



รายงานวิจัยฉบับสมบูรณ์

โครงการ

แนวทางการพัฒนาความสามารถในการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรม
ของพนักงานในโรงแรมระดับสูงในอำเภอเกาะสมุย

**Intercultural Communicative Competence of Thai Hotel Workers:
A Study of Upscale Hotels in Samui Island**

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**Intercultural Communicative Competence of Thai Hotel
Workers: A Study of Upscale Hotels in Samui Island**

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research were 1) to examine the degree of intercultural communicative competence of Thai hotel workers operating in upscale hotels in Samui island through self-assessment surveys developed from the scope of Arasaratnam's (2006) model of intercultural communicative competence, 2) to investigate factors influencing Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence including cultural empathy, experience, interaction involvement, attitude towards other cultures, and motivation, and 3) to synthesize the findings from this research and develop an optimal ICC training platform for both private and public hospitality sectors in Samui island in order to ensure international competitiveness and maximize traditional markets.

A mixed methods approach was employed in this project. In the first study, self-assessment surveys were randomly conducted in 45 upscale hotels (21 four-star, and 24 five-star hotels) in Samui island as it is generally accepted that hotels in the higher market sectors have offered a variety of full service and high-end facilities on site. Thus, upscale hotels can be an appropriate option to sample for this study due to the fact that hotel workforce operating in luxury hotels has more opportunities to interact with internal and external customers from different cultural backgrounds in relations to lower star hotels. A total of 580 surveys were distributed to management and line-level employees who currently work in any department within those hotels, of which 514 were completed and usable for the data analysis, yielding a 88.6% response rate.

The results of the structural model of ICC revealed that cultural empathy generated a direct effect on Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence but the proposed indirect effect through interaction involvement was not statistically supported. Interaction involvement and motivation emerged as another two direct predictors of Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence. Contrary to expectations and Arasaratnam's (2006) study, past experience in intercultural settings was not statistically significant to predispose Thai hotel workers' perceptions and attitude towards other cultures and their members. The finding in

the current study also suggested that cultural empathy positively influenced Thai hotel workers' attitude towards other cultures. Cultural empathy and attitude were statistically significant to generate indirect effects on Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence through interaction involvement and motivation to engage in intercultural communication.

In the second study, qualitative interviews were utilized to explore the perspectives of human resources professionals on the nature of intercultural communicative competence and its application within the hotel industry, especially in Samui island. Quota sampling was applied to select participants within the following criteria: (a) interview eight subjects, (b) participants must primarily be human resources managers or training managers or any higher position in the human resources department, (c) participants must be from four- and five-star hotels in Samui island, (d) four out of eight participants must be representatives from an international chain hotel, and (e) four out of eight participants must be representatives from a local chain hotel. Based on open-ended questions in the interview script, findings were classified under four main headings: (a) skills and competencies for workers in the Thailand hospitality industry, (b) workplace diversity in the Thailand hospitality industry, (c) ICC in the Thailand hospitality industry from a human resources perspective, and (d) the gap between education and actual needs of the industry.

From a human resources perspective in this study, Thai educators should play a part in instilling a sense of intercultural understanding and competence into their students in order to prepare them for an intercultural community and globalization. The cooperation between the industry and relevant stakeholders should also be implemented for human resources development in the context of regional, international, and global competitiveness. For example, Thai educators can cooperate with TAT (the Tourism Authority of Thailand) on a program to educate students and graduates about intercultural understanding by pinpointing the cultures of the top five international tourist arrivals to Samui island who represent as the primary market. With this type of cultural awareness program, students and graduates can learn and know how to deal with people from these cultures before starting their work in the industry.

Synthesizing the findings from this study, an optimal ICC training platform for enhancing intercultural communicative competence of Thai hotel workers in Samui island was adapted from Mitchell's (2000) guidelines and Woods' (2004) training cycle consisting of five steps: (a) identify target participants and ICC training objectives, (b) conduct an ICC pre-test, (c) identify ICC issues and incompetence, (d) develop ICC program, and (e) conduct an ICC post-test.

Findings from this project, together with the body of existing research and literature were synthesized to develop an optimal ICC training platform for both private and public hospitality sectors in Samui island in order to ensure international competitiveness and maximize traditional markets. In addition, this study may serve as a gateway for future research related to intercultural communicative competence in relevant contexts such as a study of intercultural communicative competence of Thai students in hospitality and tourism programs, a study of Thai educators' perspectives on intercultural communicative competence, and a study of intercultural communicative competence developed as part of service strategies in the Thailand hospitality industry.

Keywords: intercultural communicative competence; Thai hotel workers

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rationale and Significance

Representing the largest segment of the hospitality industry in Thailand, the hotel industry is flourishing alongside Thailand's tourism sector. According to the Ministry of Tourism & Sports (2017), tourism receipts of Surat Thani province of which Samui island is part, generated 84,795.95 million Thai Baht representing 4.22 percentage share of the country's tourism receipts from international tourist arrivals in 2017. The hotel occupancy rate in Samui island increased 23% from 57.09 in 2013 to 70.22 in 2017 along with the augmenting number of accommodations, rooms, guest arrivals, and their length of stay (see Table 1.1). Over the past five years (2013 – 2017), the number of tourists in Samui island has increased 33.33% from 1.8 million in 2013 to 2.4 million in 2017 (Ministry of Tourism & Sports, 2017). The international tourist market in Samui island includes a variety of tourists from seven regions: Africa, East Asia, Europe, Oceania, South Asia, The Americas, and the Middle East.

The majority of international tourist arrivals to Samui island have continuously been non-English speakers over the past five years. Based on the top 10 international tourist arrivals to Samui island classified by country of residence from 2013 until 2017, there appeared to be only three out of 10 countries of residence where the English language is used: Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States (Ministry of Tourism & Sports, 2017). For instance, the top three international tourist arrivals to Samui island in 2017 were German, Chinese, and East European (Ministry of Tourism & Sports, 2017). Hence, employees in the hospitality and tourism industry with foreign language and communicative skills are in high demand.

The growth of tourism and international tourist arrivals to Samui island continues to attract both direct and indirect investments to the area. While the direct investments including hotels, restaurants, and attractions create employment opportunities and revenue; the indirect investments

such as academic and career training institutions supply workers to the growing demand in the industry. The latter has become imperative due to the need for an educated workforce.

According to the National Statistical Office (2017), the number of employed workers in the Thailand hotel industry increased 111.68% during the past decade from 119,887 in 2006 to 253,771 in 2016. The highest number of employed workers 91,006 or 35.9% was in the Southern provinces of Thailand where the main tourist destinations such as Samui island and Phuket are located, followed by the number of employed workers in the Central provinces (exclude Bangkok), Bangkok, Northern, and Northeastern provinces, respectively (National Statistical Office, 2017).

The increasing globalization of world trade has generated interactions between people from different cultural backgrounds over the years. Lustig and Koester (2006) pointed out that intercultural encounters are omnipresent, “they occur within neighborhoods, across national borders, in face-to-face interactions, through mediated channels, in business, in personal relationships, in tourist travel, and in politics” (p.2). Intercultural communicative competence has become necessary in order to live productively in the intercultural environment (Chen & Starosta, 1996).

The concept of intercultural communicative competence has gained attention from several researchers over the decade (Arasaratnam, 2006; Beamer, 1992; Byram, 1997; Chen, 1989, 1990, 1997; Chen & Starosta, 1996; Deardorff, 2006; Fantini, 2007; Imahori & Lanigan, 1989; Lustig & Koester, 2006; Ruben, 1976, 1989; Spitzberg, 1989). In the hospitality and tourism context, past research has alternatively applied the concept of intercultural communicative competence to three primary approaches to interactions between people from different cultural backgrounds including visitors and the host community, visitors and the local workforce in the industry, and among the workforce from different cultures (Blanton, 1981; Cohen & Cooper, 1986; Evans, 1976; Gannon, 2008; Kriegl, 2000; Leclerc & Martin, 2004; Yu, Weiler, & Ham, 2002).

As the hospitality and tourism industry grows, Thailand, especially its tourist destination such as Samui island must strive to retain its international competitiveness with a supply of

internationally and interculturally competent workers. Although Blanton (1981) pointed out that the workforce in the hospitality and tourism industry greatly meets a demand for intercultural understanding and communicative competence in relation to other occupations, it is imperative that the study of workforce's intercultural communicative competence should be persistently conducted for human resources development and managerial implications in the industry.

Objectives of the Study

Objective 1: Examine the degree of intercultural communicative competence of Thai hotel workers operating in upscale hotels in Samui island through self-assessment surveys developed from the scope of Arasaratnam's (2006) model of intercultural communicative competence.

Objective 2: Investigate factors influencing Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence including cultural empathy, experience, interaction involvement, attitude towards other cultures, and motivation.

Objective 3: Synthesize the findings from this research and develop an optimal ICC training platform for both private and public hospitality sectors in Samui island in order to ensure international competitiveness and maximize traditional markets.

Objectives	Methodology	Research Activities	Sample
1. Examine the degree of intercultural communicative competence of Thai hotel workers operating in upscale hotels in Samui island	- Self-assessment surveys (developed from the scope of Arasaratnam's (2006) model of ICC)	1. Develop list of upscale hotels in Samui island	- Thai hotel workers who currently work in any department within hotels selected to be part of the sample
2. Investigate factors influencing Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence including cultural empathy, experience, interaction involvement, attitude towards other cultures, and motivation		2. Pre-test and Pilot study 3. Revise the original research instrument 4. Random sampling (45 upscale hotels in Samui island) 5. Contact/ invite hotels for participation in the study 6. Distribute surveys to hotel workers	

Objectives	Methodology	Research Activities	Sample
3. Synthesize the findings from this research and develop an optimal ICC training platform for both private and public hospitality sectors in Samui island in order to ensure international competitiveness and maximize traditional markets	- Self-assessment surveys (developed from the scope of Arasaratnam's (2006) model of ICC) - Qualitative interviews with human resources professionals	7. Data collection 8. Data analysis 9. Qualitative interviews with human resource professionals 10. Synthesize the findings from this study 11. Develop an optimal ICC training platform for enhancing intercultural communicative competence of Thai hotel workers in Samui island 12. Publish the study	- Thai hotel workers who currently work in any department within hotels selected to be part of the sample - 8 human resources professionals from upscale hotels in Samui island (Quota sampling: 4 participants from an international chain hotel/ 4 participants from a local chain hotel)

Methodology

A mixed methods approach was employed in this project. In the first study, self-assessment surveys were randomly conducted in 45 upscale hotels (21 four-star, and 24 five-star hotels) in Samui island as it is generally accepted that hotels in the higher market sectors have offered a variety of full service and high-end facilities on site. Thus, upscale hotels can be an appropriate option to sample for this study due to the fact that hotel workforce operating in luxury hotels has more opportunities to interact with internal and external customers from different cultural backgrounds in relations to lower star hotels. Participants were management and line-level employees who currently work in any department within those hotels selected to be part of the sample.

In the second study, qualitative interviews were utilized to explore the perspectives of human resources professionals on the nature of intercultural communicative competence and its application within the hotel industry, especially in Samui island. Quota sampling was applied to

select participants within the following criteria: (a) interview eight subjects, (b) participants must primarily be human resources managers or training managers or any higher position in the human resources department, (c) participants must be from four- and five-star hotels in Samui island, (d) four out of eight participants must be representatives from an international chain hotel, and (e) four out of eight participants must be representatives from a local chain hotel.

Lastly, the findings from the surveys along with qualitative interviews were synthesized in order to develop an optimal ICC training platform for both private and public hospitality sectors in Samui island.

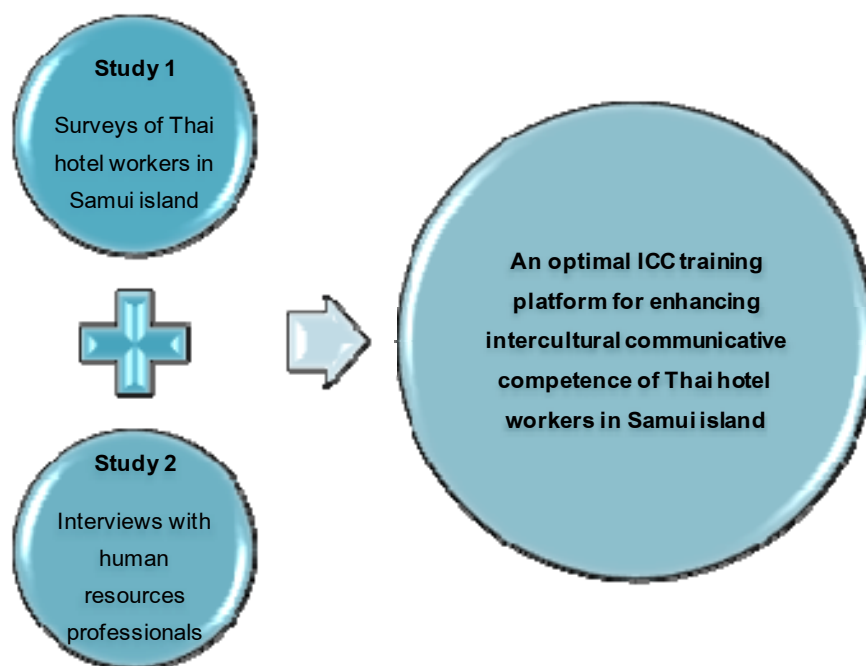


Figure 1.2. Conceptual Framework of the Study.

Significant Results and Main Findings

This study employed a mixed methods approach to examine the degree of intercultural communicative competence of Thai hotel workers operating in upscale hotels in Samui island through self-assessment surveys and develop an optimal ICC training program for stakeholders in the industry through qualitative interviews with human resources professionals.

In the first study, self-assessment surveys were applied to investigate Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence and the relationships among the factors (cultural empathy, interaction involvement, attitude, experience, motivation, and ICC) adapted from Arasaratnam's (2006) model of ICC. The primary research question, "Can the ICC model explain and predict Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence?" was answered by results from the SEM analysis which showed that the structural model was an acceptable fit to the data. The main findings were, in part, consistent with intercultural literature supporting the relationships among intercultural factors influencing Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence.

The results of the structural model of ICC suggested that cultural empathy was the strongest direct predictor of intercultural communicative competence. It suggested when Thai hotel workers internalize cultural empathy, they are bound to understand and relate themselves to others during the intercultural interaction which then leads to intercultural communicative competence as the behavioral outcome. While cultural empathy generated a direct effect on Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence, the proposed indirect effect through interaction involvement was not statistically supported. Interaction involvement and motivation emerged as another two direct predictors of Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence. In other words, Thai hotel workers who possess an ability to handle the conversation confidently and satisfyingly during the intercultural interaction with their colleagues and hotel guests from different cultures can support their intercultural communicative competence. For the context of this study, Thai hotel workers with a high degree of motivation will in general endeavor to learn and comprehend their colleagues and hotel guests from different cultures with the intention of accomplishing intercultural communication effectively and appropriately.

Contrary to expectations and Arasaratnam's (2006) study, past experience in intercultural settings was not statistically significant to predispose Thai hotel workers' perceptions and attitude towards other cultures and their members. The counter-proposition can be explained by descriptive statistics of the experience scale which was rated with "yes" or "no" (0 = No, 1 = Yes) questions.

Results demonstrated averagely over 65% of Thai hotel workers had no past experience in the intercultural settings which could support their perceptions and attitude towards other cultures and their members.

The finding in the current study also discovered that cultural empathy positively influenced Thai hotel workers' attitude towards other cultures. Cultural empathy and attitude were statistically significant to generate indirect effects on Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence through interaction involvement and motivation to engage in intercultural communication.

In the second study, qualitative interviews were utilized to explore the perspectives of human resources professionals on the nature of intercultural communicative competence and its application within the hotel industry, especially in Samui island. Based on open-ended questions in the interview script, findings were classified under four main headings: (a) skills and competencies for workers in the Thailand hospitality industry, (b) workplace diversity in the Thailand hospitality industry, (c) ICC in the Thailand hospitality industry from a human resources perspective, and (d) the gap between education and actual needs of the industry.

Given that the hospitality industry is increasingly competitive, Thailand must strive to retain its international competitiveness with a supply of internationally and interculturally competent workers. It is thus undeniable that intercultural communicative competence can help both the hotel worker and the hotel industry improve service quality. Managers should consider how to promote Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence for the hotel's benefit.

At present, many hotels in Thailand, either managed by an international, local hotel chain, or independent without any affiliation are aware of this fact and have provided training programs starting from the workers' first day of employment. In most cases, cultural awareness training programs were included as part of orientation program for familiarizing new employees with their job responsibilities, the work environment, their department's relationship to other departments, and the target customers/hotel guests they have to interact with, etc.

From a human resources perspective in this study, Thai educators should play a part in instilling a sense of intercultural understanding and competence into their students in order to prepare them for an intercultural community and globalization. The cooperation between the industry and relevant stakeholders should also be implemented for human resources development in the context of regional, international, and global competitiveness. For example, Thai educators can cooperate with TAT (the Tourism Authority of Thailand) on a program to educate students and graduates about intercultural understanding by pinpointing the cultures of the top five international tourist arrivals to Samui island who represent as the primary market. With this type of cultural awareness program, students and graduates can learn and know how to deal with people from these cultures before starting their work in the industry.

Synthesizing the findings from this study, an optimal ICC training platform for enhancing intercultural communicative competence of Thai hotel workers in Samui island was adapted from Mitchell's (2000) guidelines and Woods' (2004) training cycle consisting of five steps: (a) identify target participants and ICC training objectives, (b) conduct an ICC pre-test, (c) identify ICC issues and incompetence, (d) develop ICC program, and (e) conduct an ICC post-test.

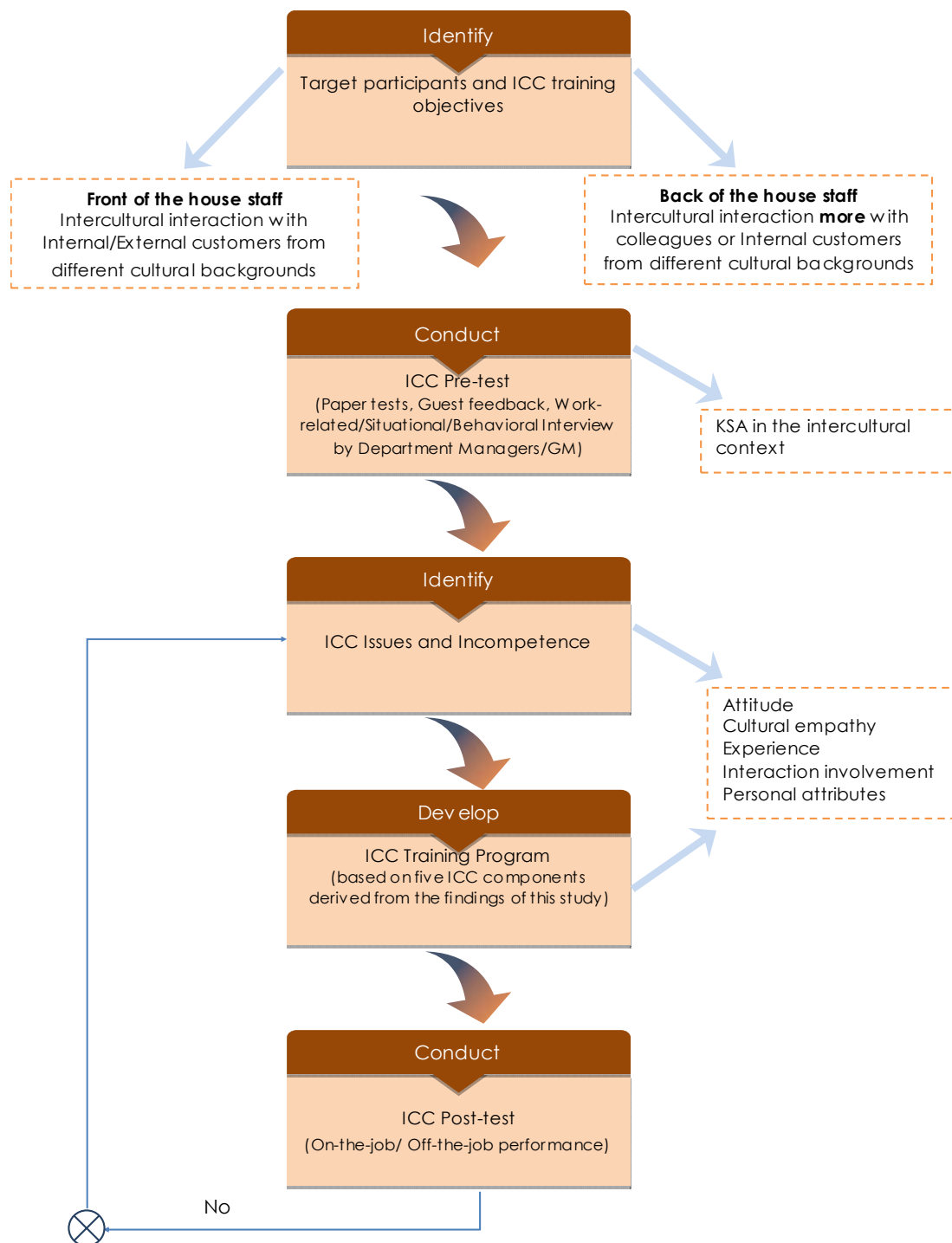


Figure 6.1. An Optimal ICC Training Platform (synthesized from the findings of this study).

