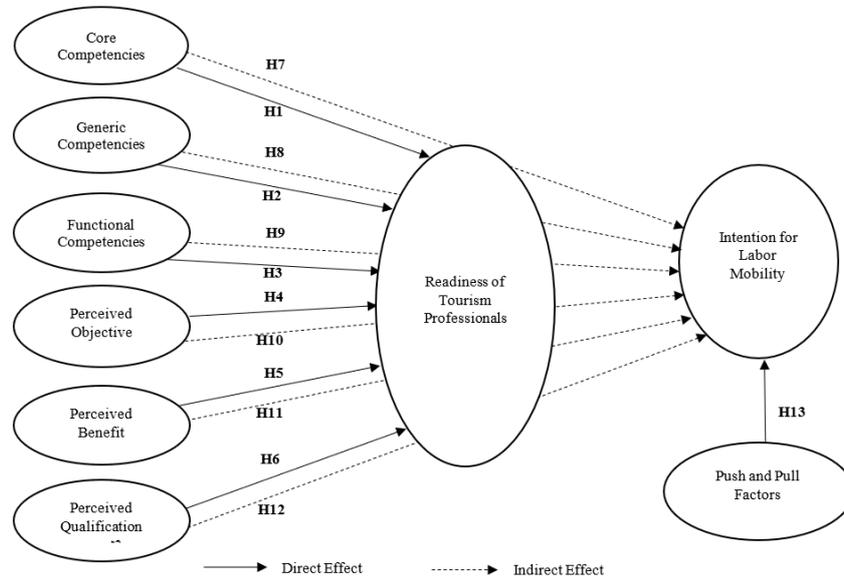


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Hypotheses

The research hypotheses could be written as follows:

- H1: Core competencies significantly affect intention for labor mobility.
- H2: Generic competencies significantly affect intention for labor mobility.
- H3: Functional competencies significantly affect intention for labor mobility.
- H4: Perceived objective significantly affect intention for labor mobility.
- H5: Perceived benefit significantly affect intention for labor mobility.
- H6: Perceived qualification significantly affect intention for labor mobility.
- H7: Readiness of tourism professionals plays a mediating role in the relationship between core competencies and intention for labor mobility.
- H8: Readiness of tourism professionals plays a mediating role in the relationship between generic competencies and intention for labor mobility.
- H9: Readiness of tourism professionals plays a mediating role in the relationship between functional competencies and intention for labor mobility.
- H10: Readiness of tourism professionals plays a mediating role in the relationship between perceived objective and intention for labor mobility.
- H11: Readiness of tourism professionals plays a mediating role in the relationship between perceived benefit and intention for labor mobility.

H12: Readiness of tourism professionals plays a mediating role in the relationship between perceived qualification and intention for labor mobility.

H13: Push and pull factors significantly affect intention for labor mobility.

Literature Reviews

ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangements

Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs) are the framework arrangements established to support facilitating the mobility of skilled labors in ASEAN Economic Community. MRAs also coordinate among member states to adopt and establish best practices on standards and qualifications in each MRA. ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangements consist of 8 areas on Engineering Services (2005), Nursing Services (2006), Architectural Services (2007), Surveying Qualifications (2007), Dental Practitioners (2009), Medical Practitioners (2009), Tourism Professionals (2012), and Accountancy Services (2014) (The Official Investment Promotion Website of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, 2021). MRAs are used for the recognition of inspections, testing, certification, and approvals issued by qualified conformity assessment of eligibility among member states (ASEAN Consultative Committee on Standards and Quality, 2021).

ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Tourism Professionals: ASEAN MRA-TP

ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Tourism Professionals (MRA-TP) was signed by ASEAN Tourism Ministers in November 2012. ASEAN MRA-TP is one of ASEAN's initiatives designed to enable the mobility of employment for skilled tourism labors across the ASEAN region and to exchange information on best practices in competency-based education and training for tourism professionals. Moreover, the MRA-TP is used to enhance competitiveness of the tourism sector in ASEAN. To be eligible to work in a host country, all certification procedures and qualifications will be subjected to prevailing domestic laws and regulations (Association of Southeast Asian Nations, 2018).