Conclusions and Future Research

Findings from this project, together with the body of existing research and literature were synthesized to develop an optimal ICC training platform for both private and public hospitality sectors in Samui island in order to ensure international competitiveness and maximize traditional markets. In addition, this study may serve as a gateway for future research related to intercultural communicative competence in relevant contexts such as a study of intercultural communicative competence of Thai students in hospitality and tourism programs, a study of Thai educators' perspectives on intercultural communicative competence, and a study of intercultural communicative competence developed as part of service strategies in the Thailand hospitality industry.

As the data in this study were obtained from a sample of Thai hotel workers who currently worked in four- and five-star properties in Samui island, the findings may not be applicable to all hotels in Thailand and their employees. Future research should investigate Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence in different settings to establish the generalizability of the findings. For example, future studies should be conducted in other tourist destinations in Thailand such as Phuket and Chiang Mai, and cross-comparisons might also be considered. In addition, follow-up qualitative interviews might be conducted in the future for a better understanding of Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Rationale and Significance

Representing the largest segment of the hospitality industry in Thailand, the hotel industry is flourishing alongside Thailand's tourism sector. According to the Ministry of Tourism & Sports (2017), tourism receipts of Surat Thani province of which Samui island is part, generated 84,795.95 million Thai Baht representing 4.22 percentage share of the country's tourism receipts from international tourist arrivals in 2017. The hotel occupancy rate in Samui island increased 23% from 57.09 in 2013 to 70.22 in 2017 along with the augmenting number of accommodations, rooms, guest arrivals, and their length of stay (see Table 1.1). Over the past five years (2013 – 2017), the number of tourists in Samui island has increased 33.33% from 1.8 million in 2013 to 2.4 million in 2017 (Ministry of Tourism & Sports, 2017). The international tourist market in Samui island includes a variety of tourists from seven regions: Africa, East Asia, Europe, Oceania, South Asia, The Americas, and the Middle East.

As shown in Table 1.2, the majority of international tourist arrivals to Samui island have continuously been non-English speakers over the past five years. Based on the top 10 international tourist arrivals to Samui island classified by country of residence from 2013 until 2017, there appeared to be only three out of 10 countries of residence where the English language is used: Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States (Ministry of Tourism & Sports, 2017). For instance, the top three international tourist arrivals to Samui island in 2017 were German, Chinese, and East European (Ministry of Tourism & Sports, 2017). Hence, employees in the hospitality and tourism industry with foreign language and communicative skills are in high demand.

Table 1.1

Growth of Accommodations in Samui Island 2013 - 2017

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Number of Accommodation	529	529	556	549	622
Hotel	66	66	81	92	151
Guesthouse	15	15	14	14	17
Resort and other	448	448	461	443	454
Rooms	20,519	20,519	21,587	21,429	22,623
Hotel	3,058	3,058	3,715	4,023	5,046
Guesthouse	332	332	302	302	316
Resort and other	17,129	17,129	17,570	17,104	17,261
Occupancy Rate (%)	57.09	61.69	66.37	68.93	70.22
Hotel	58.84	61.87	65.12	68.47	69.6
Guesthouse	54.71	57.13	63.33	65.49	66.87
Resort and other	57.72	66.07	70.65	72.82	74.19
Guest Arrivals of Accommodation (Person)	1,819,818	2,009,919	2,168,677	2,239,067	2,400,793
Hotel	335,827	354,063	432,247	457,865	576,324
Guesthouse	43,175	45,320	44,281	45,441	47,080
Resort and other	1,440,816	1,610,536	1,692,149	1,735,761	1,777,389
Length of stay (Day)	3.86	3.85	4.01	4.08	4.12
Hotel	3.61	3.71	3.88	4.04	4.09
Guesthouse	3.09	3.08	3.2	3.22	3.29
Resort and other	4.89	4.75	4.94	4.98	4.98
Person/Room (P/R)	1.98	1.93	1.94	1.92	1.92
Hotel	1.93	1.92	1.92	1.84	1.84
Guesthouse	2.04	2.01	2.04	2.02	2.01
Resort and other	1.96	1.86	1.85	1.9	1.9

Note: Adapted from data available at the website of Ministry of Tourism & Sports (2017).

Table 1.2

Top 10 International Tourist Arrivals to Samui Island by Country of Residence 2013 - 2017

Country of Residence	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Germany	203,827	221,696	250,360	282,013	349,158
China	67,000	88,988	128,767	193,394	321,106
East Europe	156,259	162,645	189,945	185,981	229,541
Australia	154,453	161,797	171,382	177,400	180,385
UK	116,529	136,649	154,251	161,699	162,200
France	95,253	100,206	116,909	115,792	100,727
Russia	79,859	87,327	89,815	92,934	97,707
USA	44,574	47,098	51,327	43,829	56,350
Austria	32,309	33,338	38,973	37,736	55,764
Switzerland	25,136	28,290	35,912	45,941	54,410

Note: Adapted from data available at the website of Ministry of Tourism & Sports (2017).

The growth of tourism and international tourist arrivals to Samui island continues to attract both direct and indirect investments to the area. While the direct investments including hotels, restaurants, and attractions create employment opportunities and revenue; the indirect investments such as academic and career training institutions supply workers to the growing demand in the industry. The latter has become imperative due to the need for an educated workforce.

According to the National Statistical Office (2017), the number of employed workers in the Thailand hotel industry increased 111.68% during the past decade from 119,887 in 2006 to 253,771 in 2016 (see Table 1.3). The highest number of employed workers 91,006 or 35.9% was in the Southern provinces of Thailand where the main tourist destinations such as Samui island and Phuket are located, followed by the number of employed workers in the Central provinces

(exclude Bangkok), Bangkok, Northern, and Northeastern provinces, respectively (National Statistical Office, 2017).

Table 1.3

Employed Workers in the Thailand Hotel Industry 2006 - 2016

Year	Number of workers	Δ (%)
2006	119,887	-
2008	122,726	+2.37%
2010	180,431	+47.02%
2012	265,906	+47.37%
2014	244,318	-8.12%
2016	253,771	+3.87%

Note: Adapted from data available at the website of National Statistical Office (2017).

The increasing globalization of world trade has generated interactions between people from different cultural backgrounds over the years. Lustig and Koester (2006) pointed out that intercultural encounters are omnipresent, “they occur within neighborhoods, across national borders, in face-to-face interactions, through mediated channels, in business, in personal relationships, in tourist travel, and in politics” (p.2). Intercultural communicative competence has become necessary in order to live productively in the intercultural environment (Chen & Starosta, 1996).

The concept of intercultural communicative competence has gained attention from several researchers over the decade (Arasaratnam, 2006; Beamer, 1992; Byram, 1997; Chen, 1989, 1990, 1997; Chen & Starosta, 1996; Deardorff, 2006; Fantini, 2007; Imahori & Lanigan, 1989; Lustig & Koester, 2006; Ruben, 1976, 1989; Spitzberg, 1989). In the hospitality and tourism context, past research has alternatively applied the concept of intercultural communicative competence to three

primary approaches to interactions between people from different cultural backgrounds including visitors and the host community, visitors and the local workforce in the industry, and among the workforce from different cultures (Blanton, 1981; Cohen & Cooper, 1986; Evans, 1976; Gannon, 2008; Kriegl, 2000; Leclerc & Martin, 2004; Yu, Weiler, & Ham, 2002).

As the hospitality and tourism industry grows, Thailand, especially its tourist destination such as Samui island must strive to retain its international competitiveness with a supply of internationally and interculturally competent workers. Although Blanton (1981) pointed out that the workforce in the hospitality and tourism industry greatly meets a demand for intercultural understanding and communicative competence in relation to other occupations, it is imperative that the study of workforce's intercultural communicative competence should be persistently conducted for human resources development and managerial implications in the industry.

Objectives of the Study

Objective 1: Examine the degree of intercultural communicative competence of Thai hotel workers operating in upscale hotels in Samui island through self-assessment surveys developed from the scope of Arasaratnam's (2006) model of intercultural communicative competence.

Objective 2: Investigate factors influencing Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence including cultural empathy, experience, interaction involvement, attitude towards other cultures, and motivation.

Objective 3: Synthesize the findings from this research and develop an optimal ICC training platform for both private and public hospitality sectors in Samui island in order to ensure international competitiveness and maximize traditional markets.

Scope of the Study

This project employed a mixed methods approach to examine the degree of intercultural communicative competence of Thai hotel workers operating in upscale hotels in Samui island through self-assessment surveys and develop an optimal ICC training platform for stakeholders in the industry through qualitative interviews with human resource professionals.

To examine the intercultural communicative competence of Thai hotel workers, a survey was conducted in four- and five-star hotels in Samui island as it is generally accepted that hotels in the higher market sectors have offered a variety of full service and high-end facilities on site. Thus, upscale hotels can be an appropriate option to sample for this study due to the fact that hotel workforce operating in luxury hotels has more opportunities to interact with internal and external customers from different cultural backgrounds in relations to lower star hotels.

In 2017, there were 622 accommodations in Samui island listed by the Tourism Ministry of Tourism & Sports; 151, 17, and 454 of those were hotels, guesthouses, resorts and other, respectively. This project employed random sampling; 45 upscale hotels (21 four-star, and 24 five-star hotels) were selected. Participants were management and line-level employees who currently work in any department within those hotels selected to be part of the sample.

The findings from the surveys along with qualitative interviews were synthesized in order to develop an optimal ICC training platform for both private and public hospitality sectors in Samui island. In regard to qualitative interviews, quota sampling was applied to select participants within the following criteria: (a) interview eight subjects, (b) participants must primarily be human resources managers or training managers or any higher position in the human resources

department, (c) participants must be from four- and five-star hotels in Samui island, (d) four out of eight participants must be representatives from an international chain hotel, and (e) four out of eight participants must be representatives from a local chain hotel. Participants who meet the requisite criteria were contacted via telephone for participation in the study. Then, the appointment confirmation email and the interview script were delivered to each participant prior to the interview. Interviews were conducted in the individual offices of the human resources professionals or the hotel lobby area/ hotel restaurants as participants saw fit.

Conceptual Framework

In line with the adapted model of intercultural communicative competence (ICC), eight hypotheses were developed for examining the relationships of its constructs and the influences of intercultural factors on Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence. Specific research question for the current project was "Can the intercultural communicative competence (ICC) model explain and predict Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence?"

As a consequence of reviewing the prior research and literature, Arasaratnam's (2006) model of intercultural communicative competence was adapted and eight hypotheses were tested:

H1: Cultural empathy positively influences Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence.

H2: Cultural empathy positively influences interaction involvement.

H3: Cultural empathy positively influences attitude towards other cultures.

H4: Interaction involvement positively influences Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence.

H5: Experience positively influences attitude towards other cultures.

H6: Attitude towards other cultures positively influences interaction involvement.

H7: Attitude towards other cultures positively influences motivation.

H8: Motivation positively influences Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence.

The following model was tested to assess Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence and investigate factors influencing an individual's intercultural communicative competence in the Thailand hospitality context, a study of upscale hotels in Samui island (see Figure 1.1). Included in the hypothesized ICC model as antecedents were cultural empathy, experience, interaction involvement, attitude, and motivation. The intercultural communicative competence serves as an outcome of intercultural communication.

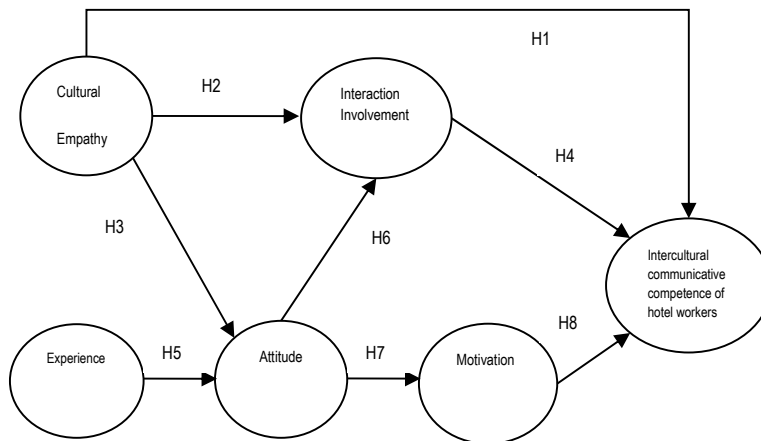


Figure 1.1. Hypothesized Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC).

The purpose of this project was to examine the degree of intercultural communicative competence of Thai hotel workers operating in upscale hotels in Samui island through self-assessment surveys and qualitative interviews with human resources professionals. Findings from this study, together with the body of existing research and literature were synthesized to develop an optimal ICC training platform for both private and public hospitality sectors in Samui island in order to ensure international competitiveness and maximize traditional markets.

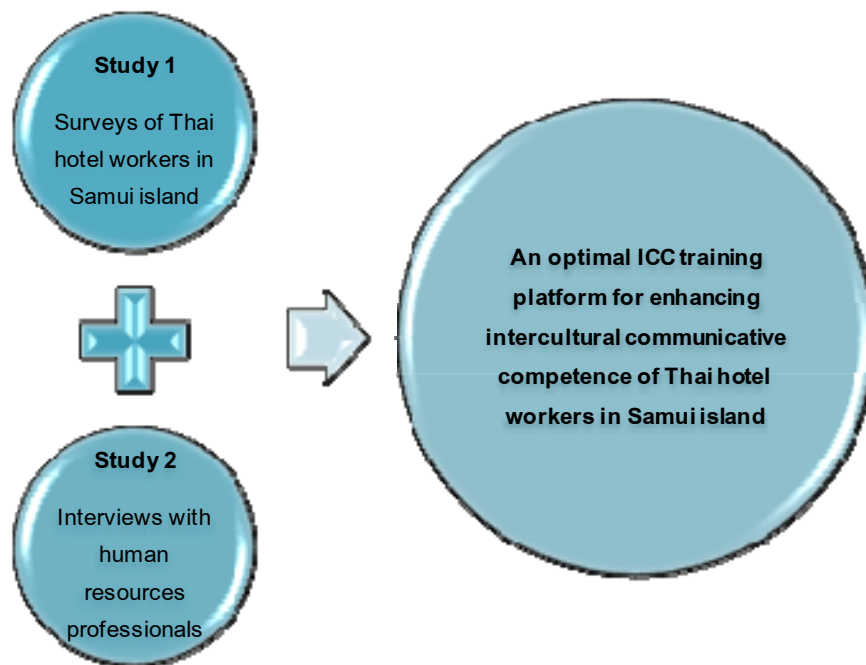


Figure 1.2. Conceptual Framework of the Study.

Expected Benefits

Findings from this project, together with the body of existing research and literature were synthesized to develop an optimal ICC training platform for both private and public hospitality sectors in Samui island in order to ensure international competitiveness and maximize traditional markets. In addition, this study may serve as a gateway for future research related to intercultural

communicative competence in relevant contexts such as a study of intercultural communicative competence of Thai students in hospitality and tourism programs, a study of Thai educators' perspectives on intercultural communicative competence, and a study of intercultural communicative competence developed as part of service strategies in the Thailand hospitality industry.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) is a concept which has been widely used in the fields of psychology, anthropology, cultural studies, linguistics, and communication (Sinicrope, Norris, & Watanabe, 2007). The concept of intercultural communicative competence has gained attention from several researchers such as Arasaratnam (2006); Beamer (1992); Byram (1997); Chen (1989, 1990, 1997); Chen and Starosta (1996); Deardorff (2006); Fantini (2007); Imahori and Lanigan (1989); Lustig and Koester (2006); Ruben (1976, 1989); and Spitzberg (1989).

The literature regards intercultural communicative competence in a similar way to communicative competence in general (Lustig & Koester, 2006; Ruben, 1989; Spitzberg, 1989). However, intercultural communicative competence is more focused on contextual factors in relation to communicative competence. As Beamer (1992) pointed out, social and cultural context must be added to the picture when studying intercultural communication. Chen and Starosta (1996) also suggested that intercultural communicative competence was not only focused on an effective and appropriate interaction between individuals, but also on particular contexts. Thus, intercultural communicative competence can be identified as a context-specific competence (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984).

Definition of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

The concept of intercultural competence was historically developed from research focusing on Western expatriates and their cultural adjustment in the 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s (Sinicrope et al., 2007). For example, Oberg (1960) was one of the earliest researchers who

proposed that people who relocate to another culture go through four phases of cultural adjustment including the honeymoon stage, crisis or culture shock, recovery, and adjustment. According to Oberg (1960), an individual is enthusiastic about the new cultural environment and excited to interact and learn from the locals during the honeymoon stage or the first period after arrival.

The superficial relations with the locals usually last from a few weeks to six months depending on circumstances (Oberg, 1960). The second, crisis or culture shock stage occurs when an individual starts to realize the significant differences between his/her own culture and the host culture and have great difficulty in adjusting to that culture. This stage leads to feelings of frustration, anxiety, and disorientation (Oberg, 1960).

If an individual overcomes the crisis or culture shock stage, he/she will stay and adjust to the next stage. However, if an individual cannot cope with culture shock, he/she will leave before the recovery stage. The third, recovery stage is when an individual starts to gradually recover from the culture shock and develop self-confidence and cultural understanding with time and patience (Oberg, 1960). Cultural adjustment is the final stage where an individual accepts, respects, and appreciates cultural differences between his/her own culture and the host culture (Oberg, 1960). Later studies that have focused on expatriates and employed Oberg's (1960) four phases of cultural adjustment include studies by Adler (1975); Anderson (1971); and Hawes and Kealey (1981).

In the late 1970s and 1980s, the intercultural competence research expanded to broader contexts including international business, cross-cultural training, and internalization of education (Sinicrope et al., 2007). During these formative years, surveys, open-ended interviews, and self-

assessment of individuals' attitudes, personalities, values, and motives were used in research on intercultural competence. The purpose and focus of past research using these instruments had four main goals: "(a) to explain overseas failure, (b) to predict overseas success, (c) to develop personnel selection strategies, and (d) to design, implement and test sojourner training and preparation methodologies" (Ruben, 1989, p. 230). At present, the scope of research on intercultural competence has expanded to more complex behavioral self-assessments and performance assessments. Although the concept of intercultural competence has gained ongoing attention from many researchers, a multiplicity of frameworks and approaches to defining and assessing intercultural competence persists today (Sinicrope et al., 2007).

The use of alternative terms for discussing intercultural competence was one of many complexities which caused confusion among researchers over the past decade. Included in these alternatives were cross-cultural communication, cultural competence, international competence, intercultural sensitivity, and multicultural competence. Sinicrope et al. (2007) pointed out that these terms were alternatively used in regard to the approach and the purpose of the study in different contexts. For example, intercultural communication focuses on interactions among people from different cultures, whereas cross-cultural communication concentrates more on a comparison of interactions among people from the same culture to those from another culture (Lustig & Koester, 2006).

One of the key confusions among past researchers was the definition and concept of intercultural awareness, intercultural sensitivity, and intercultural communicative competence (Chen, 1997). In principal, there are three main perspectives of intercultural communication including the

cognitive, affective, and behavioral approach. As comprehensively explained by Chen (1997), intercultural awareness represents a cognitive aspect of intercultural interaction, whereas intercultural sensitivity is related to the emotional and affective aspect, and intercultural communicative competence is concerned with behavioral outcomes. In other words, intercultural awareness (cognitive) represents a foundation of intercultural sensitivity (affective) which then predisposes an individual to intercultural communicative competence (behavioral) (Chen, 1997).

Thus, intercultural sensitivity can be defined as “an individual’s ability to develop a positive emotion towards understanding and appreciating cultural differences that promotes an appropriate and effective behavior in intercultural communication” (Chen, 1997, p. 5). Intercultural communicative competence refers to “a complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself” (Fantini, 2007, p. 9). In his study, Fantini (2007) regarded four constructs of intercultural communicative competence (cultural knowledge, skills, attitude towards other cultures, and cultural awareness) as a complex of abilities that an individual would need during intercultural encounters.

In summary, intercultural communicative competence as the behavioral outcome is formed by cognitive intercultural understanding and affective intercultural sensitivity. The concepts of intercultural awareness, intercultural sensitivity, and intercultural communicative competence are separate but represent a reciprocal relationship that lead an individual to effective and appropriate intercultural interactions (Chen, 1997). Therefore, the definition of intercultural communicative competence in the current study was based on the study by Fantini (2007) and described as “a

complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself" (p. 9).

Research in Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

Most past research has aimed to investigate intercultural communicative competence as the behavioral outcome of effective and appropriate intercultural interaction from different perspectives and contexts (Chen, 1997; Deardorff, 2006; Fantini, 2007; Lustig & Koester, 2006; Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984; Spitzberg & Hecht, 1984). While effectiveness refers to goal attainment such as satisfaction with the interactional performance or communication with others, appropriateness is pertinent to context or the proper interactional performance expected to be used in a given context (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984).

According to Spitzberg and Cupach (1984), effectiveness and appropriateness are regarded as satisfactory results of intercultural interaction and determinants of intercultural communicative competence. In an early study, Spitzberg and Cupach (1984) suggested that motivation, knowledge, and skills are three main constructs facilitating an individual's intercultural communicative competence. Spitzberg and Cupach (1984) viewed motivation as a factor related to perceived rewards and desired goals of communicating with others. An individual can be motivated to approach or avoid an interaction because of what he/she anticipated to obtain at the end of the interaction. For example, an individual would be likely to engage in the communication if he/she expected the conversation to be enjoyable. On the other hand, if an individual perceived that the other person would not be enjoyable or worthwhile to talk to, he/she would be likely to avoid the interaction.

Knowledge refers to an individual's state of knowing or understanding of context, other, and topics (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984). The more knowledgeable an individual is about the context, the other person, and the topics discussed, the more likely this individual is to interact competently in the communication. Lastly, Spitzberg and Cupach (1984) viewed skills as four separate components which are not entirely independent of one another: (a) interaction management (e.g., topic initiation, verbal fluency), (b) social anxiety (e.g., eye contact avoidance, rapid speaking), (c) expressiveness (e.g., expressing opinions, giving clarification), and (d) other orientation (e.g., attention to other(s) during the interaction, concern about other's feeling).

In line with the study by Spitzberg and Cupach (1984), Spitzberg and Hecht (1984) added satisfaction as an additional construct of the earlier study. In their study of relational competence, Spitzberg and Hecht (1984) viewed self and other's satisfaction as an outcome of appropriate and effective communication.

After Spitzberg and Cupach's (1984) study, Imahori and Lanigan (1989) proposed a model explaining the dynamic intercultural communication between a sojourner and a host national. They proposed that intercultural communicative competence is the appropriate degree of motivation, knowledge, and skills of both the sojourner and the host-national in regard to their interaction which lead to an effective relational outcome (Imahori & Lanigan, 1989). Based on the model, a sojourner and a host national are mirror-image interlocutors and both interact with each other in regard to one's motivation, knowledge, skills, experiences, and goals. In a satisfactory condition that either or both sojourner and host-national are positively motivated, interculturally knowledgeable, skilled, and goal driven towards worthwhile experiences, a variety of outcomes

are likely to be achieved such as intercultural effectiveness, communication effectiveness, intimacy, or satisfaction (Imahori & Lanigan, 1989).

In another early study Chen (1989) proposed extended constructs of intercultural communicative competence. The study aimed to investigate four constructs of intercultural communicative competence including personal attributes, communication skills, psychological adaptation, and cultural awareness among international students in a Midwestern university in the United States. International students were asked to assess themselves on four constructs of intercultural communicative competence. The results showed that there were significant relationships among measures of (a) personal attributes, communication skills, and psychological adaptation, and (b) communication skills and cultural awareness (Chen, 1989). In other words, an individual with a well-integrated personality will likely have a high level of communication skills and a low degree of psychological difficulty in adapting to other cultures. The significant relationship between communication skills and cultural awareness indicated in this study suggests that an individual's communication skills (e.g., linguistic skills, flexibility, interaction management, and social skills) can support the awareness of other cultures (Chen, 1989).

In an attempt to extend constructs of intercultural communicative competence, Wiseman et al. (1989) also proposed two predictors of intercultural communicative competence. Path analysis was employed to investigate the relationship between three dimensions of intercultural communicative competence (cultural-specific understanding, cultural-general understanding, and impression of the other culture), and four predictors (knowledge of the other culture, attitude towards the other culture, ethnocentrism, and perceived social distance from the other culture)

within the context of Japanese and North American students (Wiseman et al., 1989). The study revealed that ethnocentrism was the most statistically significant predictor of intercultural communicative competence followed by social distance, knowledge of the other culture, and attitude towards the other culture, respectively. In other words, the more ethnocentric an individual was, the less understanding of the American or Japanese culture. In addition, the results also showed that an individual's attitude and knowledge of the other culture had varying relationships with the dimensions of intercultural communicative competence (Wiseman et al., 1989).

Byram (1997) was also one of the earliest researchers who extended constructs and developed models of intercultural competence in the context of foreign language education. In his model, Byram (1997) proposed five constructs of intercultural competence: (a) attitude (*savoir être*), (b) knowledge (*savoirs*), (c) skills of interpreting and relating (*savoir comprendre*), (d) skills of discovery and interaction (*savoir apprendre*), and (e) critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*). As defined by Byram (1997), attitude refers to the ability to relate one's self and value others, and includes "curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own" (p. 91). Knowledge relates to the state of knowing the rules for individual and social interaction, which consists of knowing social groups and their practices, both in one's culture and in the other culture (Byram, 1997). Skills of interpreting and relating refer to an individual's ability to interpret, explain, and relate events from another culture to one's own culture. Skills of discovery and interaction allow an individual to acquire "new knowledge of culture and cultural practices" (Byram, 1997, p. 98) including the capacity to use existing knowledge, attitudes, and

skills in intercultural communication. Lastly, critical cultural awareness relates to an individual's ability to evaluate his/her own culture in comparison with other cultures from a critical perspective (Byram, 1997).

According to Byram (2009), the original model proposed that teachers need to include a cultural dimension in their teaching objectives and develop these constructs of intercultural communicative competence in their students in order to prepare them for an intercultural community and globalization. However, without specifying relations among the constructs, this model serves as a guide for teaching in foreign language education rather than a structural model (Byram, 2009).

Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven (2000) also expanded the scope of intercultural study by developing the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ) as an instrument to measure students' intercultural effectiveness. In their study, seven factors influencing the success of intercultural interaction were proposed: (a) cultural empathy ("the ability to empathize with the feelings, thoughts, and behaviors of members from different cultural groups"), (b) open-mindedness ("an open and unprejudiced attitude towards out-group members and towards different cultural norms and values"), (c) emotional stability ("the tendency to remain calm in stressful situations versus a tendency to show strong emotional reactions under stressful circumstances"), (d) orientation to action ("the courage to take action or to make things happen"), (e) adventurousness/curiosity ("the tendency to actively search and explore new situations and to regard them as a challenge"), (f) flexibility ("the ability to learn from mistakes and adjustment of behavior whenever it is required"), and (g) extraversion ("the tendency to stand out in a different culture") (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven,

2000, p. 293-295). Extending the scope from Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven's (2000) original study, the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ) has been applied by many researchers to explain and predict intercultural effectiveness in different intercultural contexts (e.g., Arasaratnam, 2006; Van der Zee, & Brinkmann, 2004; Van der Zee, Zaal, & Piekstra, 2003; Van Oudenhoven, & Van der Zee, 2002).

In a more recent study, Deardorff (2006) employed a mix of quantitative and qualitative Delphi methods to document consensus among top intercultural scholars on the identification and assessment of intercultural competence. The process model of intercultural competence was developed from the results of this study. Deardorff (2006) proposed that intercultural competence development is an ongoing process starting from an individual's attitude towards other cultures to knowledge and intercultural skills. This process predicts appropriate and effective outcomes at both the personal level (cultural adaptability, flexibility, ethnorelative view, empathy) and interpersonal level (interaction with people from different cultures) (Deardorff, 2006).

As can be seen from past research, a number of constructs essential to intercultural communicative competence have been developed by researchers from different disciplines. The results from past research not only enhance the variation in the application of constructs across investigations on intercultural communicative competence, but also broaden the perspectives on intercultural literature. Although there appears to be some understanding that the challenge of intercultural research is to investigate significant relationships among various dimensions of intercultural communicative competence, it is important to note that there has

been no consensus on the specific constructs associated with an individual's intercultural communicative competence (Cegala, 1981; Deardorff, 2006).

ICC in the Hospitality and Tourism context

In the hospitality and tourism context, the concept of intercultural communicative competence was examined in the research of Blanton (1981); Cohen and Cooper (1986); Evans (1976); Gannon (2008); Kriegl (2000); Leclerc and Martin (2004); and Yu, Weiler, and Ham (2002). Most past research has alternatively involved three main approaches to interactions and encounters between people from different cultures including visitors and the host community, visitors and local workforce in the industry, and among the workforce from different cultures.

According to Evans (1976), there were four factors affecting interactions between visitors and the host community: (a) temporal, (b) spatial, (c) communication, and (d) cultural elements. The length of stay of visitors in the host community can play an important role in effective and appropriate interactions between visitors and the host community. The longer they stay, the more opportunity and desire for interactions (Evans, 1976). For example, visitors who retire and spend their vacation for a long period of time in a particular foreign culture tend to learn enough about their new environment and interact with the members of the host community in a more understanding way. In terms of spatial factors, Evans (1976) suggested that physical and social space can affect interactions between visitors and the host community. That is, visitors may be dissociated and stay in their own physical space, or they may be welcome to share social space with the host community, depending on circumstances throughout their stay (Evans, 1976).

Lastly, linguistic and cultural factors can play a vital role in facilitating interactions between visitors and the host community. Language barriers can generate misunderstandings, negative attitude towards other cultures, and unpleasant experiences with each other during the encounters (Evans, 1976). Although Cohen and Cooper (1986) viewed interactions between visitors and members of the host community as temporary and superficial, Evans (1976) argued that they could be intensified by empathy and language ability. In addition, Evans (1976) pointed out that “individual characteristics such as adaptability, openness, and a flexible approach to life promote more effective empathetic interaction” between visitors and the host community (p. 193).

Intercultural interactions between visitors and the local workforce in the hospitality and tourism industry have also gained the attention from several researchers over the years. For example, Cohen and Cooper (1986) regarded interactions between visitors and the local workforce in the industry as asymmetry encounters. In other words, the local workforce acts as a representative of the host community and has permanent contact with tourists who temporarily visit the location (Cohen & Cooper, 1986). Thus, the local workforce in the industry has more opportunity and desire to learn the language and culture of visitors than the other way around. In addition, revenues from operating sectors of the hospitality and tourism industry can be a great incentive for the local workforce in the industry to improve their linguistic and cultural competence (Cohen & Cooper, 1986).

The nature of the hospitality and tourism industry necessitates the interactions of visitors and employees in the industry both directly and indirectly, thus highlighting the importance of

communication among people from different cultural backgrounds. According to Blanton (1981), there is a greater demand in the hospitality and tourism industry for intercultural understanding and communicative competence in relation to other occupations. For example, a tour guide is perceived as one of the primary positions to mediate between visitors and the host community by representing the host culture to visitors.

Yu, Weiler, and Ham (2002) extended the intercultural communication and mediation theory to assess Chinese tour guides' intercultural communicative competence. In their study, Yu et al. (2002) suggested that tour guide's knowledge, attitude, and social and interpersonal communication skills were three key factors affecting the guide's intercultural communicative competence. Apart from knowledge of sites visited, the tour guide must possess knowledge of culture and represent appropriately and effectively as an intermediary between visitors and local people. According to Yu et al. (2002), the culturally knowledgeable tour guide will assist tourists in gaining an accurate understanding of that cultural community and host cultures. In addition, the tour guide's positive attitude towards his/her own culture and visitors' culture, and interpersonal communication skills to mediate encounters between visitors and local people will support the tour guide's intercultural communicative competence (Yu et al., 2002).

Leclerc and Martin (2004) also examined the importance of intercultural communicative competence of tour guides perceived by tourists visiting the Southwestern United States from France, Germany, and the United States. In their study, Leclerc and Martin (2004) asked cross-national tourists to rate their perceptions of the importance of four nonverbal dimensions (approachability, poise, attentiveness, and touch), and three verbal dimensions (language

adaptability, interpersonal inclusion, and assertiveness) of tour guide's intercultural communicative competence.

According to Leclerc and Martin (2004), approachability refers to the state of being friendly and approachable such as smiling, laughing, and showing pleasant facial expressions, whereas poise includes an individual's pleasant appearance, appropriate distance and posture. Attentiveness refers to nonverbal communication through gestures such as making eye contact, nodding, and paying close attention, whereas touch includes handshaking, talking, and touching while interacting (Leclerc & Martin, 2004). Included in the three verbal dimensions were language adaptability ("use appropriate grammar, present ideas clearly, choose words carefully, speak clearly, avoid slang"), interpersonal inclusion ("invite other to do something, ask about the other person, compliment the other person, share information about self"), and assertiveness ("use impressive words, agree, talk a lot") (Leclerc & Martin, 2004, p. 188).

In general the results showed that the American tourists perceived nonverbal and verbal dimensions of a tour guide's intercultural communicative competence as more important assets than the European tourists. Approachability was rated as the most important nonverbal dimension of a tour guide's intercultural communicative competence by the American and French tourists, whereas German tourists perceived attentiveness as the most important nonverbal communication skills. For the verbal dimension, language adaptability was perceived as the most important competence among the three nationality groups (Leclerc & Martin, 2004). In summary, the findings of the study showed that there were statistically significant differences

in the perceptions of intercultural communicative competence of tour guides among the American and European tourists or cross-national tourists.

Apart from interactions with visitors, employees in the hospitality and tourism industry also interact with colleagues from different cultures. As hotels are increasingly branded and managed by global hotel management companies, workplace diversity has become a major issue in the hotel industry (Anklin, 2007). Most past research has pointed out that many hotel companies try to make an effort to address the diversity issue for three main reasons: demographic changes, globalization, and marketing. Since the workforce is increasingly more diverse, the need for companies to reflect demographic changes is of vital importance. In terms of globalization, workplace diversity is a critical dimension for those hotel companies seeking to establish themselves as global players. In addition, the major hotel companies have recognized that they can better serve customers in various markets by generating workforce diversity (Pimapunsi, 2008). For instance, InterContinental Hotels Group benefits from workforce diversity when approximately 22,000 people working for the group can speak a combined 47 languages and can serve non-English speaking guests in their native language when needed (Anklin, 2007).

According to DiversityInc (2018), three major hospitality companies; Marriott International, Hilton, and Aramark, were ranked 2nd, 10th, and 41st in the world's top 50 diversity companies, respectively. Large hotel companies such as Marriott International have more than 7,000 lodging properties worldwide under 30 brands across 130 countries and territories (Marriott International, 2018). As described in its diversity and inclusion corporate fact sheet,

“We (Marriott) believe our strength lies in our ability to embrace differences and create opportunities for all employees, guests, owners and franchisees, and suppliers” (Marriott International, 2018).

Similarly, Hilton is a global organization that is committed to diversity as its core value. Given the fact that 69% of its current employees are racial or ethnic minorities, 53% are women, 5% identified as LGBT, and 4% have a disability; Hilton has continued to develop its Team Member Resource Groups (TMRGs) which support their growing career paths and enable members to exchange feedback on their insights and past experiences with high-level executives, as a way of guaranteeing voices are heard (Slovak, 2018).

Over the years, many hotel companies have realized that multiple benefits of workplace diversity such as competitive advantage, effective knowledge transfer, and effective productivity can be achieved by managing diversity wisely. Diversity in the workforce can help companies to develop their capability of understanding customers' needs and engaging in long-term business relations with them. A diverse collection of skills and experiences such as language and cultural understanding allows a company to provide quality service to guests on a global level.

Kriegl (2000) also pointed out that the ability to communicate with foreign guests along with cultural sensitivity is an asset to international hospitality workers. In Kriegl's (2000) study, cultural sensitivity was perceived by hotel managers working outside the United States as the most important international management skill, whereas intercultural competence was ranked 6th out of 13 international management skills. In order these skills were cultural sensitivity, interpersonal skills, managerial flexibility, adaptive leadership, international motivation,

intercultural competence, ability to work with limited resources, understanding of international business, interest in working abroad, international etiquette, stress management, functional skills, and technical skills (Kriegl, 2000).

Thus, intercultural communicative competence of employees in the hotel sector will not only satisfy the needs of guests, but it will also build effective and pleasant relationships with colleagues from different cultures. Although past research has shown that language ability is important for hospitality employees, it does not always generate intercultural competence.

As Beamer (1992) pointed out, intercultural communicative competence does not automatically come with linguistic skill. To be interculturally competent also requires other elements such as cultural knowledge, attitude towards other cultures, and personal and professional experiences in different cultural settings.

Arasaratnam's (2006) Model of ICC

Theoretical perspectives for this project were based on Arasaratnam's (2006) model of intercultural communicative competence. In 2006, Arasaratnam proposed a model derived in part from an earlier study Arasaratnam and Doerfel (2005) where they conducted qualitative interviews with participants who had interactions with people from different cultures on a regular basis. Five variables emerging from the results of word cluster analysis in the Arasaratnam and Doerfel's (2005) study included empathy, motivation, attitude towards other cultures, experiences, and listening.

Arasaratnam (2006) employed five variables derived from the results of the previous study (Arasaratnam & Doerfel, 2005) to develop and test a new model of intercultural

communicative competence. In this study, Arasaratnam (2006) used a quantitative survey research method and path analysis to investigate the relationships among five constructs associated with an individual's intercultural communicative competence.

In regard to the model, Arasaratnam (2006) proposed the following positive relationships between the constructs: (a) cultural empathy and interaction involvement, (b) cultural empathy and attitude towards other cultures, (c) attitude towards other cultures and interaction involvement, (d) experience and attitude towards other cultures, (e) experience and motivation, (f) attitude towards other cultures and motivation, (g) motivation and intercultural communicative competence, (h) interaction involvement and intercultural communicative competence.

In addition, Arasaratnam (2006) also suggested that a direct relationship between cultural empathy and intercultural communicative competence exists within intercultural communication. In other words, an individual with a high degree of cultural empathy possesses the ability to understand and relate oneself to the other during the intercultural interaction which then leads to intercultural communicative competence as the behavioral outcome.

In summary, Arasaratnam (2006) proposed that cultural empathy generates a direct effect on an individual's intercultural communicative competence and indirect effects through interaction involvement, attitude towards other cultures, and motivation, which are also influenced by experience. Cultural empathy, attitude towards other cultures, and experience are predicted to influence an individual's motivation to competently communicate with people from other cultures, which then leads to intercultural communicative competence.

Given that its constructs can likely be related to the hospitality and tourism context, Arasaratnam's (2006) five original constructs including cultural empathy, experience, interaction involvement, attitude towards other cultures, and motivation have high potential for influencing an individual's intercultural communicative competence in the hospitality context. For instance, cultural empathy refers to the ability to relate oneself to other's view, feelings, and/or experiences during the intercultural interaction (Ruben, 1976). From a hospitality service perspective, workforce in the industry is required to possess this ability in order to serve and satisfy the needs of visitors from different cultures (Blanton, 1981). In addition, empathy was also included in five dimensions of service quality along with tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, and assurance (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988).

Cultural empathy. According to Spitzberg and Cupach (1984), empathy refers to the ability to engage in interactive behavior both cognitively and emotionally. An empathic person tends to be more selfless and attentive to other's emotions and reactions (Davis, 1983).

In intercultural literature, empathy has been addressed as a key component for intercultural sensitivity and intercultural communicative competence (Bennett, 1986; Chen, 1997; Chen & Starosta, 1996). In his study, Ruben (1976) described cultural empathy as the ability to relate oneself to other's views, feelings, and/or experiences during the intercultural interaction. As a result, cultural empathy encourages an individual to express understanding and consideration through his/her active listening and verbal language with communication counterparts (Chen, 1997). The ability to put oneself in another's shoes, as Ruben (1976) put it,

is a positive attribute and will predispose an individual to intercultural communicative competence.

From a hospitality service perspective, serving and satisfying the needs of visitors and guests from different cultures require an empathic understanding based on both personal and professional experiences (Blanton, 1981). Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) also included empathy in five dimensions of service quality along with tangibles (“physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of personnel”), reliability (“ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately”), responsiveness (“willingness to help customers and provide prompt service”), and assurance (“knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence”) (p. 23).

Experience. Based on Bandura’s (1977) self-efficacy theory, personal experience was a foundation of an individual’s performance accomplishment which represented one of the four factors influencing self-efficacy along with vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and psychological states. Bandura (1977) suggested that positive experiences in the past helped an individual to gain confidence and motivation to engage in similar interactions.

In the intercultural context, experience refers to an individual’s past experience in intercultural settings such as living abroad, studying abroad, training in intercultural communication, and/or having relationship with people from other cultures (Arasaratnam, 2006). Imahori and Lanigan (1989) pointed out that past experience in intercultural interaction was not only a foundation of an individual’s skills and motivation, but also of their knowledge of appropriate behaviors during encounters with people from different cultures.

In Arasaratnam's (2006) study, the results revealed that past experience in intercultural encounters generates indirect effects on an individual's intercultural communicative competence through attitude towards other cultures and motivation to engage in intercultural communication.

Interaction involvement. Interaction involvement refers to the ability to perceive, respond, and focus on the topic discussed during the interaction with communication counterparts (Cegala, 1981). According to Cegala (1981), interaction involvement consists of three dimensions: (a) perceptiveness (ability to process the meaning of interaction), (b) responsiveness (ability to handle the communication), and (c) attentiveness (ability to concentrate on the topic and contents of communication).

The most ideal condition of interaction involvement occurs when an individual possesses high degrees of these three dimensions which help an individual to engage in an intercultural interaction effectively and appropriately (Chen, 1997). In addition, interaction involvement is relevant to an individual's notion of self-consciousness and self-reward (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984). In other words, an individual with a high level of interaction involvement tends to handle the conversation so confidently and satisfyingly during the intercultural interaction that he/she anticipates the next encounters.

Attitude. Attitude towards other cultures refers to perceptions and feelings that an individual holds towards other cultures and their members (Wiseman, Hammer, & Nishida, 1989). According to Gudykunst, Wiseman, and Hammer (1977), attitude towards other cultures consists of three interrelated components: (a) cognitive, (b) affective, and (c) conative.

The cognitive component relates to an individual's view on other cultures and their people, whereas the affective and conative components relate to an individual's emotional perception and behavior towards other cultures and their people, respectively (Gudykunst et al., 1977). Furthermore, attitude towards other cultures can be viewed as an individual's acceptance, appreciation, and respect for similarities and differences among cultures (Fritz, Mollenberg, & Chen, 2000). In Morgan and Arasaratnam's (2003) study, a positive attitude towards other cultures and their members was described as a key variable in predicting effective intercultural communication.

Motivation. Motivation refers to an individual's desire to take part in intercultural communication with the aim of understanding and gaining knowledge of other cultures and their members (Arasaratnam, 2006). Specifically, motivation is defined as "the set of feelings, intentions, needs, and drives associated with the anticipation of or actual engagement in intercultural communication" (Wiseman, 2003, p. 195).