ASEAN Common Competency Standards for Tourism Professionals (ACCSTP) was a framework drawn from the minimum common competency standards in terms of the knowledge, skills, and attitude (competence) that should be widely used among ASEAN countries to allow tourism professionals to work effectively as well as to be assessed, recognized, and equated to comparable qualifications in other ASEAN countries (Association of Southeast Asian Nations, 2018). In the ACCSTP framework, the minimal competencies required are arranged on a framework using common divisions of labor in 32 job titles classified into two fields as hotel services and travel services with 6 labor divisions (Association of Southeast Asian Nations, 2018). Hotel Services are divided into 4 divisions as front office, housekeeping, food production, and food and beverage service. *Front Office division* has 5 job titles including front office manager, front office supervisor, receptionist, telephone operator, and bell boy. *Housekeeping division* has 6 job titles including executive housekeeper, laundry

manager, floor supervisor, laundry attendant, room attendant, and public area cleaner. *Food Production division* has 7 job titles including executive chef, demi chef, commis chef, chef de partie, commis pastry, baker, and butcher. *Food and Beverage Service division* has 5 job titles including F&B director, F&B outlet manager, head waiter, bartender, and waiter (Association of Southeast Asian Nations, 2018). Travel Services are divided into two divisions as travel agencies and tour operation. *Travel Agencies division* has 4 job titles including general manager, assistant general manager, senior travel consultant, and travel consultant. *Tour Operation division* has 5 job titles including product manager, sales and marketing manager, credit manager, ticketing manager, and tour manager (Association of Southeast Asian Nations, 2018).

The competencies set based on the ACCSTP framework could be classified into three types as *core competencies*, *generic competencies*, and *functional competencies*. *Core competencies* refer to competencies that are essential to be achieved if a person is to be accepted as competent in a particular primary division of labor to be effective and achieve goals. They are directly linked to key occupational tasks and include units such as work effectively with colleagues and customers and implement occupational health and safety procedures. *Generic competencies* refer to competencies that are essential to be achieved if a person is to be accepted as competent in a particular secondary division of labor to perform the jobs effectively. It combined life skills and competencies, such as use common business tools and technology and manage and resolve conflict situations. Finally, *functional competencies* are specific to jobs within the labor division and include the specific skills as well as knowledge and expertise/know-how to perform the jobs effectively.

Competency and Competency for Tourism Professionals

Competency is widely attributed by McClelland (1973) for an analysis of qualities that were appropriate for a job. This research results indicated that individual characteristics and competencies as abilities to put skills and knowledge into practice were predictors of high performance. The competencies required to perform the job from this research consisted of communication skills by communicating properly with verbal and nonverbal communications, patience, moderate goal setting, and ego development. (McClelland, 1973; Goldman & Scott, 2016). There were various definitions of competency from previous studies as knowledge, skills, abilities, characteristics, motives, traits, attitudes, values, beliefs, interests, work habits, and aspects of self-image or social role (Goldman & Scott, 2016; Boyatzis, 1982; Fleishman et al., 1995; Green, 1999; Guion, 1991; Mirabile, 1997; Mumford et al., 2000; Spencer & Spencer, 1993; Weinert, 2001).

Gupta (2011) studied on competencies' importance and performance in tourism industry and stated that the importance and implementation of competency consisted of 14 variables. Those were knowledge regarding geography, language, safety assessment, variety of food, transportation, accommodation, facilities, tourism resources, sustainable tourism development, product and travel cost, media usage, tour package development, skills to