According to Gardner (2001), motivation consists of three key elements: (a) effort, (b) enjoyment, and (c) intention. In other words, a motivated individual tends to make an effort to learn the language, and enjoys being a part of the cultural community in which the language is used with the intention of achieving intercultural communication effectively and appropriately. Thus, these three elements assist in differentiating between a high motivated and low motivated individual (Gardner, 2001).

Intercultural communicative competence. Defined by Fantini (2007), intercultural communicative competence is "a complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and

appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself" (p. 9). Lustig and Koester (2006) suggested that an interculturally competent individual possesses the ability to apply and integrate a wide range of culture-general knowledge into their behavioral performance during the intercultural interaction. An individual with intercultural communicative competence will also be able to adapt oneself and react effectively and appropriately to different patterns of intercultural communication (Lustig & Koester, 2006).

In Arasaratnam's (2006) original model, intercultural communicative competence was treated as the dependent variable and identified as an effective and appropriate behavioral outcome of intercultural communication. For the context of this study, the intercultural communicative competence construct aimed to measure Thai hotel workers' ability to integrate their culture-general knowledge into their behavioral performance during their intercultural communication with people from different cultures in the hospitality context.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed methods approach to examine the degree of intercultural communicative competence of Thai hotel workers operating in upscale hotels in Samui island through self-assessment surveys and develop an optimal ICC training platform for stakeholders in the industry through qualitative interviews with human resources professionals. As Deardorff (2006) pointed out, the most effective way of examining the extent of intercultural communicative competence is to apply a blend of quantitative and qualitative approaches including survey, observation, in-depth interview, and assessment by self and others. Accordingly, this research employed mixed methods and the objectives of the study were resolved through two approaches as follows:

Table 3.1

Research Plan and Methodology

Objectives	Methodology	Research Activities	Sample
1. Examine the degree of intercultural communicative competence of Thai hotel workers operating in upscale hotels in Samui island	- Self-assessment surveys (developed from the scope of Arasaratnam's (2006) model of ICC)	1. Develop list of upscale hotels in Samui island	- Thai hotel workers who currently work in any department within hotels selected to be part of the sample
2. Investigate factors influencing Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence including cultural empathy, experience, interaction involvement, attitude towards other cultures, and motivation		2. Pre-test and Pilot study 3. Revise the original research instrument 4. Random sampling (45 upscale hotels in Samui island) 5. Contact/ invite hotels for participation in the study 6. Distribute surveys to hotel workers	

Table 3.1 (continued)

Research Plan and Methodology

Objectives	Methodology	Research Activities	Sample
3. Synthesize the findings from this research and develop an optimal ICC training platform for both private and public hospitality sectors in Samui island in order to ensure international competitiveness and maximize traditional markets	- Self-assessment surveys (developed from the scope of Arasaratnam's (2006) model of ICC) - Qualitative interviews with human resources professionals	7. Data collection 8. Data analysis 9. Qualitative interviews with human resource professionals 10. Synthesize the findings from this study 11. Develop an optimal ICC training platform for enhancing intercultural communicative competence of Thai hotel workers in Samui island 12. Publish the study	- Thai hotel workers who currently work in any department within hotels selected to be part of the sample - 8 human resources professionals from upscale hotels in Samui island (Quota sampling: 4 participants from an international chain hotel/ 4 participants from a local chain hotel)

Quantitative Approach – Survey of Thai Hotel Workers

This project applied a survey research method which was conducted with Thai hotel workers operating in upscale hotels in Samui island. The objectives of this approach was twofold:

(a) to examine the Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence through self-assessment surveys, and (b) to investigate factors influencing Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence including cultural empathy, experience, interaction involvement, attitude towards other cultures, and motivation.

Sample selection. It is generally accepted that hotels in the higher market sectors have offered a variety of full service and high-end facilities on site. Hence, upscale hotels can be an

appropriate selection of sample for this study due to the fact that hotel workforce operating in luxury hotels has more opportunities to interact with internal and external customers from different cultural backgrounds in relations to lower star hotels.

In 2017, there were 622 accommodations in Samui island listed by the Ministry of Tourism & Sports; 151, 17, and 454 of those were hotels, guesthouses, resorts and other, respectively. This study employed random sampling; 45 upscale hotels (21 four-star, and 24 five-star hotels) were selected. Participants were management and line-level employees who currently work in any department within those hotels selected to be part of the sample.

According to Gagné and Hancock (2006), models applied larger samples ($N \geq 250$), with more indicators per factor, and with larger factor loadings are more likely to converge properly. As this study employed a variety of statistical analyses including data screening, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and structural equation modeling (SEM) to test and validate the adequacy of ICC model in investigating factors influencing Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence, 500 responses were initiatively expected for securing a subsample after data screening and prior to model testing.

Research model. The proposed model in the current research was adapted from Arasaratnam's (2006) Intercultural Communicative Competence model which was comprised of six constructs: (a) cultural empathy, (b) experience, (c) interaction involvement, (d) attitude, (e) motivation, and (f) intercultural communicative competence. In Arasaratnam's (2006) original intercultural communicative competence model, cultural empathy is predisposed to interaction involvement and attitude towards other cultures which are favorable for intercultural communication.

Positive relationships between cultural empathy and interaction involvement, and cultural empathy and attitude towards other cultures were addressed in the original model. Experiences in different cultural settings such as living abroad, studying abroad, training in intercultural communication, and/or interacting with people from other cultures on a regular basis lead to positive attitude towards other cultures, which then direct to motivation to engage in intercultural communication. These experiences serve as a fundamental contributor to an individual's intercultural communicative competence. In addition, Arasaratnam's (2006) study reveals a direct positive relationship between cultural empathy and an individual's intercultural communicative competence. This explained that an individual with high level of cultural empathy who has the ability to understand the feelings and problems of people from different cultures will likely be interculturally competent.

As illustrated in Figure 3.1, the solid lines indicate positive serial relationships among the intercultural communicative competence constructs. This model was tested to assess Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence and investigate factors influencing an individual's intercultural communicative competence in the Thailand hospitality context. Included in the proposed ICC model as antecedents are cultural empathy, experience, interaction involvement, attitude, and motivation. The intercultural communicative competence serves as an outcome of intercultural communication.

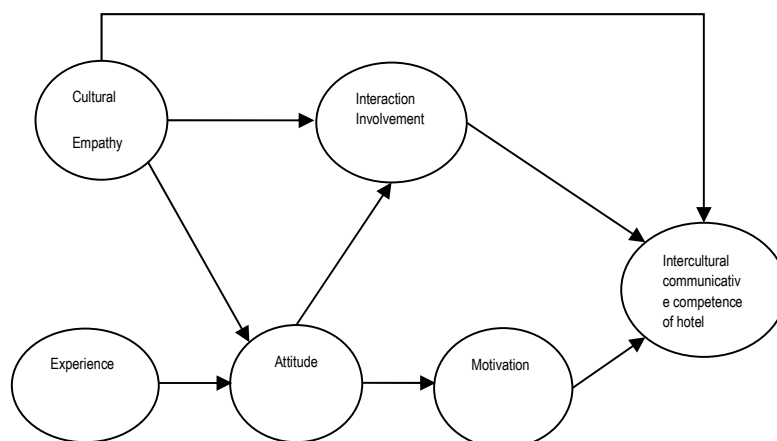


Figure 3.1. Proposed Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC).

Research instrument development. The bilingual questionnaire in Thai and English created for this study consisted of four sections: (a) foreign language self-assessment, (b) the assessment of proposed constructs predisposing to intercultural communicative competence within the hospitality context, (c) demographics, and (d) organizational characteristics (see Appendix B).

As part of the communicative competence, questions regarding foreign language skills were asked in the first section focusing on respondent's proficiency, use of foreign language skills at work, and motivation for studying a foreign language besides English. The second section of the survey contained 35 Likert-scale statements (1-5 rating), with 1 representing strongly disagree and 5 representing strongly agree. At the end of this section, experience scale was measured applying 10 yes/no statements. The third section of the survey contained basic demographic questions regarding age, gender, years in the industry, years in the position, and educational background. Hotel size, rating, number of employees working in the hotel, and hotel ownership were identified

as key organizational characteristics in the last section of the questionnaire for further cross-comparison.

Arasaratnam's (2006) study of intercultural communicative competence model along with past researches in the intercultural literature (Fritz et al, 2000; Gardner, 2010; Richards & Franco, 2006; Van der Zee et al., 2003) served as the foundation for this study and was adapted into a 45-items assessing (a) cultural empathy (seven items), (b) interaction involvement (five items), (c) attitude (seven items), (d) motivation (five items), (e) intercultural communicative competence (11 items), and (f) experience (10 items) within the hospitality and tourism context. Also included were 10 and four items pertaining to the demographic and organizational profile, respectively.

Cultural empathy was measured by seven items adapted from the study by Van der Zee et al. (2003). Included in this scale were the questions pertaining to an individual's ability to relate oneself to the perspectives, feelings, and/or experiential encounters with people from different cultures. Some of the wording was changed for the context in the current study. For example, the word "people" was replaced with the words "hotel guests" and "colleagues" in the statements such as: "I attempt to understand by imagining the perspectives of my colleagues from different cultures," "I accept that hotel guests from different cultures can react differently," and "I notice when hotel guests from different cultures are in trouble."

The five-item interaction involvement scale was adapted from the study by Fritz et al. (2000) to examine Thai hotel workers' ability to interact with hotel guests and their colleagues. Included in this scale were statements pertaining to satisfaction, confidence, and responsiveness while interacting with hotel guests and colleagues from different cultures. For example, the

statements “I enjoy interacting with hotel guests from different cultures,” and “I am confident interacting with hotel guests from different cultures” were addressed in this scale.

The seven-item attitude scale was also adapted from the study by Fritz et al. (2000) to assess Thai hotel workers’ attitude towards other cultures. Included in this scale were statements relating to an individual’s acceptance, appreciation, and respect for similarities and differences among cultures. For example, the statements “I respect the values of people from different cultures,” “I appreciate the language(s) of the different culture(s)”, and “I accept the similarities and/or differences among cultures” were posted in this scale.

The five-item motivation scale was adapted from Gardner’s (2010) Attitude Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) to assess Thai hotel workers’ motivation to engage in intercultural communication. Included in this scale were statements pertaining to self-effort, intention, and enjoyment from communicating and understanding hotel guests and colleagues from different cultures.

Intercultural communicative competence was assessed by 11 items adapted from the study by Richards and Franco (2006). The statements relating to intercultural knowledge and foreign language skills outcomes such as “I demonstrate knowledge of other cultures,” “I understand when native speakers speak their language at a normal speed,” and “I can understand the foreign language when spoken about a variety of topics within the hospitality and tourism context” were included in this scale. The intercultural communicative competence scale in this study aimed to assess Thai hotel workers’ ability to integrate their culture-general knowledge into their behavioral performance during the intercultural encounter with people from different cultures in the hospitality context.

The 10-item experience scale was adapted from the Arasaratnam's (2006) study of intercultural communicative competence model. The yes/no statements pertaining to experiences in intercultural settings such as living abroad, studying abroad, training in intercultural communication, and/or interacting with people from other cultures on a regular basis were assessed in this scale.

In essence, the questionnaire contained 45 items assessing the constructs influencing Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence including cultural empathy (Question 1 through 7), interaction involvement (Question 8 through 12), attitude (Question 13 through 19), motivation (Question 20 through 24), intercultural communicative competence (Question 25 through 35), and experience (Question 36 through 45). The items in the other three sections included foreign language self-assessment, demographics, and organizational characteristics (see Appendix B).

Table 3.2

Constructs and Measures of ICC Model

Constructs (No. of items)	Measures
Cultural Empathy (7 items)	EM1: I can understand the feelings of people from different cultures EM2: I attempt to understand by imagining the perspectives of hotel guests from different cultures. EM3: I attempt to understand by imagining the perspectives of my colleagues from different cultures. EM4: I accept that hotel guests from different cultures can react differently. EM5: I accept that my colleagues from different cultures can react differently. EM6: I notice when hotel guests from different cultures are in trouble EM7: I notice when my colleagues from different cultures are in trouble
Interaction Involvement (5 items)	IV1: I enjoy interacting with hotel guests from different cultures. IV2: I enjoy interacting with my colleagues from different cultures. IV3: I am confident of interacting with hotel guests from different cultures. IV4: I always know what to say when interacting with hotel guests from different cultures. IV5: I always know what to say when interacting with my colleagues from different cultures.
Attitude (7 items)	AT1: I respect the values of people from different cultures. AT2: I respect the ways people from different cultures behave. AT3: I would not accept the opinions of people from different cultures. AT4: I think Thai culture is better than other cultures. AT5: I appreciate the language(s) of different culture(s). AT6: I accept the similarities and/or differences among cultures. AT7: People from other cultures should be treated the same way as people of my own culture.

Table 3.2 (continued)

Constructs and Measures of ICC Model

Constructs (No. of items)	Measures
Motivation (5 items)	MO1: I enjoy initiating conversations with hotel guests from different cultures. MO2: I enjoy initiating conversations with my colleagues from different cultures. MO3: I make a point of trying to understand hotel guests from different cultures. MO4: I make a point of trying to understand colleagues from different cultures. MO5: When I have a problem understanding something in other cultures, I always ask people from that culture.
Intercultural Communicative Competence (11 items)	ICC1: I demonstrate knowledge of global issues and basic concepts (e.g., political events, globalization). ICC2: I demonstrate knowledge of other cultures (e.g., religious, political, governmental, educational, family structures). ICC3: I understand myself in a cultural context (e.g., aware of my own origins, history, ethnic identity, community, etc.). ICC4: I understand myself in a comparative cultural context. ICC5: I understand when native speakers speak their language at a normal speed (based on the foreign language that I feel I can communicate the best). ICC6: I am able to reply to a question based on general knowledge of global issues in the foreign language. ICC7: I can understand the foreign language when written about a variety of topics within the hospitality and tourism context. ICC8: I can understand the foreign language when spoken about a variety of topics within the hospitality and tourism context. ICC9: I can use foreign language skills to present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics. ICC10: I reinforce and further my knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language. ICC11: I understand language rules through comparisons of the language studied and my own.

Table 3.2 (continued)

Constructs and Measures of ICC Model

Constructs (No. of items)	Measures
Experience (10 items)	EX1: I had formal training in intercultural communication at school. EX2: I had formal training in intercultural communication at the hotel in which I was previously employed. EX3: I had formal training in intercultural communication at the hotel in which I am currently employed. EX4: I had colleagues from different cultures at the hotel in which I was previously employed. EX5: I have colleagues from different cultures at the hotel in which I am currently employed. EX6: I have close friends from different cultures. EX7: I watch movies/TV series from different cultures on a regular basis. EX8: I have studied abroad. EX9: I have lived abroad. EX10: I have done an internship abroad.

Pre-test and pilot study. The pilot study was intended to test the feasibility of the main research design and reliability of research instrument. Hence, a small preliminary sample was utilized. Human resources managers from two upscale hotels (one four-star, and one five-star hotel) in Samui island were contacted via email to obtain permission to distribute surveys to front-line hotel workers. Once permission was granted, 60 surveys (30 surveys for four-star hotel, and 30 surveys for five-star hotel) were distributed and collected after a two-week time period.

Internal consistency reliability tests were conducted to assess the reliability of all the scales measuring the constructs in the proposed ICC model. The Cronbach's alpha value of each scale was reported as follows: (a) cultural empathy (Cronbach's $\alpha = .71$), (b) interaction involvement (Cronbach's $\alpha = .87$), (c) attitude (Cronbach's $\alpha = .73$), (d) motivation (Cronbach's $\alpha = .83$), (e) intercultural communicative competence (Cronbach's $\alpha = .91$). The dichotomous items on the

experience scale yield a Kuder-Richardson (KR) reliability estimate of .76. Based on the results from reliability test, no changes were made to the original research instrument.

Data collection. The data were collected from August 2017 – May 2018. Invitation letters for participation in the study were distributed by two research assistants who had strong business connections in the hotel industry, especially in Samui island. In the invitation letter, the human resource managers were asked permission for the researchers to come on property and distribute surveys to hotel workers operating in all departments including Rooms Division, Food and Beverage, Sales and Marketing, Facilities, and Housekeeping for the purposes of completing the survey (see Appendix C). Once the researcher had been granted permission to contact hotel workers on location, the researcher distributed surveys to hotel workers during morning departmental meetings. Employees were asked to complete the surveys and deposit completed questionnaires in a designated box placed in staff dining halls or other specified staff areas. Surveys were collected during a one-week time period.

Data analysis. This study employed a variety of statistical analyses. Prior to analyses, the data were screened for missing values, univariate and multivariate outliers, normality, and multicollinearity using SPSS v23 for Mac. Descriptive statistics were used to provide the demographic profile of hotel workers and organizational characteristics of hotels in Samui island. A principal axis factor with promax rotation (EFA) was conducted on the 45 items to explore and determine which factors would remain for further analysis. Using Gorsuch's (1977) criteria, items with an eigenvalue greater than 1.0 and with a factor loading of .40 or higher were retained in the current study. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was then conducted based on the factor

solution given by EFA, using *Mplus* v7, to modify the hypothesized model until good model fit was achieved. Lastly, the structural equation modeling (SEM) was conducted to test and validate the adequacy of the ICC model in investigating factors influencing Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence. The following model fit indices were employed in this study: (a) the ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom (values less than 5 acceptable, less than 2 excellent), (b) Comparative Fit Index (CFI > .90 acceptable, > .95 excellent), (c) Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA with 90% confidence interval < .08 acceptable, < .05 excellent), and (d) Standardized root mean square residual (values less than .10 excellent).

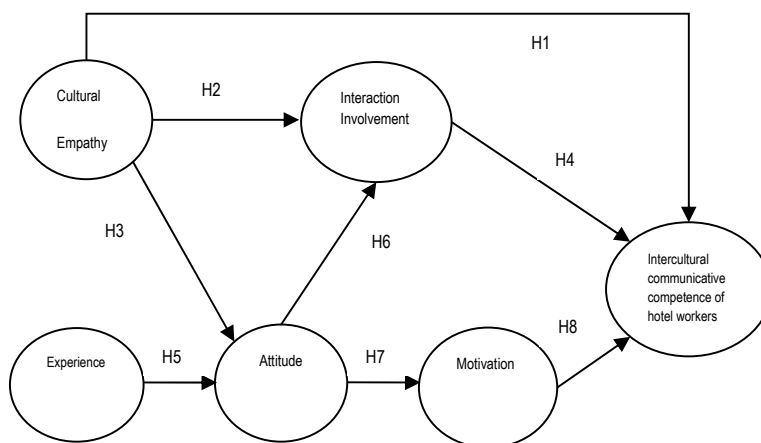


Figure 3.2. Hypothesized Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC).

Qualitative Approach – Interviews with Human Resources Professionals

The study employed a qualitative research approach which was conducted with human resources professionals from upscale hotels in Samui island. The purpose of this approach was twofold: (a) to explore the perspectives of human resources professionals on the nature of intercultural communicative competence and its application within the hotel industry, especially in Samui island, through qualitative interviews, and (b) to synthesize the findings from this study and

develop an optimal ICC training platform for both private and public hospitality sectors in Samui island in order to ensure international competitiveness and maximize traditional markets.

Sample selection. Quota sampling was applied in the current qualitative study to select participants within the following criteria: (a) interview eight subjects, (b) participants must primarily be human resources managers or training managers or any higher position in human resources professionals, (c) participants must be from four- and five-star hotels in Samui island, (d) four out of eight participants must be representative from the international chain hotel, and (e) four out of eight participants must be representative from the local chain hotel (see Table 3.2). Participants who meet the imperative criteria were contacted via telephone for participation in the study. Then, the appointment confirmation email and the interview script were delivered to each participant prior to the interview. Interviews were conducted in the individual offices of the human resources professionals or the hotel lobby area/hotel restaurant as participants saw fit.

Research instrument development. The interview script produced for this study comprised six sections: (a) rapport building, (b) opening questions, (c) introductory questions, (d) transition questions, (e) key questions, and (d) ending questions (see Appendix D). The oral script started with the rapport building in order to introduce the researcher and the objectives of the current study to the participants. Opening questions (Question 1 and 2) were asked to obtain demographic and organizational information. Introductory questions (Question 3 and 4) were followed to discuss the skills and competencies which are important for employees in the Thailand hotel industry from a human resources perspective. Transition questions (Question 5 through 7) were asked to introduce

the participants to the concept of workplace diversity and intercultural settings as the foundation for the following key questions.

Arasaratnam's (2006) five original constructs promoting an individual's intercultural communicative competence along with past researches in the intercultural literature (Fantini, 2007; Sinicrope et al., 2007) provided the fundamental concept for the key questions (Question 8 through 14). Included in this section were key questions such as "What do you consider to be the key component of intercultural communicative competence?," "How do the attitude towards other cultures promote intercultural communicative competence and help employees in the Thailand hospitality and tourism industry," and "To what extent do you think Thai hotel workers (at line-level) currently possess intercultural communicative competence?" In essence, the qualitative interview in this study was based on open-ended questions which could prompt the participants' opinions and further remarks regarding the intercultural communicative competence of hotel workers and its significance from a human resources point of view.

Data collection. Data were collected through qualitative interviews with human resources professionals. The interviews were conducted from June to October 2018. The interviews were audio recorded and each interview comprised 16 questions (see Appendix D). While the shortest interview was conducted 26.20 minutes, the longest interview was 58.52 minutes. In essence, the average length of interview was 43.92 minutes per person. Given the fact that most of the participants utilized Thai language for daily communication, the interviews were directed in Thai language for the convenience of expressing thoughts and remarks with respect to the intercultural

communicative competence of hotel workers and its significance from a human resources point of view.

Table 3.3

Number of Interview Participants (n = 8)

Upscale Hotels in Samui Island	Job Position	No. of Participant
Local Brand Hotels		
Centara Grand Beach Resort Samui	Director of Human Resources	1
Muang Samui Spa Resort	Human Resources Manager	1
Silavadee Pool Spa Resort	HR & Training Manager	1
The Library Koh Samui	HR & Training Manager	1
International Brand Hotels		
Conrad Koh Samui	Training Manager	1
Four Seasons Resort Koh Samui	Learning Manager	1
InterContinental Samui Baan Taling Ngam Resort	Director of Human Resources	1
Sheraton Samui Resort	Learning & Development Manager	1
Total Number of Participants		<u>8</u>

Data analysis. As the interviews were directed in Thai language, each interview was transcribed verbatim and translated from Thai into English. Prior to analyses, member checking method was utilized to increase the credibility of the qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this current study, member checking method was conducted both during the interviews and after the interviews. In other words, the interview content was checked throughout each interview to assure it was the information that participants actually intended to provide before moving on to the next questions. After the interviews, participants were contacted via email and the interview

transcripts were delivered for them to review and confirm the accuracy of the content. The verified transcripts were then screened manually for the relevant text before further content analysis.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION – QUANTITATIVE APPROACH

SURVEY OF THAI HOTEL WORKERS

Demographic Profile

A total of 580 surveys were distributed of which 514 were completed and usable for the data analysis, yielding a 88.6% response rate. Nearly half of all respondents (46.0%) were between 21 and 30 years old, and 41.3% were between 31 and 40 years old. Over one-third of the respondents (37.3%) had an undergraduate degree, 42.2% currently worked in Rooms Division, 40.0% in Food and Beverage, 6.6% in Sales and Marketing, and 11.1% in other departments such as Spa and HR department. Approximately 90% of respondents currently worked in line level positions, 46.1% had worked in the hotel industry between 1 and 5 years, 22.9% had worked in the current hotel less than a year, and 65.0% had remained in the current position between 1 and 5 years. Male and female respondents represented 39.3% and 60.7% of the sample, respectively. Based upon these results the profile of the typical survey respondent was a Thai female, 21-30 years old, with an undergraduate degree, who had worked in the hotel industry between 1 and 5 years, and currently worked in a line level position within the Rooms Division (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1

Demographic Profile of Thai Hotel Workers in Samui Island (N = 514)

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Age		
< 21	14	2.8
21-30	234	46.0
31-40	210	41.3
41-50	40	7.9
51-60	11	2.2

Note: Number of cases under frequency excludes missing observations

Table 4.1 (continued)

Demographic Profile of Thai Hotel Workers in Samui Island (N = 514)

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Education		
Less than high school	5	1.0
High school diploma	167	32.8
Vocational/Technical School	69	13.6
Some college/Associate degree	62	12.2
Undergraduate degree	190	37.3
Graduate degree	16	3.1
Current department		
Rooms Division	216	42.2
F&B	205	40.0
Sales & Marketing	34	6.6
Other	57	11.1
Current position level		
Management level	45	8.8
Line level	467	91.2
Years in this position		
< 1	80	15.6
1-5	333	65.0
6-10	92	18.0
11-15	6	1.2
> 15	1	0.2
Years in the hotel industry		
< 1	45	8.8
1-5	236	46.1
6-10	173	33.8
11-15	51	10.0
> 15	7	1.4
Years in current hotel		
< 1	117	22.9
1-5	297	58.0
6-10	91	17.8
11-15	7	1.4
Gender		
Male	200	39.3
Female	309	60.7

Note: Number of cases under frequency excludes missing observations

Organizational Characteristics

Approximately 54% of respondents currently worked in five-star hotels, with four-star hotels representing the remaining 46.1%. A total of 6.1% of the participants' hotels had between 200 and 299 rooms, whereas 30.9% had between 100 and 199 rooms, and approximately 60% had less than 100 guestrooms. Slightly over 40% of the participants' hotels had between 100 and 199 employees. Over half of the participants' hotels (57.3%) were managed by a hotel chain, with the rest 42.7% being independent without any affiliation (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2

Organizational Characteristics of Hotels in Samui island (N = 514)

Variable	Frequency	Percent
No. of rooms		
< 50	30	5.9
50-99	277	54.2
100-199	158	30.9
200-299	31	6.1
300-399	14	2.7
>500	1	0.2
Hotel rating		
5 star	272	53.9
4 star	233	46.1
No. of employees		
< 50	15	2.9
50-99	135	26.4
100-199	213	41.7
200-299	114	22.3
300-399	32	6.3
400-499	2	0.4
Management style		
Independent without affiliation	218	42.7
Chain/affiliated hotel	293	57.3

Note: Number of cases under frequency excludes missing observations

Self-assessment and View on Foreign Languages

In addition to English, respondents were asked the number of languages in which they were able to communicate. Participants (38.9%) reported having a working knowledge of at least one other language with some individuals (9.5%) knowing two foreign languages, 1.4% three foreign languages, and only 0.2% four foreign languages. Chinese, French, Japanese, German were the top four foreign languages, comprising 27.4%, 12.5%, 5.8%, and 5.5% of the sample, respectively. This finding was consistent with statistics of the Ministry of Tourism & Sports (2017) showing that tourists from Germany (ranked first), China (ranked second), France (ranked sixth), and Russia (ranked seventh) were in part the top 10 international tourist arrivals to Samui island over the past five years (2013 – 2017). Employees in the industry with a working knowledge of these languages are in demand to serve this group of tourists.

With regard to specific language skills, a total of 77.1% of respondents rated speaking as most often used skills at work, 12.8% for listening, 5.1% for reading, and 4.9% for writing. Self-assessment questions generated diverse responses, with 37.0% of the sample describing their foreign language skills as satisfactory, and only 2.6% considering themselves excellent. Approximately 50% of respondents reported needing to improve their speaking, whereas writing (39.1%), listening (34.6%), and reading skills (24.0%) received less attention. Results showed 31.6% of respondents used foreign language skills daily in their place of work.

The question of motivation for studying a foreign language generated findings similar to Norris-Holt (2001) which identified that instrumental orientation would be a motive more frequently than integrative orientation for the study of language based on the attitudes and motivation in

second language learning (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Instrumental orientation refers to language learners who have a goal to achieve, whereas integrative orientation defines learners who have a significant interest in the culture of that language and expect to take part in foreign community (Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Norris-Holt, 2001). This study showed that 49.7% of respondents chose to learn a foreign language for increasing their job opportunities and 36.8% expected to improve language skills, whereas only 13.2% learned the foreign language for the purpose of developing an understanding of the foreign culture (see Table 4.3).

Table 4.3

Self-assessment and View on Foreign Languages (N = 514)

Variable	Frequency	Percent
No. of foreign languages (besides English)		
0	257	50.0
1	200	38.9
2	49	9.5
3	7	1.4
4	1	0.2
Foreign language (besides English)		
Chinese	141	27.4
French	64	12.5
German	28	5.5
Italian	6	1.2
Japanese	30	5.8
Korean	15	2.9
Russian	19	3.7
Spanish	13	2.5
Other	4	0.8
Motivation to learn foreign languages		
To improve language skills	114	36.8
To increase job opportunities	154	49.7
To develop understanding of the culture of a foreign country	41	13.2
Frequency of using foreign language skills at work		
Everyday	153	31.6
2-3 days/week	88	18.2
Once a week	48	9.9
Once a month	36	7.4
Never	159	32.9

Note: Number of cases under frequency excludes missing observations

Table 4.3 (continued)

Self-assessment and View on Foreign Languages (N = 514)

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Foreign language skills most often used		
Listening	65	12.8
Speaking	391	77.1
Reading	26	5.1
Writing	25	4.9
Self-assessed foreign language skills		
Excellent	13	2.6
Very Good	73	14.5
Good	157	30.5
Satisfactory	186	37.0
Weak	74	14.7
Foreign language skills need improvement		
Listening	176	34.6
Speaking	253	49.7
Reading	122	24.0
Writing	199	39.1

Note: Number of cases under frequency excludes missing observations

Data Screening

Prior to model testing, the data (primarily the 45 variables) were screened for univariate and multivariate outliers, normality, and multicollinearity using SPSS v23 for Mac. Using Field's (2009) criteria of normality ($|z_{\text{skewness}}| > 2.58$) for large samples ($N > 200$), a total of 9 (1.8%) univariate outliers was deleted from the original 514 cases. Six multivariate outliers were deleted based on Mahalanobis distance criteria at .001 level (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). Finally, bivariate correlation coefficients were computed among the 45 variables and there was no evidence of multicollinearity ($r > .80$) (Field, 2009).

Structural Equation Modeling

After data screening, a subsample of 499 cases or 97.1% of the original sample was used for analysis. Using *Mplus* v7, the hypothesized model was tested. The hypothesized model was not a good fit to the data, $\chi^2(930) = 2,040.768$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2/df = 2.194$, CFI = .778, TLI = .764, RMSEA = .049 (90% CI .046 - .052). To modify the model, a principal axis factor with promax rotation (EFA) was conducted on the 45 items. Using Gorsuch's (1997) criteria, a six-factor solution was achieved. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis (KMO = .941), and all six factors in combination explained 60.8% of the variance.

Table 4.4

Factor Analysis of Intercultural Communicative Competence Factors (n = 499)

Factors	Factor loading	Eigenvalue	% of variance
<i>Factor 1 – ICC (Cronbach's $\alpha = .96$)</i>		13.85	40.95
ICC8: I can understand the foreign language when spoken about a variety of topics within the hospitality and tourism context.	.89		
ICC9: I can use foreign language skills to present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics.	.88		
ICC11: I understand language rules through comparisons of the language studied and my own.	.87		
ICC10: I reinforce and further my knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language.	.87		
ICC7: I can understand the foreign language when written about a variety of topics within the hospitality and tourism context.	.86		
ICC5: I understand when native speakers speak their language at a normal speed (based on the foreign language that I feel I can communicate the best).	.84		
ICC6: I am able to reply to a question based on general knowledge of global issues in the foreign language.	.83		
ICC3: I understand myself in a cultural context (e.g., aware of my own origins, history, ethnic identity, community, etc.).	.75		
ICC2: I demonstrate knowledge of other cultures (e.g., religious, political, governmental, educational, family structures).	.75		
ICC4: I understand myself in a comparative cultural context.	.74		

Note: 60.8% of cumulative variance explained. Factor loadings below .40 were excluded.

Table 4.4 (continued)

Factor Analysis of Intercultural Communicative Competence Factors (n = 499)

Factors	Factor loading	Eigenvalue	% of variance
<i>Factor 2 – Interaction Involvement</i> (Cronbach's $\alpha = .93$)		10.73	6.51
IV3: I am confident interacting with hotel guests from different cultures.	.78		
IV4: I always know what to say when interacting with hotel guests from different cultures.	.78		
IV2: I enjoy interacting with my colleagues from different cultures.	.76		
IV1: I enjoy interacting with hotel guests from different cultures.	.75		
IV5: I always know what to say when interacting with my colleagues from different cultures.	.74		
<i>Factor 3 – Cultural Empathy</i> (Cronbach's $\alpha = .88$)		8.57	4.54
EM4: I accept that hotel guests from different cultures can react differently.	.79		
EM5: I accept that my colleagues from different cultures can react differently.	.74		
EM3: I attempt to understand by imagining the perspectives of my colleagues from different cultures.	.72		
EM2: I attempt to understand by imagining the perspectives of hotel guests from different cultures.	.68		
EM6: I notice when hotel guests from different cultures are in trouble.	.63		
EM1: I can understand the feelings of people from different cultures.	.61		
<i>Factor 4 – Experience</i> (Kuder-Richardson (KR) = .76)		5.21	4.05
EX9: I have lived abroad.	.82		
EX10: I have done an internship abroad.	.80		
EX2: I had formal training in intercultural communication at the hotel in which I was previously employed.	.77		
EX1: I had formal training in intercultural communication at school.	.71		
EX3: I had formal training in intercultural communication at the hotel in which I am currently employed.	.71		
EX4: I had colleagues from different cultures at the hotel in which I was previously employed.	.59		
EX8: I have studied abroad.	.57		
EX5: I have colleagues from different cultures at the hotel in which I am currently employed.	.52		

Note: 60.8% of cumulative variance explained. Factor loadings below .40 were excluded.

Table 4.4 (continued)

Factor Analysis of Intercultural Communicative Competence Factors (n = 499)

Factors	Factor loading	Eigenvalue	% of variance
<i>Factor 5 – Motivation (Cronbach's α = .85)</i>		3.37	2.85
MO2: I enjoy initiating conversations with my colleagues from different cultures.	.47		
MO1: I enjoy initiating conversations with hotel guests from different cultures.	.46		
MO5: When I have problem understanding something in other cultures, I always ask people from that culture.	.42		
<i>Factor 6 – Attitude (Cronbach's α = .72)</i>		4.84	1.90
AT1: I respect the values of people from different cultures.	.56		
AT6: I accept the similarities and/or differences among cultures.	.55		
AT2: I respect the ways people from different cultures behave.	.48		
AT5: I appreciate the language(s) of different culture(s).	.48		
AT3: I would not accept the opinions of people from different cultures (reverse scored).	.47		

Note: 60.8% of cumulative variance explained. Factor loadings below .40 were excluded.

Table 4.4 shows the rotated factor loadings. The solution used 37 (82.2%) of the original 45 items. That is, 8 items with factor loadings below .40 were dropped from the final solution: (a) factor 1 – ICC (one item – ICC1), (b) factor 2 – interaction involvement (no item was dropped), (c) factor 3 – cultural empathy (one item – EM7), (d) factor 4 – experience (two items – EX6, EX7), (e) factor 5 – motivation (two items – MO3, MO4), (f) factor 6 – attitude (two items – AT4, AT7).

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was then conducted based on the six-factor solution given by EFA. This model was not a good fit to the data, $\chi^2(614) = 1,476.344$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2/df = 2.404$, CFI = .797, TLI = .780, RMSEA = .053 (90% CI .050 - .057). The model was modified by dropping items which had low factor loading until good model fit was achieved, $\chi^2(195) = 357.855$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2/df = 1.835$, CFI = .927, TLI = .914, RMSEA = .041 (90% CI .034 - .048). The final

measurement model retained 22 (48.9%) of the original 45 items with six factors: ICC (four items), interaction involvement (four items), cultural empathy (four items), experience (four items), motivation (three items), and attitude (three items). Solutions were generated on the basis of WLSMV (Mean- and Variance-adjusted Weighted Least Square) estimation, which is technically used for a model with one or more of the categorical factor indicators (Brown, 2006). Additionally, factor determinacy scores were not available for analysis because the experience scale is categorical with “yes” or “no” responses.

Table 4.5 illustrates confirmatory factor analysis results for the measurement model. Factor loading estimates were statistically significant at .001 level with the values ranging from .65 to .91, suggesting that the indicators were strongly related to their purported latent factors (Brown, 2006). The average variance extracted (AVE) of all constructs ranged from .51 to .88 indicating adequate convergent validity of the measurement model (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). The composite reliability (CR) coefficients ranged from .85 to .93 suggesting a good construct reliability (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 4.5

Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results for the Measurement Model (n = 499)

Constructs	Indicators	Factor loading	AVE	CR
ICC (4 items)			.51	.93
	ICC5: I understand when native speakers speak their language at a normal speed (based on the foreign language that I feel I can communicate the best).	.91		
	ICC7: I can understand the foreign language when written about a variety of topics within the hospitality and tourism context.	.86		
	ICC8: I can understand the foreign language when spoken about a variety of topics within the hospitality and tourism context.	.87		
	ICC9: I can use foreign language skills to present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics.	.84		
Interaction Involvement (4 items)			.71	.88
	IV1: I enjoy interacting with hotel guests from different cultures.	.89		
	IV2: I enjoy interacting with my colleagues from different cultures.	.87		
	IV3: I am confident interacting with hotel guests from different cultures.	.83		
	IV4: I always know what to say when interacting with hotel guests from different cultures.	.83		
Cultural Empathy (4 items)			.74	.92
	EM1: I can understand the feelings of people from different cultures.	.88		
	EM2: I attempt to understand by imagining the perspectives of hotel guests from different cultures.	.86		
	EM3: I attempt to understand by imagining the perspectives of my colleagues from different cultures.	.88		
	EM4: I accept that hotel guests from different cultures can react differently.	.83		

Note: AVE = average variance extracted; CR = composite reliability

Table 4.5 (continued)

Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results for the Measurement Model (n = 499)

Constructs	Indicators	Factor loading	AVE	CR
Experience (4 items)	EX1: I had formal training in intercultural communication at school.	.89	.88	.89
	EX2: I had formal training in intercultural communication at the hotel in which I was previously employed.	.79		
	EX8: I have studied abroad.	.90		
	EX9: I have lived abroad.	.65		
Motivation (3 items)	MO1: I enjoy initiating conversations with hotel guests from different cultures.	.79	.67	.86
	MO2: I enjoy initiating conversations with my colleagues from different cultures.	.86		
	MO5: When I have problem understanding something in other cultures, I always ask people from that culture.	.80		
Attitude (3 items)	AT1: I respect the values of people from different cultures.	.83	.66	.85
	AT2: I respect the ways people from different cultures behave.	.78		
	AT6: I accept the similarities and/or differences among cultures.	.83		

Note: AVE = average variance extracted; CR = composite reliability

Intercorrelations of the six constructs were examined for discriminant validity (see Table 4.6). The correlation matrix showed that all factor correlations did not exceed .85 which is technically used as the cutoff criterion for problematic discriminant validity (Brown, 2006; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). In other words, results indicated that the discriminant validity of the constructs was good. However, seven intercorrelations were moderately high: between attitude and interaction involvement ($r = .83$), between motivation and intercultural communicative competence

($r = .81$), between motivation and cultural empathy ($r = .81$), between motivation and interaction involvement ($r = .85$), between intercultural communicative competence and cultural empathy ($r = .74$), between intercultural communicative competence and interaction involvement ($r = .75$), and between cultural empathy and interaction involvement ($r = .76$).

Table 4.6

Correlation Matrix for the Measurement Model Constructs (n = 499)

	Mean	SD	AT	MO	ICC	EM	EX	IV
AT	4.09	0.94	1.00					
MO	3.80	1.05	.69***	1.00				
ICC	3.48	1.13	.48***	.81***	1.00			
EM	3.73	1.03	.69***	.81***	.74***	1.00		
EX	0.33	0.39	-.00***	.32***	.51***	.26***	1.00	
IV	3.85	1.02	.83***	.85***	.75***	.76***	.17**	1.00

Note: ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; AT = Attitude, MO = Motivation, ICC = Intercultural Communicative, EM = Cultural Empathy, EX = Experience, IV = Interaction Involvement; Experience: dichotomous measure (0 = No, 1 = Yes); All other constructs: 5-point Likert scale

Finally, the structural model was tested with ICC regressed on cultural empathy, interaction involvement, and motivation; interaction involvement regressed on cultural empathy and attitude; motivation regressed on attitude; and attitude regressed on cultural empathy, and experience. The structural model was an acceptable fit to the data, $\chi^2(159) = 411.081$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2/df = 2.585$, CFI = .904, TLI = .886, RMSEA = .056 (90% CI .050 - .063).

Significant Predictors and Main Findings

This study adapted Arasaratnam's (2006) model of ICC to investigate Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence and the relationships among the factors (cultural empathy,

interaction involvement, attitude, experience, motivation, and ICC). The primary research question, “Can the ICC model explain and predict Thai hotel workers’ intercultural communicative competence?” was answered by results from the SEM analysis which showed that the structural model was an acceptable fit to the data. This result statistically suggested that the proposed model can explain and predict Thai hotel workers’ intercultural communicative competence.

Table 4.7

Standardized Parameter Estimates for the Structural Model (n = 499)

Hypothesized Path	Standardized Path Coefficients	p-value	Results
H1: Cultural Empathy → ICC (+)	.87	*	Supported
H2: Cultural Empathy → Interaction Involvement (-)	-.22	.21	Not Supported
H3: Cultural Empathy → Attitude (+)	.86	***	Supported
H4: Interaction Involvement → ICC (+)	.80	*	Supported
H5: Experience → Attitude (-)	-.03	.48	Not Supported
H6: Attitude → Interaction Involvement (+)	.82	***	Supported
H7: Attitude → Motivation (+)	.90	***	Supported
H8: Motivation → ICC (+)	.85	***	Supported

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

As illustrated in Table 4.7, cultural empathy emerged as the strongest direct predictor of intercultural communicative competence (standardized parameter estimate = .87, $p < .001$). This

finding affirmed that cultural empathy generated direct effects on Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence, and hence Hypothesis 1 was supported. When Thai hotel workers internalize cultural empathy, they are bound to understand and relate themselves to others during the intercultural interaction which then leads to intercultural communicative competence as the behavioral outcome. This result was consistent with intercultural literature which identified cultural empathy as a key component for intercultural sensitivity and intercultural communicative competence (Bennett, 1986; Chen, 1997; Chen & Starosta, 1996; Kiatkiri, 2014).

While cultural empathy also positively influenced Thai hotel workers' attitude towards other cultures, it did not significantly promote their interaction involvement in this study. That is, Hypothesis 3 was supported, whereas Hypothesis 2 was not (standardized parameter estimate = -.22, $p > .05$). This finding showed that Thai hotel workers with a high degree of cultural empathy tend to possess a positive attitude towards other cultures and their members, which then leads to the ability to serve and satisfy the needs of hotel guests from different cultures.