service and advice, information technology skills, and awareness of cultural differences. Generic competencies for managers' career success in the hospitality industry indicated various competencies as a positive work attitude, taking initiatives, willingness to accept challenges, enthusiasm and energy, working hard, resilience, integrity, maintaining a professional appearance, communication and interpersonal skills as relationships management, negotiation, effective communication, language usage, and participation in coworkers and customers' relationships (Wang, 2013; Akrivos et al., 2007; Chung-Herrera et al., 2003; De Vos & Soens, 2008; Kay & Russette, 2000; Lent et al., 1994; Ng & Pine, 2003; DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994; Ladkin & Juwaheer, 2000; Munar & Montan, 2009; Sewell & Pool, 2010). The other key success factors for hospitality career included capacity for innovation, flexible working methods, adaptability to environmental changes, capacity for learning or acquiring skills and knowledge, problem solving ability, career planning and self-development abilities, long-term goal-setting, fitting one's career to the business environment, teamwork, stress management, time management, and knowing competency (Wang, 2013; Bridgstock, 2009; Joo & Ready, 2012; Munar & Montan, 2009; Beheshtifar, 2011; Ren et al., 2013; Joo & Ready, 2012; Uhl-Bien & Graen, 1998; Williams et al., 2009; Kong et al., 2012; Colakoglu, 2011).

Cognitive and Comprehensive on perceived objective, perceived benefit, and perceived qualification for MRA-TP

Many scholars have given the meaning of the word cognition, concluding that cognition refers to the ability to remember and understand the details of information that a person has accumulated and passed on, as well as the ability to convey meaning, interpret, expand, or express your opinions about matters after receiving the information (Polpailin, 1997; Jutavijit, 1997; Wangpanich, 1983). Comprehension refers to the ability to capture the importance of stories in language, code, symbols, both concrete and abstract, divided into translations and Interpretation (Jaidee, 1999). If someone recognize and understand about perceived objective, perceived benefit, and perceived qualification as positive things, they may have positive intention to prepare and to integrate into their decision.

Readiness for Tourism Professionals in Thailand

Chalamwong (2015) stated that the demand for workers in tourism industry in 2014 was about 27,000 workers; however, it encountered 17,000 worker shortage to fulfill the needs from overall industry. This study also revealed advantages and disadvantages of Thai labors in hotel and tourism services and could be concluded that Thai workers did not have outstanding professional competence, especially in problem solving skills, computer skills, working together as a team, operational techniques, foreign language especially English, and management ability. Thai workers' performance did not meet the expectations of entrepreneurs, and a major problem in tourism industry was the shortage of skilled workers and expert. The Ministry of Tourism and Sports, which is responsible for tourism professional development, should coordinate with the Department of Skill Development, Ministry of

Labour to enhance the readiness of personnel in the hotel, restaurant, and tourism business as well as to upgrade skills or certify competency standards for the labors. The utmost urgency issue was empowering and performance Standards 32 jobs titles in tourism industry. Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI) suggested that potential development of Thai labors from 32 job titles in tourism and hotels should be focused on working skills and foreign languages. With the working and communication skills together would enhance labors' capabilities and competencies to be qualified as per ASEAN Common Competency Standards for Tourism Professionals (ACCSTP) (Paitoonpong, Tulyawasinpong, Akarakul, Chaksirinon, & Tasee, 2010).

Labor Mobility and Push and Pull Factors

A labor mobility is usually an employment as short-term contract involving travelling or construction work whereas relocation mobility of labors to work in another country or another place as expatriate could be categorized as a long-term labor mobility (Otto & Dalbert, 2012). Grabowska (2005) stated that changes in international labor movements were related to political, economic, and sociocultural factors. Push and pull factors can be divided into macro and micro levels. The push factors at macro level were more unemployment rate, job shortage for new graduates, low wages, political corruption, and avoiding economic or social risks. The push factors at micro level were money needed to support family, lack of opportunities for advancement in the job, or want to start a new life. The pull factors from both macro and micro levels were higher wage rates, have a better life, have better career path, money needed, needs to develop potential, a better workplace, or migration with family. Ng, Sorensen, Eby and Feldman (2007) stated that there are several reasons for labors to relocate, and these consisted of both macro views, including economic factors, social characteristics, industrial differences, and corporate policies, and micro view or individual view which come from different factors such as values, personality, and so on.

There were many previous studies focusing on competencies' importance and performance in tourism industry, but the study in ASEAN countries after the MRA-TP was established was not found. Many studies on ASEAN MRA mentioned about how to use ASEAN MRA competencies as guidelines to develop professional standards in various careers, such as teacher and accountants and how MRA standard can provide guidelines to build readiness for ASEAN workforces toward ASEAN market integration and labor mobility (Jitpaisanwattana et al., 2015; Srisuruk & Silanoi, 2015; Vesamavibool et al., 2015; Wangpanich, 1983; Pholpairin, 1997; Juthawijit, 1997; Pholkaew et al., 2017).