Apart from cultural empathy, interaction involvement emerged as another direct predictor of Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence, and Hypothesis 4 was supported. The significant relationship between interaction involvement and intercultural communicative competence in the current study suggested that Thai hotel workers' ability to handle the conversation confidently and satisfyingly during the intercultural interaction with their colleagues and hotel guests from different cultures can support their intercultural communicative competence.

In regard to the first four hypotheses, except Hypothesis 2, results were consistent with Arasaratnam's (2006) original model which proposed the positive relationships among these constructs: between cultural empathy and intercultural communicative competence, between cultural empathy and attitude towards other cultures, and between interaction involvement and intercultural communicative competence. Furthermore, as indicated by Hall's (1989) high- and low-context cultural taxonomy, Thai culture was perceived as high-context where implicit messages play a significant role and the information is inferred by the context of the communication. In a high-context culture, its members tend to be more empathic and mindful of other's feelings and the surroundings. It was along these lines not surprising to find that cultural empathy emerged as a key indicator of Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence and attitude towards other cultures.

However, Hypothesis 5 was not supported. This finding contradicted the proposition that experience positively influences attitude towards other cultures. In other words, experience in intercultural settings did not significantly appear to be predictive of Thai hotel workers' attitude (standardized parameter estimate = $-.03$, $p > .05$). For the context of this study, the counter-proposition can be explicated by descriptive statistics of the experience scale which was rated with "yes" or "no" (0 = No, 1 = Yes) questions. As shown in Table 4.8, four items of past experience in intercultural settings including "I had formal training in intercultural communication at school," "I had formal training in intercultural communication at the hotel in which I was previously employed," "I have studied abroad," and "I have lived abroad" were retained in the final measurement model of ICC. Results demonstrated averagely over 65% of Thai hotel workers had no past experience in these intercultural

settings which could lead to their perceptions and attitude towards other cultures and their members.

Although confirmatory factor analysis results for the measurement model presented proof of good construct validity and reliability (see Table 4.5), the relationship between past experience in intercultural settings and attitude towards other cultures should be explored further.

Table 4.8

Descriptive Statistics of Experience Scale (n = 499)

Indicators	Mean	Frequency	Percent
Formal ICC training at school	0.57		
No (0)		212	42.7
Yes (1)		284	57.3
Formal ICC training at hotel (previously employed)	0.56		
No (0)		217	43.8
Yes (1)		279	56.3
Studied abroad	0.06		
No (0)		465	93.8
Yes (1)		31	6.3
Lived abroad	0.14		
No (0)		428	86.3
Yes (1)		68	13.7

Note: Number of cases under frequency excludes missing observations; Formal training in intercultural communication at school, Formal training in intercultural communication at the hotel in which participants were previously employed, Studied abroad, and Lived abroad were four items of experience scale retained in the final measurement model.

Although cultural empathy did not generate direct effects on interaction involvement, Thai hotel workers' attitude towards other cultures positively influenced their interaction involvement and motivation, and thus Hypothesis 6 and Hypothesis 7 were supported. This result was consistent with Kiatkiri's (2014) study which confirmed that Thai hotel workers' positive attitude towards other

cultures can motivate and develop their capacity to participate in an intercultural interaction with colleagues and hotel guests from different cultures effectively and appropriately.

Lastly, motivation emerged as another direct predictor of Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence, and thus Hypothesis 8 was supported. For the context of this study, motivation to communicate with people from different cultures was a significant attribute and predisposed Thai hotel workers to intercultural communicative competence. In other words, Thai hotel workers with a high degree of motivation will in general endeavor to learn and comprehend their colleagues and hotel guests from different cultures with the intention of accomplishing intercultural communication effectively and appropriately.

In summary, the results of the structural model of ICC revealed that cultural empathy generated a direct effect on Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence but the proposed indirect effect through interaction involvement was not statistically supported. Interaction involvement and motivation emerged as another two direct predictors of Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence. Contrary to expectations and Arasaratnam's (2006) study, past experience in intercultural settings was not statistically significant to predispose Thai hotel workers' perceptions and attitude towards other cultures and their members.

The finding in the current study also revealed that cultural empathy positively influenced Thai hotel workers' attitude towards other cultures. Cultural empathy and attitude were statistically significant to generate indirect effects on Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence through interaction involvement and motivation to engage in intercultural communication. Figure 4.1 demonstrates the final model of ICC with standardized parameter

estimates. Statistically significant relationships among factors are presented with solid lines while non-significant relationships at the .05 level are presented with dotted lines.

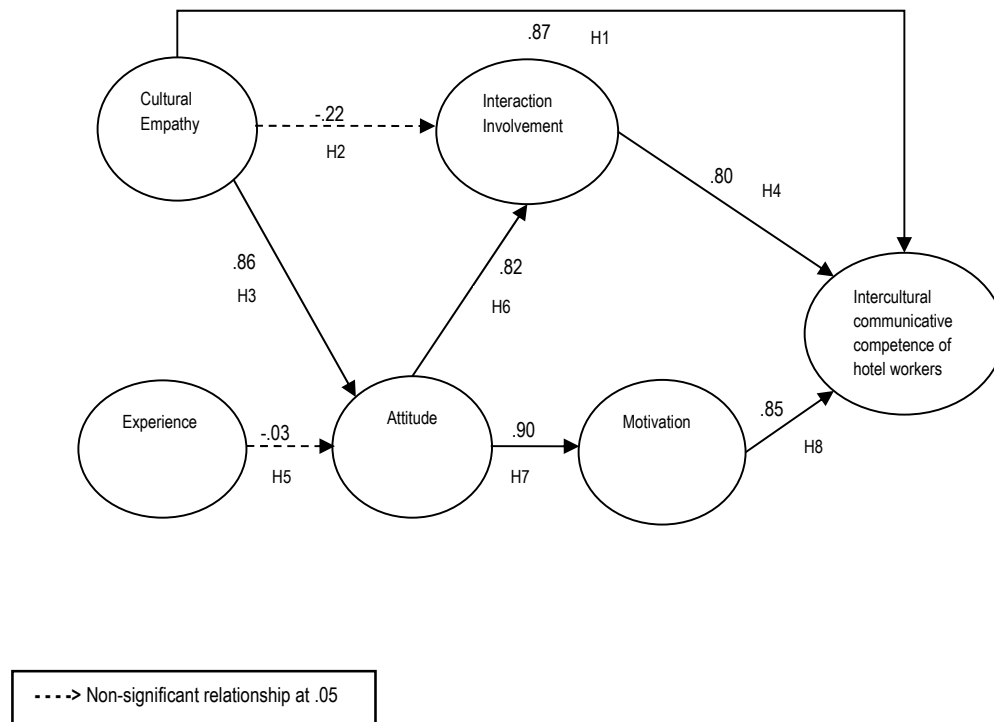


Figure 4.1. Results of SEM Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

CHAPTER V
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION – QUALITATIVE APPROACH
INTERVIEWS WITH HUMAN RESOURCES PROFESSIONALS

As human resources professionals are considered to be one of the direct practitioners in the industry, their perspectives on the intercultural communicative competence of hotel workers and its significance from a human resources viewpoint were valuable for the current study. In addition, findings from this study were profitable for both private and public hospitality and tourism sectors in Thailand in order to ensure international competitiveness and maximize traditional markets.

The purpose of this qualitative approach was to explore the perspectives of human resources professionals on the nature of intercultural communicative competence and its application within the hotel industry, especially in Samui island, through interviews. Arasaratnam's (2006) five constructs promoting an individual's intercultural communicative competence (cultural empathy, motivation, attitude towards other cultures, experience, and interaction involvement) along with past research in the intercultural literature (Fantini, 2007; Kiatkiri, 2014; Sinicrope et al., 2007) provided the fundamental concept for the key interview questions. Specific research questions for the current study were as follows:

1. What constitutes intercultural communicative competence according to human resources professionals?
2. To what extent do Thai hotel workers currently possess intercultural communicative competence according to human resources professionals?

The data analytical method was adapted from Auerbach and Silverstein's (2003) guidelines consisting of five steps: (a) select the relevant text for further content analysis, (b) develop main

headings based on open-ended questions in the interview script, (c) group together repeating ideas and relevant statements shared by the participants, (d) group repeating ideas into coherent categories under each main heading, (e) describe and interpret the meaning of repeating ideas and coherent categories under each main heading.

As a parallel term to the validity in quantitative research, trustworthiness was a major concern in the current study. In an attempt to contribute to trustworthiness, thick description which refers to the process of describing the interview data in extensive detail was applied (Creswell & Miller, 2000). With a detailed description of human resources professionals' perspectives on the nature of intercultural communicative competence and its application within the Thailand hotel industry, the readers can easily follow and make a connection between findings from the current study and their own point of view.

As Creswell and Miller (2000) pointed out, thick description also allows readers to understand that the findings from the study are credible and can be applied to other settings or similar contexts.

Overall, the interview data were classified under four main headings which were addressed further in results and discussion section of the current study as follows:

1. Skills and competencies for workers in the Thailand hotel industry
2. Workplace diversity in the Thailand hotel industry
3. ICC in the Thailand hotel industry from a human resources perspective
4. The gap between education and actual needs of the industry

Sample Characteristics

Of the eight Thai human resources professionals who accepted the invitation to participate in the study, three (37.5%) were males, and five (62.5%) were females. In regard to current job position, one (12.5%) was human resources manager, two (25%) were human resources & training manager, three (37.5%) were training manager or alternatively called, learning manager, and two (25%) were human resources director. The average length of time the interviewees had worked in current hotel, in the hotel industry, and in human resources professionals was 9 years and 7 months ($M = 9.66$), 16 years and 6 months ($M = 16.63$), and 14 years and 3 months ($M = 14.31$), respectively (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1

A Frequency Distribution of the Participants by Gender, Job Position, and Work Experience (N = 8)

Trait	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	3	37.5
Female	5	62.5
Position		
Human Resources Manager	1	12.5
Human Resources & Training Manager	2	25.0
Training Manager (Learning & Development Manager)	3	37.5
Human Resources Director	2	25.0
Years in the current hotel	<i>Mean</i>	9.66
Years in the hotel industry	<i>Mean</i>	16.63
Years in the human resources profession	<i>Mean</i>	14.31

Organizational Characteristics

Among the eight interviewees, four (50%) were representative from a local chain hotel, and another four (50%) were from an international chain hotel as part of quota sampling criteria. The average number of permanent employees working in the participants' hotels was 260 employees ($M = 260.00$), and eight expatriate employees ($M = 8.50$). The ratio of expatriates to Thai employees was 3:100. The nationalities of expatriates were reported varying from American, Australian, Burmese, Chinese, European, and Korean. A majority of expatriates worked in management level positions including general manager, executive chef, supervisor, director or higher position in any department.

In regard to percentage of Thai hotel workers with a degree in hospitality and tourism, an estimated 25% of Thai hotel workers were reported having this degree (see Table 5.2). This finding was consistent with the study by Chaisawat (2005) which indicated that the hospitality and tourism education in Thailand was scarcely existent until a decade ago. According to Chaisawat (2005), the major boom in Thai hospitality and tourism programs had been during 1999 to 2003. The total number of academic institutions offering an undergraduate degree in hospitality and tourism increased 51% from 51 in 1999 to 77 in 2003 (Chaisawat, 2005). As a result, Thai employees who had mostly worked in the industry more than ten years tend to graduate in other fields of study.

Table 5.2

Organizational Profile of Thai Human Resources Professionals in Samui Island (N = 8)

Trait	Frequency	Percent
Hotel ownership		
Local chain	4	50.0
International chain	4	50.0
No. of permanent employees	<i>Mean</i>	260.00
No. of expatriate employees	<i>Mean</i>	8.50
Ratio of expatriates to Thai employees	<i>Mean</i>	3:100
Percentage of Thai hotel workers with a degree in Hospitality/Tourism		
	<i>Mean</i>	25.00

Skills and Competencies for Workers in the Thailand Hotel Industry

As part of introductory questions, all participants were asked to discuss the skills and competencies which are essential for workers in the Thailand hotel industry. The majority (7 interviewees; 87.5%) listed top three ranked skills and competencies that they believed are required for workers in line level and management level positions. As represented in Figure 5.1, five (62.5%) out of eight interviewees agreed that language and communication skills should be ranked number one followed by functional and technical skills with respect to the skills and competencies needed for line-level workers. As one participant clarified, “functional and technical skills are trainable during both on-the-job and off-the-job training, whereas language and communication skills take longer time for training and developing those who do not possess this competency from the beginning.”

Top 3 Skills for Line-level Hotel Workers (N = 8)

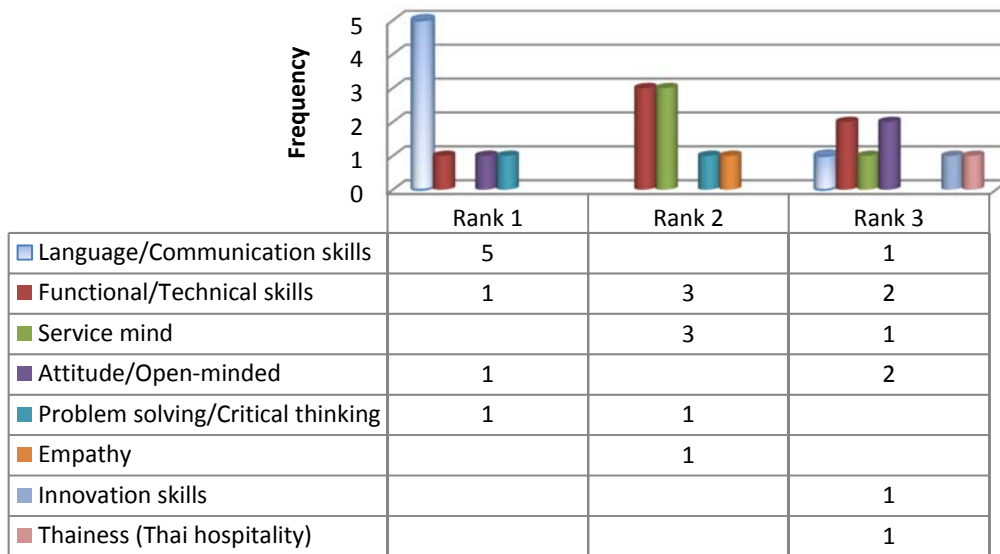


Figure 5.1. Top Three Skills for Line-level Hotel Workers (N = 8).

One participant shared her view on the importance of language and communication skills for hotel workers in line level positions:

Language and communication skills are obviously important in this industry. Now, we do not talk about English anymore as we expect everyone can speak this language. Hotel workers could expectedly speak at least three languages, especially the language of target customers. However, it also depends on the extent of interactions with hotel guests. That is, for those who directly interact with guests on a regular basis such as front office staff, and guest service officer, language and communication skills are a definite must. On the other hand, for line level workers who have semi- to non-interactions with hotel guests such as housekeepers and back-of-the-house staff, language and communication skills might not be primarily required.

Due to the fact that the number of Chinese tourists has consistently outpaced visitors from other countries for the past decade, among the foreign languages besides English, Chinese language was most mentioned during the interviews. The majority (6 interviewees; 75%) added that those who are able to speak or communicate in Chinese would be first considered for employment in the hotel industry, especially in Samui island these days.

The six following skills and competencies were also perceived to be important for line-level employees: (a) service mind, (b) attitude/open-minded, (c) problem solving/critical thinking, (d) empathy, (e) innovation skills, and (f) Thainess (Thai hospitality). This finding was consistent with past research which pointed out that these skills and competencies play an essential role for the success in the hospitality industry (Annaraud, 2006; Baum, 2002; Blue & Harun, 2003; Christou, 2000; Kay & Moncarz, 2004; Kiatkiri, 2014; Lertwannawit et al., 2009; Martin & Davies, 2006).

As can be seen in general hotel job postings, people who work in the hotel are expected to have service mind along with other qualifications. Half of the participants (50%) agreed that those who possess service mind tend to have service skills or the ability to appropriately and effectively provide good service and satisfy the needs of hotel guests. Some participants (3 interviewees; 37.5%) also explained that attitude is very essential for those who work in the hotel industry. While employees with a positive attitude tend to be open-minded, adaptable, and trainable, those who possess a negative attitude tend to be narrow-minded and inadaptable. Given that this industry is human- and service-based, employees with a positive attitude will be able to better serve and deal with internal and external customers from diverse backgrounds in various unforeseen circumstances.

Empathy, innovation skills, and Thainess were also mentioned and emerged as key skills and competencies for line-level employees in the current study. As one participant pointed out, empathy or the ability to relate oneself to other's view, feelings, and/or experiences will definitely support hotel workers' service performance. That is, they will be able to notice and recognize the extent of hotel guests' expression, expectation, satisfaction, and dissatisfaction. This finding was consistent with the study by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry (1988) noting that empathy was also included in five dimensions of service quality along with tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, and assurance.

Innovation skills were also perceived to be essential for the new generation of hotel workers. The younger generation with a good knowledge of IT or e-commerce applications, such as online ticketing and reservation service, are in high demand nowadays. One participant added that she included this competency in the job requirements and qualifications when recruiting new line-level staff.

Last but not least, Thainess which refers to the traditional hospitable character of the Thai people was also emerged as one of the competencies for line-level employees in the current study. The concept of Thainess was initiatively launched in the "2007 Seven Amazing Wonders of Thailand" campaign by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) to promote the characteristics of Thai attractions (TAT, 2018). With the intention of making the nation stand out by offering one of a kind of experiences to tourists visiting Thailand, the concept of Thainess also covers the unique art of Thai living which refers to traditional Thai hospitality, lifestyle, and friendliness of the people. Hotel workers who possess the unique art of Thainess would impress guests with the hospitable

character of the Thai people and the numerous cultural assets of the nation and make Thailand a unique and memorable tourist destination.

Top 3 Skills for Management-level Hotel Workers (N = 8)

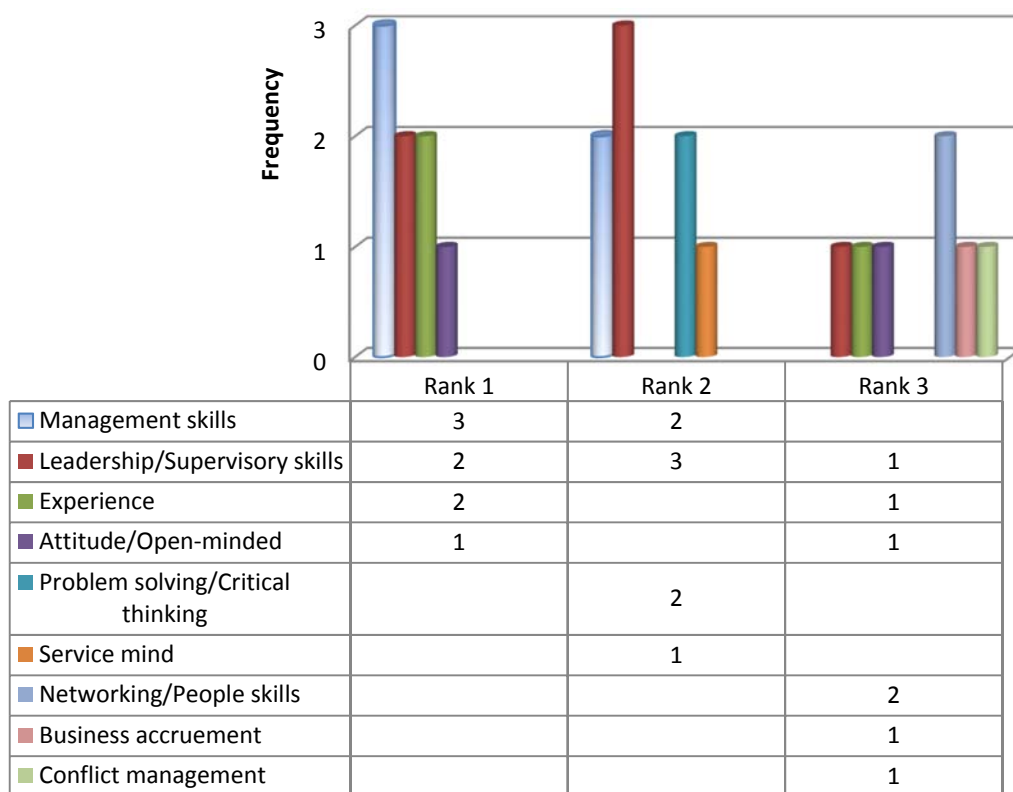


Figure 5.2. Top Three Skills for Management-level Hotel Workers (N = 8).

In regard to the skills and competencies needed for workers in management level positions, management skills were rated by five (62.5%) out of eight interviewees as the most important competencies followed by leadership and supervisory skills (see Figure 5.2). The majority (6 interviewees; 75%) pointed out that management and leadership skills are an absolute requirement for people who work in management and higher level positions. As they have already passed all requirements of basic skills and competencies, skills for those who work in management level positions such as management and leadership skills are expected to be far more advanced than for

those in line level positions. In other words, they need to be able to lead and motivate their subordinates to achieve desired performance and organizational objectives under their supervision effectively. Management and leadership skills should always come together with strategic thinking, planning skills, supervisory, and visionary skills or the ability to forecast what the world or the business should be like in the future.

The seven following skills and competencies were also perceived to be essential for workers in management level positions: (a) experience/professionalism, (b) attitude/open-minded, (c) problem solving/critical thinking, (d) service mind, (e) networking/people skills, (f) business accruement, and (g) conflict management. Some participants (3 interviewees; 37.5%) shared their view on these skills and competencies needed for workers in management level positions:

Experience and professionalism make workers in management level positions different and standing out from those in line-level positions. The longer experience they have, the more professional they become. That is, hotel workers with experience in the industry gained over a long period of time tend to professionally think ahead, plan, and make a right decision at the right moment.