There were many past research studies in ASEAN MRA, and their objectives were to study factors affecting readiness in various professional areas, such as Chawaphanth et al. (2016) focused on nurses' readiness through perceived knowledge about AEC and their effects on professional nurses and core competencies for nurses. Also, Pornnimit (2017) developed conceptual framework with 5 concepts as ASEAN citizenships' attributes, professional and

functional competency, 21st century skills, concepts and awareness toward ASEAN and concepts of ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement. Furthermore, Sinthipsomboon et al. (2018) focused on professional standards for hotel staff in AEC by addressing about competencies standards for tourism professionals, objectives, qualifications, and benefits of MRA, readiness preparation to enhance professional skills, overview, strength, and weakness of hotel industry as well as ASEAN labor mobility. Nangklaphivat (2014) studied on preparation of Thai labor in tourism industry for the ASEAN Economic Community Integration focusing on various aspects of preparation of Thai labor, MRA-TP core, generic and functional competencies, overview of Thai tourism, and free flow of skilled labor.

Therefore, the proposed hypotheses of this research were to investigate the effects of core competencies, generic competencies, and functional competencies on labor mobility drawn in Hypothesis 1 - 3. Moreover, if tourism professionals recognize about objective, benefits, and standard qualification of MRA-TP, they may understand their situations in ASEAN labor market. The more positive knowledge on ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement, the higher intention to prepare and integrate themselves into ASEAN market integration as proposed in Hypothesis 4 – 6. The push and pull factors are external factors from macro scales that affect labor mobility in many studies; therefore, push and pull factors significantly affect intention for labor mobility could be drawn as Hypothesis 13. Past research studies above also mentioned in their research findings that Thai professionals still need to improve in various aspects, such as English language, their knowledge about competencies, and ASEAN market integration. Many of them also mentioned that some professional careers were not ready, so they may not integrate into ASEAN labor market. Consequently, readiness of tourism professionals may mediate relationships among core competencies, generic competencies, functional competencies, perceived objectives, perceived benefits, perceived qualifications, and intention for labor mobility as proposed in Hypothesis 7 – 12, respectively.

Research Methodology

Sample and Data Collection

Population of this research can be divided into two groups representing two divisions in hotel and travel services for tourism professionals as follows: 1) Population of hotel services were 2,310,000 employees in Hotel and Accommodation sectors in Thailand and 2) Population of travel services were indefinite. After the determination of sample sizes, there were 400 employees being selected to be study samples for each group compounding as 800 employees in total (Yamane, 1970).

The sampling method used in this research was non-probability sampling with quota and purposive sampling techniques. First, quota sampling was divided into 5 regions covering Central, Southern, Eastern, Northeastern, and North regions of Thailand. The researcher then selected the highest tourist arrivals in each region, so the provinces

chosen were Bangkok, Chonburi, Phuket, Nakhon Ratchasima, and Chiang Mai covering all 5 regions as proposed. The next step was that 80 questionnaires were distributed to each division as hotel and travel services as a total of 160 in each province. The last step was that purposive sampling technique was used to select those 400 professional hotel staffs who work in front office positions and 400 professional staffs from travel agencies and tour operations with more than 1 year working experience in their position.

Measurement and Data Analysis Method

The research methodology was the quantitative research conducted using survey method. The questionnaires with 6 sections were utilized as data collection tool. Core competencies, generic competencies, functional competencies were developed to be consistent with MRA - TP qualification required for tourism professionals. The perceived objective, perceived benefit, and perceived qualification were developed by measuring their understanding about ASEAN MRA establishment. The readiness was adopted from Yararat (2011) who showed that occupations expected by the ASEAN Economic Community consist of 3 aspects as cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains while push and pull factors were developed from international labor movements (Grabowska, 2005; Klanjit, 2004), and intention for job mobility was developed from intention toward ASEAN market integration. Section 1 to 4 were five-point Likert scale questions regarding core competencies, generic competencies, functional competencies, perceived objective, perceived benefit, perceived qualification, readiness of tourism professionals, push and pull factors, and intention for labor mobility ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Section 5 consisted of closed-ended questions regarding their personal background and working experience, such as gender, age, type of service, and position at work. Descriptive statistics used in quantitative data analysis included frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. Due to hypothesis testing, inferential statistics used were Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM).

Research Results

The results of the research showed that most of respondents were female (63.0%), had age range between 25 - 34 years old (55.9%), obtained the Bachelor's Degree (71.7%), had average income between 15,001 - 25,000 Bath per month (42.8%), and had working experience in this position around 3 - 6 years (36.6%).

The research results further revealed that most of the respondents had agreements toward core competencies, generic competencies, functional competencies at the agree level and had the mean as 3.91, 3.87, and 4.04, respectively. In the aspect of agreements toward Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs) for ASEAN tourism professionals, the research results showed that most of the respondents had agreements toward perceived objective, perceived benefit, and perceived qualification at the agree level and had the mean as 3.58, 3.68, and

3.49, respectively. The research results also showed that most of the respondents had agreements toward readiness of tourism professionals at the agree level and had the mean as 3.50. In addition, the results showed that most of the respondents had agreements toward labor mobility and push and pull factors at the agree level and had the mean as 3.46 and 3.68, respectively.

Validity and Reliability

Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability were investigated to measure construct reliability. The measurement model in table 1 showed that Cronbach's alpha coefficient of each construct ranged from 0.8 to 0.95, meaning that all constructs are acceptable according to the recommended threshold value of 0.70 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). In terms of composite reliability, all values ranged from 0.91 to 0.95, which is more than the recommended value of 0.70; hence, the constructs in the research model are acceptable (Hair, Sarstedt, Matthews, & Ringle, 2016).

Table 1 Factor Loading, Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient (CA), Composite Reliability (CR) and Average variance extracted (AVE) for Measurement Model

Latent Variable	CA	CR	AVE	Indicators	Loads
Core Competencies (C_Comp)	0.91	0.93	0.73	C_Comp1	0.84
				C_Comp2	0.86
				C_Comp3	0.84
				C_Comp4	0.87
				C_Comp5	0.87
Generic Competencies (G_Comp)	0.92	0.94	0.62	G_Comp1	0.78
				G_Comp2	0.82
				G_Comp3	0.83
				G_Comp4	0.81
				G_Comp5	0.76
				G_Comp6	0.79
				G_Comp7	0.81
				G_Comp8	0.76
				G_Comp9	0.71
Functional Competencies (F_Comp)	0.94	0.95	0.64	F_Comp1	0.79
				F_Comp2	0.83
				F_Comp3	0.82
				F_Comp4	0.77
				F_Comp5	0.81
				F_Comp6	0.81
				F_Comp7	0.73

Table 1 Factor Loading, Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient (CA), Composite Reliability (CR) and Average variance extracted (AVE) for Measurement Model (Cont.)

Latent Variable	CA	CR	AVE	Indicators	Loads
				F_Comp8	0.82
				F_Comp9	0.81
				F_Comp10	0.83
				F_Comp11	0.80
Perceived Objective (Obj)	0.93	0.95	0.83		
				Obj1	0.90
				Obj2	0.93
				Obj3	0.92
				Obj4	0.90
Perceived Benefit (Bene)	0.92	0.95	0.87		
				Bene1	0.92
				Bene2	0.94
				Bene3	0.93
Perceived Qualification (Qua)	0.95	0.97	0.88		
				Qua1	0.92
				Qua2	0.95
				Qua3	0.94
				Qua4	0.95
Readiness (Rea)	0.93	0.94	0.52		
				Rea1	0.69
				Rea2	0.66
				Rea3	0.71
				Rea4	0.69
				Rea5	0.75
				Rea6	0.75
				Rea7	0.77
				Rea8	0.72
				Rea9	0.77
				Rea10	0.77
				Rea11	0.75
				Rea12	0.64
				Rea13	0.71
				Rea14	0.73
Intention for Labor Mobility (Int)	0.87	0.91	0.72		
				Int1	0.72
				Int2	0.90
				Int3	0.90
				Int4	0.86
Push & Pull Factors (Fac)	0.90	0.93	0.72		
				Fac1	0.83

Table 1 Factor Loading, Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient (CA), Composite Reliability (CR) and Average variance extracted (AVE) for Measurement Model (Cont.)