Two participants (25%) also pointed out that networking and people skills are important for those who work in management level positions. They must have positive work relationships with colleagues, their subordinates, and good networking with people outside their organization. In other words, management level workers can be viewed as an ambassador for the property who builds cooperative relationships with people both from inside and outside their organization. This finding was in part consistent with results from the study by Kiatkiri (2014) where networking and people

skills were ranked number five of skills and competencies needed for Thai hotel workers in management level positions.

In addition, one participant added that people who work in management level positions should also have a strong perspective on business accrument. In principle, they should be able to effectively analyze current business situation and forecast the future direction of the industry in order to gain competitive advantage over other hotel properties.

Workplace Diversity in the Thailand Hotel Industry

The concept of workplace diversity and intercultural settings were introduced to the participants as the foundation for the key questions relating to Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence. All interviewees were solicited to respond to a series of questions about workplace diversity including "What does workplace diversity mean to you?," "Does your hotel have workplace diversity?," and "How does your hotel manage workplace diversity?"

The majority (7 interviewees; 87.5%) appeared to associate workplace diversity with a variety of people from different backgrounds in an organization including age, gender, ethnicity, education, sexual orientation, family, job responsibilities, and experience. One participant viewed workplace diversity as a good opportunity to gain advantage over other hotel properties. Given that employees are a human capital of an organization, having a variety of human capital is highly beneficial to an organization in the long run. Experience and knowledge sharing among employees from diverse backgrounds, for example, is one of the advantages of workplace diversity.

This finding was consistent with Pimapunsri's (2008) view on the benefit of workforce diversity in promoting an organization to gain better understanding of other cultures and better

serve customers in various markets. All interviewees brought up the concept of equity in the workplace at the mention of workplace diversity. They pointed out that all employees regardless of the nationality, the religion, must be treated equally so that they can work happily together. An awareness of workplace diversity was viewed as an attempt to make employees from diverse backgrounds happy so that they want to give their happiness back to customers. In other words, employees will serve guests as the way they were treated by their employers.

All interviewees revealed that there was low percentage of race and ethnic diversity in the Thailand hotel industry, especially in Samui island where the majority of workers are Thai people and the ratio of expatriates to Thai employees was only 3:100. As a result, ethnic diversity is definitely not a major issue for the human resources department. On the other hand, age and generation gap were considered to be the issue of workplace diversity in the Thailand hotel industry. During the interviews, five interviewees (62.5%) addressed the issue of age and generation gap in the workplace. As there are both older and younger generation of hotel workers nowadays, disagreements and arguments among them have been an inevitable issue in the hotel industry.

In addition, educational background, sexual orientation, family background, job responsibilities, and experience also emerged as the minor issue of workplace diversity in the Thailand hotel industry. Various family and educational backgrounds of hotel workers were also perceived as an issue as they lead to their ways of seeing things in a whole different perspective. Although sexual orientation and gender identity appear to be the minor issue of diversity in the

hotel industry, all interviewees were aware that this subject is sensitive and needs to be dealt with very carefully.

Lastly, all participants were requested to discuss workplace diversity management, policies, programs or training in their hotels. The finding suggested that diversity management programs developed in the Thailand hotel industry can be grouped under two categories: programs for all workers and programs for expatriates only.

All interviewees pointed out that their hotels adopted two approaches to diversity management programs for all employees. While one approach was provided for facilitating workplace diversity within an organization, another was for training their employees to deal with customers from diverse backgrounds. For instance, activity-based programs such as an annual staff outing, occasional staff parties, team-building program, leadership program, and intercultural events are created for building relationships among employees from different backgrounds. People who work in management and higher level positions in any department would be assigned to attend a training session for leaders about workplace diversity management. This session aims to educate leaders on a strategy for working with colleagues and subordinates from diverse backgrounds and retaining a pleasant work environment at the same time.

On the other hand, cultural awareness training programs are provided for the purpose of educating employees on appropriate and effective intercultural interactions. For instance, as tourists from China appeared to be in the top three international tourist arrivals to Samui island over the past five years (see Table 1.2), hotel workers who have direct interactions with hotel guests must be aware of the nature of the Chinese culture and their beliefs. One participant also

added that the cultural awareness training was taught by a Chinese management trainee who is temporarily employed at the hotel. Apart from teaching basic Chinese for Hotel, the training also covers a geography and brief history of China which is relevant to their cultural beliefs in more ways than one.

It was also interesting to note that there were only representative from the international chain hotel who brought up the online diversity training program designed by their corporate headquarters to increase cultural diversity awareness, attitude, knowledge, and skills of their employees. For example, people working for Marriott International group are required to complete the “Serve 360 Goal: Human Rights” online training, which includes information on Marriott’s human rights, non-discrimination policies, and diversity related issues. While Hilton has not only used state-of-the-art technology like MOOCs (Massive Online Open Courses), Harvard Manager Mentor, and Cornell Hospitality for their leadership development, but also invested in “CultureWizard” intercultural online learning tools, resources, and training programs for developing intercultural understanding and awareness both inside and outside an organization. In other words, the online intercultural training programs where hotel workers can access anytime at any places will benefit hotel workers in regard to intercultural communication and encounters with colleagues and guests from different backgrounds. However, during the interview, no representative from the local chain hotel stated any policies or plans to invest in the online diversity training program for their employees.

With respect to diversity management programs for expatriates, all interviewees stated that a Thai culture brief or culture orientation program was provided for all expatriates at the beginning

of employment. This program covers all information about the nature of the Thai culture, the meaning of body language or non-verbal communication in Thai culture, Thai cultural beliefs, cultural Dos and Don'ts, and organizational culture in general. In most cases the culture orientation program was on a two-day session and conducted by a representative from the human resources department.

As expatriates were mostly employed in management level positions, the difficulty of working with local staff was also reported being an issue in the Thailand hotel industry due in part to the language barrier and cultural differences. This issue was also pointed out and consistent with the study by Kiatkiri (2014). Accordingly, the majority (6 interviewees; 75%) provided follow-up meetings with expatriates in an effort to minimize this difficulty. In most cases the human resources department considered themselves to be an intermediary between expatriate managers and local staff. In addition, half of the participants (50%) who were representative from the local chain hotel pointed out that socializing with local staff outside of work was likewise a means of lessening the difficulty of working with local staff and an unpleasant work environment. That is, socializing with local staff was helpful for expatriates to learn how to get along with local people and gain an in-depth understanding of Thai culture which can then lead to a pleasant and productive work environment.

ICC in the Thailand Hotel Industry from a Human Resources Perspective

Attitude. When asked about what constitutes intercultural communicative competence, all interviewees agreed that attitude towards other cultures is the key component of this competence. They believed that attitude towards other cultures serves as a foundation of hotel workers'

intercultural communicative competence which then leads to service quality. Attitude is not only grounds for hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence, but also for their job performance. If they fundamentally have a positive attitude, there followed other components. An individual with a positive attitude towards other cultures tend to be open-minded and willing to accept other cultures and their members. This attribute helps them a great deal to perform their job effectively when interacting with hotel guests from different backgrounds.

Not only did most of the interviewees relate attitude towards other cultures to the openness and the willingness to accept other cultures during intercultural encounters, they perceived this key component as an individual's respect for other cultures as well. Given that all people have their own culture, the respect for other cultures is vital for retaining a good work environment. This does not only mean the respect between Thai and expatriate employees or Thai employees and international hotel guests, but also among Thai workers who originate from various parts of the country.

In addition to attitude towards other cultures, the majority (7 interviewees; 87.5%) reflected that hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence also consists of cultural empathy, work experience, knowledge of other cultures, language abilities, and confidence to interact with people from other cultures.

Cultural empathy. From a hospitality service perspective, cultural empathy was viewed as an attempt to understand other cultures empathically as well as the ability to foresee a guest's needs and concerns. As in part consistent with the study by Kiatkiri (2014), half of the interviewees (50%) brought up that cultural empathy is in the nature of the Thai people who in general have an

empathic comprehension of other cultures. With their thoughtfulness and considerate regard for others, Thai people habitually like to extend a warm welcome to the passing tourists regardless of nationality. Thus, traditional Thai hospitality is known for its kind and hospitable service.

In addition, one participant added that people do not have cultural empathy by nature, they need a profound understanding of other cultures and experience in intercultural involvement in order to build up this ability. That is, cultural empathy can promote an individual's intercultural communicative competence, but it is not easy for anyone to possess this ability. Given that cultures are by nature a very sensitive matter, lacking deep understanding of other cultures might risk offending some people. For example, in Thai culture, it is not uncommon for a hotel staff to help senior hotel guests who needed support while walking by gently grasping their arm. Be that as it may, it might not be common in some cultures and people might be offended by this innocent action. Thus, a profound comprehension of other cultures, particularly the culture of target hotel guests, is needed in the context of customer service in the hospitality industry.

Experience. Work experience in intercultural environment thus emerged as another vital component of hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence. Four interviewees (25%) observed that front-line employees who had worked in the hotel industry for many years tend to be at ease when interacting with hotel guests from different cultures. On the other hand, new employees, especially those who just graduated from school and have no work experience, are likely to get nervous when they have to serve international hotel guests. Subsequently, intercultural experience in actual work settings and training program in intercultural communication provided by the hotel in which they were employed appeared to be important for workers in the industry.

Interaction involvement. All interviewees agreed that hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence is also underpinned by their knowledge of other cultures. To appropriately and effectively interact with hotel guests and colleagues from different cultures, hotel workers need to have practical knowledge of other cultures, the basic knowledge of hotel guests' culture, specifically cultural Dos and Don'ts. For example, as one interviewee added, the increasing number of Israeli tourists in Samui island each year has made hotel workers progressively aware of the nature of the Jewish culture and their beliefs, including the specific dietary or kosher meals, and other restrictions imposed by religious law.

Aside from knowledge of other cultures, Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence was also supported by their language abilities, and confidence to interact with people from other cultures.

Personal attributes. Consistent with the study by Kiatkiri (2014), personal attributes emerged as one of the components of intercultural communicative competence. In the current study, be trainable, be self-disciplined, and be mature were described as personal attributes that a hotel worker should possess. As one interviewee pointed out, hotel workers' educational background does not really matter in the hospitality and tourism context, as long as they are potentially trainable. For those who are trainable, they could be trained to deal with intercultural encounters in actual work settings and develop a sense of diversity, cultural awareness, and many more abilities in the future.

During the interviews, be self-disciplined or having the ability to make themselves do the things they know they ought to do without others making them do, and be mature, were also

mentioned and perceived as another two required personal attribute of a hotel worker in the cultural context. In other words, a self-disciplined hotel worker with a sense of mature and appropriate tends to behave in a sensible and reasonable way even he/she disagrees on any cultural issues; he/she still focuses and makes an effort to stay on task which is certainly helpful for the service performance.

In summary, the components of intercultural communicative competence from a human resources perspective were grouped under five core categories including attitude, cultural empathy, experience, interaction involvement, and personal attributes. All core categories were guided by Arasaratnam's (2006) study except personal attributes which emerged as another component of hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence in the current study (see Table 5.3).

Table 5.3

What Constitutes ICC in the Hospitality Industry from a Human Resources Perspective?

Components	Descriptions
Attitude	- Open-minded - Accept other cultures and their members - Respect other cultures and their members
Cultural empathy	- Thai personality traits/ nature of the Thai people - Attempt to understand other cultures empathically (anticipate hotel guests' needs and concerns)
Experience	- Work experience - Intercultural encounters
Interaction involvement	- Knowledge of other cultures (especially, cultural Dos and Don'ts) - Language abilities - Confidence to interact with people from other cultures
Personal attributes	- Trainable - Self-disciplined - Mature (a sense of appropriate/ make an effort to stay on task)

ICC and Thai hotel workers. All respondents were also asked to respond to two comparative questions about the extent of intercultural communicative competence of Thai hotel workers who worked in line level and management level positions. Five (62.5%) out of eight interviewees rated their employees in line level positions an estimated ICC score of 80% up. Although it also depends on the degree of interactions with hotel guests and colleagues from diverse backgrounds, the level of Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence was described as being 'relatively good' in general. The majority of interviewees claimed that their employees in line level positions were able to serve hotel guests from different cultures appropriately and effectively. Thus, they had never received a guest complaint of cultural offenses.

In regard to Thai hotel workers in management level positions and their intercultural communicative competence, all interviewees reflected that the level of their intercultural communicative competence must be higher than of those who worked in line level positions. Given that workers in management level positions should be able to solve any intercultural communication problems that may arise and help their subordinates to get through the situation, the level of their intercultural communicative competence was thus described as being 'better than relatively good' in general.

The Gap between Education and Actual Needs of the Industry

All respondents were approached to discuss the extent to which Thai academic institutions supported intercultural communicative competence of their graduates. The majority agreed that Thai academic institutions played an insignificant role in underpinning intercultural communicative competence of their graduates. They commented that graduates had come to learn and developed

their abilities to appropriately and effectively interact with people from diverse backgrounds when they started to work in the industry. In other words, graduates learned about other cultures and how to serve and deal with people from diverse backgrounds in different circumstances mostly from on-the-job training and actual work settings.

In most cases, graduates learned about other cultures only from the language and its grammatical structures perspective, whereas language serves as one of many more dimensions of the culture. For example, Thai academic institutions have offered language courses such as 'English for the hospitality industry,' 'Chinese for careers,' 'German for tourism industry,' etc., in hospitality and tourism curricula but students have hardly been taught about other cultures or anything related to intercultural understanding which is obviously important to working in the industry.

However, three (37.5%) out of eight interviewees reflected that the degree to which Thai academic institutions supported intercultural communicative competence of their graduates is tending upwards. This finding was consistent with the study by Kiatkiri (2014) noting that a work-integrated learning (WIL) and internship abroad program have been incorporated into many of Thai hospitality and tourism curricula and provided an opportunity for students to enhance their intercultural communicative competence over the past decade. One participant also added that Thai academic institutions have supported intercultural communicative competence of their graduates better than they did in the past when an opportunity for students to do an internship abroad was very limited. Thankfully, many of Thai hospitality and tourism programs have offered a cooperative education and several options for doing an internship abroad nowadays which can

serve as a good foundation for graduates' intercultural communicative competence before starting their work in the industry.

All respondents were also asked to discuss the extent to which Thai hospitality and tourism undergraduate programs meet the needs of the Thailand hospitality industry. In general, five (62.5%) out of eight interviewees reflected that they were satisfied with Thai education providers and their graduates. However, they pointed out that the gap between the content of courses offered in university curricula and the real world still exists. This finding was also consistent with the study by Kiatkiri (2014) explicating that courses offered in Thai hospitality and tourism undergraduate programs overfocused on theory which is not practical enough in preparing their graduates for actual work settings. As a result, they will need to be intensively trained when starting their work in the hotel.

To bridge the gap between education and actual needs of the industry, the majority (7 interviewees; 87.5%) reflected that the cooperation between Thai academic institutions and industry practitioners should be implemented. While Thai academic institutions are in a position to provide theoretical knowledge for their students, industry practitioners are to assist them in practical knowledge and training in actual work settings. All participants agreed that industry practitioners should play a part in developing the hospitality and tourism curricula because they have realistic expectations of qualified graduates and first-hand experience of working with them.

Additionally, the majority of interviewees observed that Thai academic institutions are seemingly aware of the need for cooperation with the industry. It can be seen that a cooperative

education, especially in the form of work-integrated learning (WIL) and internship program have been incorporated into many of Thai hospitality and tourism curricula these days.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study employed a mixed methods approach to examine the degree of intercultural communicative competence of Thai hotel workers operating in upscale hotels in Samui island through self-assessment surveys and develop an optimal ICC training program for stakeholders in the industry through qualitative interviews with human resources professionals.

In the first study, self-assessment surveys were applied to investigate Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence and the relationships among the factors (cultural empathy, interaction involvement, attitude, experience, motivation, and ICC) adapted from Arasaratnam's (2006) model of ICC. The primary research question, "Can the ICC model explain and predict Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence?" was answered by results from the SEM analysis which showed that the structural model was an acceptable fit to the data. The main findings were, in part, consistent with intercultural literature supporting the relationships among intercultural factors influencing Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence.

The results of the structural model of ICC suggested that cultural empathy was the strongest direct predictor of intercultural communicative competence. It suggested when Thai hotel workers internalize cultural empathy, they are bound to understand and relate themselves to others during the intercultural interaction which then leads to intercultural communicative competence as the behavioral outcome. While cultural empathy generated a direct effect on Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence, the proposed indirect effect through interaction involvement was not statistically supported. Interaction involvement and motivation emerged as another two direct predictors of Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence. In

other words, Thai hotel workers who possess an ability to handle the conversation confidently and satisfyingly during the intercultural interaction with their colleagues and hotel guests from different cultures can support their intercultural communicative competence. For the context of this study, Thai hotel workers with a high degree of motivation will in general endeavor to learn and comprehend their colleagues and hotel guests from different cultures with the intention of accomplishing intercultural communication effectively and appropriately.

Contrary to expectations and Arasaratnam's (2006) study, past experience in intercultural settings was not statistically significant to predispose Thai hotel workers' perceptions and attitude towards other cultures and their members. The counter-proposition can be explained by descriptive statistics of the experience scale which was rated with "yes" or "no" (0 = No, 1 = Yes) questions. Results demonstrated averagely over 65% of Thai hotel workers had no past experience in the intercultural settings which could support their perceptions and attitude towards other cultures and their members.

The finding in the current study also discovered that cultural empathy positively influenced Thai hotel workers' attitude towards other cultures. Cultural empathy and attitude were statistically significant to generate indirect effects on Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence through interaction involvement and motivation to engage in intercultural communication.

In the second study, qualitative interviews were utilized to explore the perspectives of human resources professionals on the nature of intercultural communicative competence and its application within the hotel industry, especially in Samui island. Based on open-ended questions in

the interview script, findings were classified under four main headings: (a) skills and competencies for workers in the Thailand hospitality industry, (b) workplace diversity in the Thailand hospitality industry, (c) ICC in the Thailand hospitality industry from a human resources perspective, and (d) the gap between education and actual needs of the industry.

As part of introductory questions, all interviewees were asked to discuss the skills and competencies which are important for Thai hotel workers. Language and communication skills, functional/technical skills, service mind, and positive attitude/open-minded emerged as top four ranked skills and competencies that the majority of interviewees believed are needed for hotel workers in line level positions. In regard to the skills and competencies needed for hotel workers in management level positions; management skills, leadership/supervisory skills, experience, and positive attitude/open-minded were rated as the top four important skills and competencies.

The concept of workplace diversity and intercultural settings were introduced to the participants as the foundation for the key questions pertaining to Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence. The majority appeared to associate workplace diversity with a variety of people from different backgrounds in an organization including age, gender, ethnicity, education, sexual orientation, family, job responsibilities, and experience. All interviewees revealed that there was low percentage of race and ethnic diversity in the Thailand hotel industry, especially in Samui island where the majority of workers are Thai people and the ratio of expatriate to Thai employees was only 3:100. On the other hand, age and generation gap were considered to be the issue of workplace diversity in the Thailand hospitality industry.

All interviewees were also requested to discuss workplace diversity management, policies, programs or training in their hotels. This study discovered that diversity management programs developed in the Thailand hotel industry can be grouped under two categories: programs for all workers and programs for expatriates only. It was also interesting to note that there were only representatives from the international chain hotel who brought up the online diversity training program designed by their corporate headquarters to increase cultural diversity awareness, attitude, knowledge, and skills of their employees. However, no representative from the local chain hotel stated any policies or plans to invest in the online diversity training program for their employees.

The first research question, “What constitutes intercultural communicative competence according to human resources professionals?,” was answered by findings from repeating ideas shared by all participants. The components of intercultural communicative competence from a human resources perspective were grouped under five core categories including attitude, cultural empathy, experience, interaction involvement, and personal attributes. All core categories were guided by Arasaratnam’s (2006) study except personal attributes which emerged as another component of hotel workers’ intercultural communicative competence in the current study.

To answer the second research question, “To what extent do Thai hotel workers currently possess intercultural communicative competence according to human resources professionals?,” all participants were asked to respond to two comparative questions in the interview script about the extent of intercultural communicative competence of Thai hotel workers who worked in line level and management level positions. The majority of interviewees claimed that their employees in line

level positions were able to serve hotel guests from different cultures appropriately and effectively and then described the level of their intercultural communicative competence as being 'relatively good' in general. In regard to Thai hotel workers in management level positions, the level of their intercultural communicative competence was perceived as being higher than of those who worked in line level positions.

All respondents were also asked to discuss the extent to which Thai academic institutions supported intercultural communicative competence of their graduates. The majority reflected that the degree of this support is tending upwards. A work-integrated learning (WIL) and internship abroad program have been incorporated into many of Thai hospitality and tourism curricula and provided an opportunity for students to enhance their intercultural communicative competence over the past decade. In addition, they pointed out that the gap between the content of courses offered in university curricula and the real world still exists. To bridge the gap between education and actual needs of the industry, they thus suggested that the cooperation between Thai academic institutions and industry practitioners should be more implemented.

Optimal ICC Training Platform

Given that the hospitality industry is increasingly competitive, Thailand must strive to retain its international competitiveness with a supply of internationally and interculturally competent workers. It is thus undeniable that intercultural communicative competence can help both the hotel worker and the hotel industry improve service quality. Managers should consider how to promote Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence for the hotel's benefit.

At present, many hotels in Thailand, either managed by an international, local hotel chain, or independent without any affiliation are aware of this fact and have provided training programs starting from the workers' first day of employment. In most cases, cultural awareness training programs were included as part of orientation program for familiarizing new employees with their job responsibilities, the work environment, their department's relationship to other departments, and the target customers/hotel guests they have to interact with, etc.