Latent Variable	CA	CR	AVE	Indicators	Loads
				Fac2	0.86
				Fac3	0.86
				Fac4	0.84
				Fac5	0.85

In table 1, AVE was in the range of 0.52 to 0.88, which exceeded the minimum threshold value of 0.50, confirming convergent validity. The discriminant validity was tested and the square roots of AVEs were more than the 0.7 minimum threshold, and all values were more than the correlations among the latent constructs (0.72 – 0.94); thus, it is valid.

Analysis of Structural Model

From the structural model in this research, the direct effects indicated that R^2 of the dependent variable, or, intention for labor mobility (Int) was 0.42 indicating that 42% of Intent variance was explained by the independent variable. For the indirect effects, R^2 of the mediating variable or readiness (Rea) and the dependent variable or intention for labor mobility (Int) were 0.58 and 0.44, respectively.

Table 2 Structural Model

	Part 1 Direct Effects		Part 2 Indirect Effects	
	Int	Rea		Int
R^2	0.42	0.58		0.44
H1: C_Comp → Int	-0.08		H7: C_Comp → Rea → Int	-0.08
H2: G_Comp → Int	0.24***		H8: G_Comp → Rea → Int	0.18***
H3: F_Comp → Int	-0.13**		H9: F_Comp → Rea → Int	-0.15**
H4: Obj → Int	0.16**		H10: Obj → Rea → Int	0.12*
H5: Bene → Int	-0.09		H11: Bene → Rea → Int	-0.07
H6: Qua → Int	0.25***		H12: Qua → Rea → Int	0.19***
H13: Fac → Int	0.42***			
Mediating Effects				
Rea → Int	0.23***			
G_Comp → Rea		0.31***		
F_Comp → Rea		0.15***		
Obj → Rea		0.21***		
Qua → Rea		0.33***		

Note: * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001 (two-tailed test)

The results of structural model showed that generic competencies ($\beta = 0.24$, $p < 0.001$), functional competencies ($\beta = -0.13$, $p < 0.01$), perceived objective ($\beta = 0.16$, $p < 0.01$), perceived qualification ($\beta = 0.25$, $p < 0.001$) and push and pull factors ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < 0.001$) had positive and significant effects on intention for labor mobility, so Hypothesis 2, 3, 4, 6, and 13 were then supported. On the other hand, the results of hypothesis testing showed that core competencies and perceived benefit did not have significant effects on intention for labor mobility, so hypothesis 1 and 5 were rejected (Described in Table 2: Part 1 Direct Effects). The mediating effects showed that generic competencies ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.001$), functional competencies ($\beta = 0.15$, $p < 0.001$), perceived objective ($\beta = 0.21$, $p < 0.001$), and perceived qualification ($\beta = 0.33$, $p < 0.001$) had positive and significant effects on readiness. Finally, readiness of tourism professionals had an effect on intention for labor mobility ($\beta = 0.23$, $p < 0.001$).

The results from table 2 part 2 demonstrated that there was a significant indirect effect on the relationship. Since the direct effect of generic competencies and intention for labor mobility was significant, readiness of tourism professionals had a partial mediating effect on the relationship between generic competencies and intention for labor mobility; therefore, hypothesis 8 was supported ($\beta = 0.18$, $p < 0.001$). The research also explored the mediating effect of readiness of tourism professionals on the relationships among functional competency, perceived objective, perceived qualification, and intention for labor mobility. There were both significant direct and indirect effects among functional competency, perceived objective, perceived qualification, and intention for labor mobility. This means readiness of tourism professionals possessed a partial mediating effect on the relationship among functional competency, perceived objective, perceived qualification, and intention for labor mobility. Consequently, hypothesis 9 ($\beta = -0.15$, $p < .01$), hypothesis 10 ($\beta = 0.12$, $p < .05$), and hypothesis 12 ($\beta = 0.19$, $p < .001$) were supported.

Discussions

The results of this research showed that competencies in each profession is important career success and career development. The results further revealed that generic and functional competencies for tourism skilled labors had effects on readiness and intention for job mobility which were similar to those obtained in other studies. Wang (2013) stated that in order to have career success in the hospitality industry, generic competencies comprised effective working and communicating skills with multiple languages, positive attitudes toward service, maintaining interpersonal skills, and maintaining professional attitudes as enthusiasm, energy, working hard and willingness to accept challenges (Akrivos et al., 2007; Chung-Herrera et al., 2003; De Vos & Soens, 2008; Kay & Russette, 2000; Lent et al., 1994; Ng & Pine, 2003; DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994; Ladkin & Juwaheer, 2000; Munar & Montan, 2009; Sewell & Pool,

2010). In addition, the results were in accordance with Gupta (2011) who stated that the importance and implementation of competency consisted of 14 variables relating to generic and functional competencies in tourism professional qualifications.

This research results also revealed that most of respondents had agreement toward perceived objective, perceived qualification, readiness, labor mobility, and push and pull factors at agree level. However, the readiness and job mobility were lower than other variables. The results of these may be in line with Chalamwong (2015) which indicated that Thai workers did not have outstanding professional competence, especially in problem solving skills, computer skills, working together as a team, operational techniques, foreign language, especially English, and management ability. This attitude may lead to lower score on average of readiness and intention for job mobility among ASEAN countries. The results of this research were also similar to Grabowska (2005) and Ng, Sorensen, Eby and Feldman (2007) regarding push and pull factors for labor movements. The more agreement the respondents had with push and pull factors, the higher intention they considered participating in job mobility among ASEAN countries. Therefore, to prepare to avoid labor shortage in the future, macroeconomics and microeconomics must be considered at the national level.

Limitation of the Research

The researcher's focus in this research was on readiness and labor mobility toward the ASEAN Community of tourism professionals from hotel services and travel services in Thailand. Since the data were collected from 400 professional hotel staffs who work in front office positions and 400 professional travel agencies and tour operations, the generalization of the results could be limited. As this research was cross-sectional, data were collected at one specific time point. The influence of government policy as well as other host countries qualifications and standards were not determined. The research also proposed only one moderator (readiness of tourism professionals); thus, other applicable variables should also be considered to facilitate the relationships among the variables.

Recommendations

- For Practitioners

To be successful in tourism industry, knowledge and understanding toward customers preferences and destination awareness are essential. Tourism professionals should pay more attention to all knowledge regarding similarities and differences among ASEAN countries to perform best tasks in service. To enhance competitiveness for Thai tourism professionals, there would be needs in coordination from all stakeholders within the tourism industry by implementing the MRA - TP standards and qualifications as a guideline in a long-term strategic planning. Research results and recommendations could lead to the improvement of the policy of training for employees and help in producing and developing

graduates of higher education institutions quality for the private sector to support the AEC. For examples, entrepreneurs can take MRA-TP qualifications into human resource development programs or key performance indicators to motivate employees to realize the importance of their MRA-TP competencies. It may help increase capability of employees to perform tasks in tourism industry efficiently and effectively. Moreover, educational institutions majoring in tourism and hotel management also need to revise curriculum to be consistent with these qualifications to prepare new graduates to compete in this industry. There is not only a need for a revision of curriculum but also a need to concentrate on building professional experiences in fieldwork through cooperative education and internship during studies. More importantly, emphasis on creating graduates in accordance with industry requirements and labor standards shall be considered.

- Further Studies

As this research was carried out in Thailand, the researcher suggested testing the research model in other ASEAN member countries for future research. Longitudinal research is suggested over multiple time points to examine whether relationships exist among competencies, perceived MRAs, readiness and labor mobility in ASEAN. Other variables such as cultural distance, psychological distance among exporting countries and importing countries in professionals' perspectives could lead to better understanding of their motivation, decision, and intention toward this industry.

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