From a human resources perspective in this study, Thai educators should play a part in instilling a sense of intercultural understanding and competence into their students in order to prepare them for an intercultural community and globalization. The cooperation between the industry and relevant stakeholders should also be implemented for human resources development in the context of regional, international, and global competitiveness. For example, Thai educators can cooperate with TAT (the Tourism Authority of Thailand) on a program to educate students and graduates about intercultural understanding by pinpointing the cultures of the top five international tourist arrivals to Samui island who represent as the primary market. With this type of cultural awareness program, students and graduates can learn and know how to deal with people from these cultures before starting their work in the industry.

Synthesizing the findings from this study, an optimal ICC training platform for enhancing intercultural communicative competence of Thai hotel workers in Samui island was adapted from Mitchell's (2000) guidelines and Woods' (2006) training cycle consisting of five steps: (a) identify target participants and ICC training objectives, (b) conduct an ICC pre-test, (c) identify ICC issues and incompetence, (d) develop ICC program, and (e) conduct an ICC post-test (see Figure 6.1).

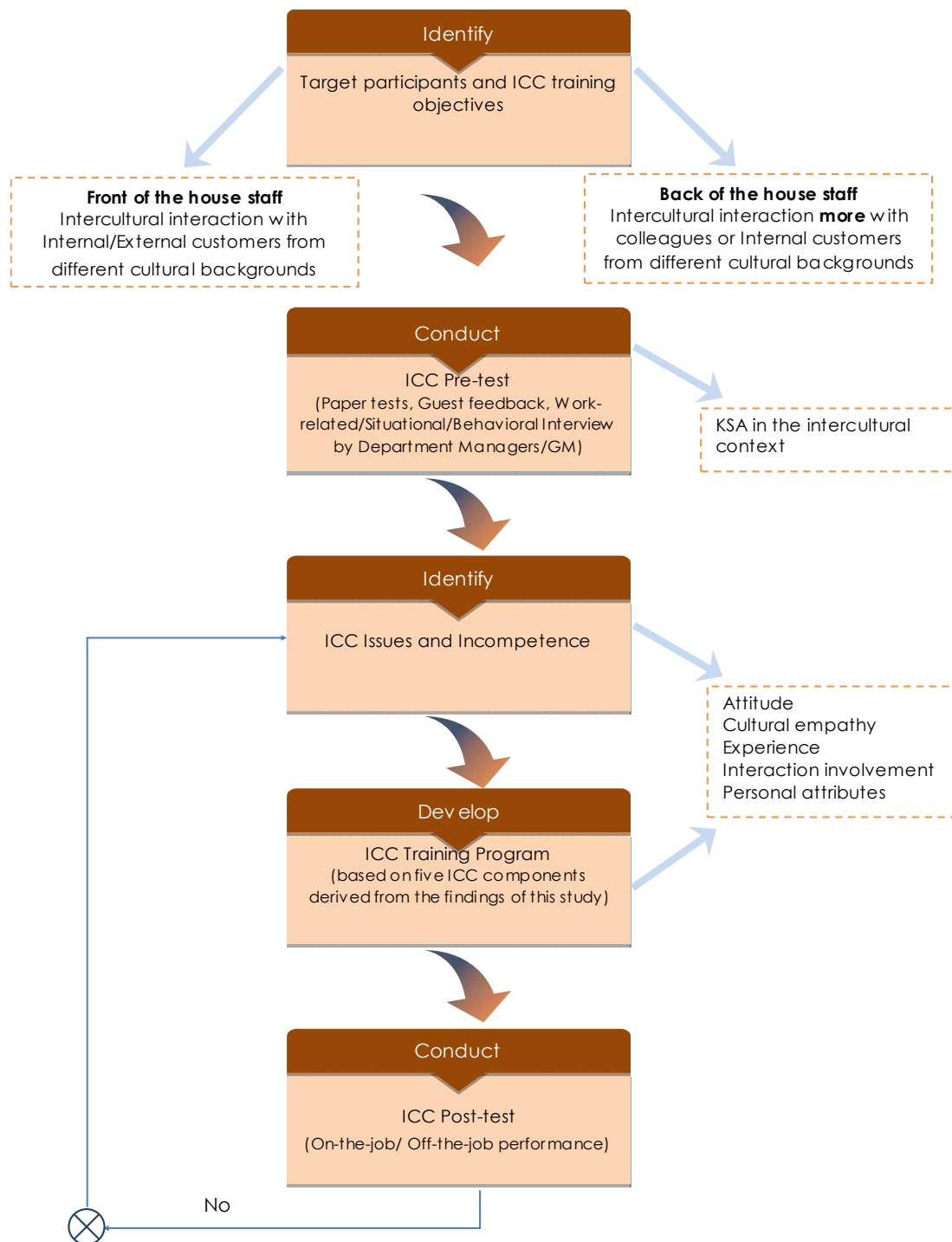


Figure 6.1. An Optimal ICC Training Platform (synthesized from the findings of this study).

Table 6.1

ICC Training Approach and Activities

Training Platform	Approach	Activities
Step 1: Identify target participants and ICC training objectives	Target Participants: Front of the house staff (direct guest services): Front office, Housekeeping, Food and Beverage, Reservation departments, etc. Objectives: To improve the service delivered to Internal/External customers from different cultural backgrounds/ Effective Intercultural interaction	
	Target Participants: Back of the house staff (no direct guest services - staff and support departments): Human Resources, Sales & Marketing, Accounting, Engineering departments, etc. Objectives: To educate staff to be more sensitive to their colleagues or Internal customers from different cultural backgrounds/ Effective Intercultural interaction	
Step 2: Conduct an ICC pre-test	To establish the baseline of KSA (Knowledge, Skills, Abilities) in the intercultural context by testing the target staff' current knowledge, skills, and abilities when dealing with Internal/External customers from different cultural backgrounds	Alternative ICC pre-test methods: - KSA in the intercultural context paper tests - Guest feedback - Critical incidents - Online ICC testing - Work-related/Behavioral/Situational interview by Department Supervisor, Manager and/or General Manager
Step 3: Identify ICC issues and incompetence	To identify staff's existing levels of KSA (Knowledge, Skills, Abilities) in the intercultural context after conducting an ICC pre-test. ICC issues and incompetence could be: - Problem in intercultural communication and interaction involvement - Negative attitude towards people from different cultural backgrounds - Problem in cultural sensitivity - Negative past experience with people from different cultural backgrounds - Personal difficulties when dealing with people from different cultural backgrounds	

Table 6.1 (continued)

ICC Training Approach and Activities

Training Platform	Approach	Activities
Step 4: Develop ICC training program	Based on five ICC components from the findings of this study: 1. Attitude 2. Cultural empathy 3. Experience 4. Interaction involvement 5. Personal attributes	Alternative ICC training topics: - Overview of the cultural differences (nationalities, religion, languages, manners and customs, gastronomy, etc.) - Cultural conflicting attitude (Hall's 1989 High/Low context culture, Hofstede's 1980 cultural dimension) - Cultural stereotypes - Perceptions of time in different cultures for a productive work environment - Specific dietary and other restrictions imposed by religious law (Ex. Kosher meals, Halal food, etc.) - Intercultural Communication and Interaction - Intercultural non-verbal communication - Tips on intercultural success Training methods (alternatively performed by Outsourcing professional ICC trainers and/or Hotel Training Manager): - Intercultural case studies - Discussion - Lecture with questions - Games - Role play - Movies/Films - Online ICC training program/ MOOCs (Massive Online Open Courses)

Training Platform	Approach	Activities
Step 5: Conduct an ICC post-test	To evaluate and measure change between before and after ICC training: On-the-job performance: to evaluate staff's on-the-job performance when dealing with Internal/External customers from different cultural backgrounds after ICC training (guest feedback, critical incidents, observation/assessment by supervisor, manager, colleagues, etc.) Off-the-job performance: to evaluate staff's off-the-job performance when dealing with their colleagues or Internal customers from different cultural backgrounds in connection with the ICC training methods <i>If the results are not effectively positive, Step 3 (identify ICC issues and incompetence) needs to be re-implemented as a continuous cycle process.</i>	

Limitations and Future Research

As with any research, this study was not without limitations. First, due to a limited number of respondents who had past experience in intercultural encounters, the relationship between past experience in intercultural encounters and attitude towards other cultures could not be statistically measured. Therefore, the relationship between these two constructs should be investigated further before coming to a conclusion.

Second, although qualitative interviews allowed the researcher to gain an in-depth analysis of Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence through the eyes of human resources professionals, subjectivity was a major concern in a qualitative research method. For the context of this study, subjectivity may arise both during the interviews and after the interviews. Given that the researcher had to introduce the concept of intercultural communicative competence and relevant intercultural literature before asking questions, the said information could

unintentionally influence the participants' responses. In regard to subjectivity that may arise after the interviews, Glesne (2011) pointed out that a sense of subjectivity can emerge when writing up the study.

Lastly, data in this study were obtained from a sample of Thai hotel workers who currently worked in four- and five-star properties in Samui island. Thus, the findings may not be applicable to all hotels in Thailand and their employees. Future research should investigate Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence in different settings to establish the generalizability of the findings. For example, future studies should be conducted in other tourist destinations in Thailand such as Phuket and Chiang Mai, and cross-comparisons might also be considered. In addition, follow-up qualitative interviews might be conducted in the future for a better understanding of Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence.

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APPENDIX A

Manuscript

Intercultural Communicative Competence of Thai Hotel Workers: A Study of Upscale Hotels in Samui Island

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the extent of intercultural communicative competence of Thai hotel workers operating in upscale hotels in Samui island. Self-assessment surveys were randomly conducted in 45 upscale hotels (21 four-star, and 24 five-star hotels). A total of 580 surveys were distributed to management and line-level employees who currently work in any department within those hotels, of which 514 were completed and usable for the data analysis, yielding a 88.6% response rate. The results of the structural model of ICC revealed that cultural empathy generated a direct effect on Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence but the proposed indirect effect through interaction involvement was not statistically supported. Interaction involvement and motivation emerged as another two direct predictors of Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence. Contrary to expectations and Arasaratnam's (2006) model of ICC, past experience in intercultural settings was not statistically significant to predispose Thai hotel workers' perceptions and attitude towards other cultures and their members. The finding in the current study also suggested that cultural empathy positively influenced Thai hotel workers' attitude towards other cultures. Cultural empathy and attitude were statistically significant to generate indirect effects on Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence through interaction involvement and motivation to engage in intercultural communication.

Keywords: intercultural communicative competence; Thai hotel workers

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1. Introduction

Representing the largest segment of the hospitality industry in Thailand, the hotel industry is flourishing alongside Thailand's tourism sector. According to the Ministry of Tourism & Sports (2017), tourism receipts of Surat Thani province of which Samui island is part, generated 84,795.95 million Thai Baht representing 4.22 percentage share of the country's tourism receipts from international tourist arrivals in 2017. The hotel occupancy rate in Samui island increased 23% from 57.09 in 2013 to 70.22 in 2017 along with the augmenting number of accommodations, rooms, guest arrivals, and their length of stay. Over the past five years (2013 – 2017), the number of tourists in Samui island has increased 33.33% from 1.8 million in 2013 to 2.4 million in 2017 (Ministry of Tourism & Sports, 2017). The international tourist market in Samui island includes a variety of tourists from seven regions: Africa, East Asia, Europe, Oceania, South Asia, The Americas, and the Middle East.

The majority of international tourist arrivals to Samui island have continuously been non-English speakers over the past five years. Based on the top 10 international tourist arrivals to Samui island classified by country of residence from 2013 until 2017, there appeared to be only three out of 10 countries of residence where the English language is used: Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States (Ministry of Tourism & Sports, 2017). For instance, the top three international tourist arrivals to Samui island in 2017 were German, Chinese, and East European (Ministry of Tourism & Sports, 2017). Hence, employees in the hospitality and tourism industry with foreign language and communicative skills are in high demand.

The growth of tourism and international tourist arrivals to Samui island continues to attract both direct and indirect investments to the area. While the direct investments including hotels, restaurants, and attractions create employment opportunities and revenue; the indirect investments such as academic and career training institutions supply workers to the growing demand in the industry. The latter has become imperative due to the need for an educated workforce.

According to the National Statistical Office (2017), the number of employed workers in the Thailand hotel industry increased 111.68% during the past decade from 119,887 in 2006 to 253,771 in 2016. The highest number of employed workers 91,006 or 35.9% was in the Southern provinces of Thailand where the main tourist destinations such as Samui island and Phuket are located, followed by the number of employed workers in the Central provinces (exclude Bangkok), Bangkok, Northern, and Northeastern provinces, respectively (National Statistical Office, 2017).

The increasing globalization of world trade has generated interactions between people from different cultural backgrounds over the years. Lustig and Koester (2006) pointed out that intercultural encounters are omnipresent, "they occur within neighborhoods, across national borders, in face-to-face interactions, through mediated channels, in business, in personal relationships, in tourist travel, and in politics" (p.2). Intercultural communicative competence has become necessary in order to live productively in the intercultural environment (Chen & Starosta, 1996).

The concept of intercultural communicative competence has gained attention from several researchers over the decade (Arasaratnam, 2006; Beamer, 1992; Byram, 1997; Chen, 1989, 1990, 1997; Chen & Starosta, 1996; Deardorff, 2006; Fantini, 2007; Imahori & Lanigan, 1989; Lustig & Koester, 2006; Ruben, 1976, 1989; Spitzberg, 1989). In the hospitality and tourism context, past research has alternatively applied the concept of intercultural communicative competence to three primary approaches to interactions between people from

different cultural backgrounds including visitors and the host community, visitors and the local workforce in the industry, and among the workforce from different cultures (Blanton, 1981; Cohen & Cooper, 1986; Evans, 1976; Gannon, 2008; Kriegl, 2000; Leclerc & Martin, 2004; Yu, Weiler, & Ham, 2002).

As the hospitality and tourism industry grows, Thailand, especially its tourist destination such as Samui island must strive to retain its international competitiveness with a supply of internationally and interculturally competent workers. Although Blanton (1981) pointed out that the workforce in the hospitality and tourism industry greatly meets a demand for intercultural understanding and communicative competence in relation to other occupations, it is imperative that the study of workforce's intercultural communicative competence should be persistently conducted for human resources development and managerial implications in the industry.

1.1 Intercultural communicative competence

While intercultural sensitivity can be defined as “an individual’s ability to develop a positive emotion towards understanding and appreciating cultural differences that promotes an appropriate and effective behavior in intercultural communication” (Chen, 1997, p. 5), intercultural communicative competence refers to “a complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself” (Fantini, 2007, p. 9). In his study, Fantini (2007) regarded four constructs of intercultural communicative competence (cultural knowledge, skills, attitude towards other cultures, and cultural awareness) as a complex of abilities that an individual would need during intercultural encounters. Intercultural communicative competence as the behavioral outcome is formed by cognitive intercultural understanding and affective intercultural sensitivity. The concepts of intercultural awareness, intercultural sensitivity, and intercultural communicative competence are separate but represent a reciprocal relationship that lead an individual to effective and appropriate intercultural interactions (Chen, 1997). Although the concept of intercultural competence has gained ongoing attention and developed from many researchers, the definition of intercultural communicative competence in the current study was based on the study by Fantini (2007) and described as “a complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself” (p. 9).

1.2 ICC in the hospitality and tourism context

In the hospitality and tourism context, the concept of intercultural communicative competence was examined in the research of Blanton (1981); Cohen and Cooper (1986); Evans (1976); Gannon (2008); Kriegl (2000); Leclerc and Martin (2004); and Yu, Weiler, and Ham (2002). Most past research has alternatively involved three main approaches to interactions and encounters between people from different cultures including visitors and the host community, visitors and local workforce in the industry, and among the workforce from different cultures. The nature of the hospitality and tourism industry necessitates the interactions of visitors and employees in the industry both directly and indirectly, thus highlighting the importance of communication among people from different cultural backgrounds.

According to Blanton (1981), there is a greater demand in the hospitality and tourism industry for intercultural understanding and communicative competence in relation to other

occupations. For example, a tour guide is perceived as one of the primary positions to mediate between visitors and the host community by representing the host culture to visitors.

Apart from interactions with visitors, employees in the hospitality and tourism industry also interact with colleagues from different cultures. As hotels are increasingly branded and managed by global hotel management companies, workplace diversity has become a major issue in the hotel industry (Anklin, 2007). Most past research has pointed out that many hotel companies try to make an effort to address the diversity issue for three main reasons: demographic changes, globalization, and marketing. Since the workforce is increasingly more diverse, the need for companies to reflect demographic changes is of vital importance. In terms of globalization, workplace diversity is a critical dimension for those hotel companies seeking to establish themselves as global players. In addition, the major hotel companies have recognized that they can better serve customers in various markets by generating workforce diversity (Pimapunsri, 2008). For instance, InterContinental Hotels Group benefits from workforce diversity when approximately 22,000 people working for the group can speak a combined 47 languages and can serve non-English speaking guests in their native language when needed (Anklin, 2007). According to DiversityInc (2018), three major hospitality companies; Marriott International, Hilton, and Aramark, were ranked 2nd, 10th, and 41st in the world's top 50 diversity companies, respectively. Large hotel companies such as Marriott International have more than 7,000 lodging properties worldwide under 30 brands across 130 countries and territories (Marriott International, 2018). As described in its diversity and inclusion corporate fact sheet, "We (Marriott) believe our strength lies in our ability to embrace differences and create opportunities for all employees, guests, owners and franchisees, and suppliers" (Marriott International, 2018). Similarly, Hilton is a global organization that is committed to diversity as its core value. Given the fact that 69% of its current employees are racial or ethnic minorities, 53% are women, 5% identified as LGBT, and 4% have a disability; Hilton has continued to develop its Team Member Resource Groups (TMRGs) which support their growing career paths and enable members to exchange feedback on their insights and past experiences with high-level executives, as a way of guaranteeing voices are heard (Slovak, 2018).

Over the years, many hotel companies have realized that multiple benefits of workplace diversity such as competitive advantage, effective knowledge transfer, and effective productivity can be achieved by managing diversity wisely. Diversity in the workforce can help companies to develop their capability of understanding customers' needs and engaging in long-term business relations with them. A diverse collection of skills and experiences such as language and cultural understanding allows a company to provide quality service to guests on a global level. Kriegl (2000) also pointed out that the ability to communicate with foreign guests along with cultural sensitivity is an asset to international hospitality workers. In Kriegl's (2000) study, cultural sensitivity was perceived by hotel managers working outside the United States as the most important international management skill, whereas intercultural competence was ranked 6th out of 13 international management skills. In order these skills were cultural sensitivity, interpersonal skills, managerial flexibility, adaptive leadership, international motivation, intercultural competence, ability to work with limited resources, understanding of international business, interest in working abroad, international etiquette, stress management, functional skills, and technical skills (Kriegl, 2000).

Thus, intercultural communicative competence of employees in the hotel sector will not only satisfy the needs of guests, but it will also build effective and pleasant relationships with colleagues from different cultures. Although past research has shown that language ability is

important for hospitality employees, it does not always generate intercultural competence. As Beamer (1992) pointed out, intercultural communicative competence does not automatically come with linguistic skill. To be interculturally competent also requires other elements such as cultural knowledge, attitude towards other cultures, and personal and professional experiences in different cultural settings.

1.3 ICC Arasaratnam's (2006) Model of ICC

Theoretical perspectives for this project were based on Arasaratnam's (2006) model of intercultural communicative competence. In 2006, Arasaratnam proposed a model derived in part from an earlier study Arasaratnam and Doerfel (2005) where they conducted qualitative interviews with participants who had interactions with people from different cultures on a regular basis. Five variables emerging from the results of word cluster analysis in the Arasaratnam and Doerfel's (2005) study included empathy, motivation, attitude towards other cultures, experiences, and listening. Arasaratnam (2006) employed five variables derived from the results of the previous study (Arasaratnam & Doerfel, 2005) to develop and test a new model of intercultural communicative competence. In this study, Arasaratnam (2006) used a quantitative survey research method and path analysis to investigate the relationships among five constructs associated with an individual's intercultural communicative competence.

In regard to the model, Arasaratnam (2006) proposed the following positive relationships between the constructs: (a) cultural empathy and interaction involvement, (b) cultural empathy and attitude towards other cultures, (c) attitude towards other cultures and interaction involvement, (d) experience and attitude towards other cultures, (e) experience and motivation, (f) attitude towards other cultures and motivation, (g) motivation and intercultural communicative competence, (h) interaction involvement and intercultural communicative competence. In addition, Arasaratnam (2006) also suggested that a direct relationship between cultural empathy and intercultural communicative competence exists within intercultural communication. In other words, an individual with a high degree of cultural empathy possesses the ability to understand and relate oneself to the other during the intercultural interaction which then leads to intercultural communicative competence as the behavioral outcome.

In summary, Arasaratnam (2006) proposed that cultural empathy generates a direct effect on an individual's intercultural communicative competence and indirect effects through interaction involvement, attitude towards other cultures, and motivation, which are also influenced by experience. Cultural empathy, attitude towards other cultures, and experience are predicted to influence an individual's motivation to competently communicate with people from other cultures, which then leads to intercultural communicative competence.

Given that its constructs can likely be related to the hospitality and tourism context, Arasaratnam's (2006) five original constructs including cultural empathy, experience, interaction involvement, attitude towards other cultures, and motivation have high potential for influencing an individual's intercultural communicative competence in the hospitality context. For instance, cultural empathy refers to the ability to relate oneself to other's view, feelings, and/or experiences during the intercultural interaction (Ruben, 1976). From a hospitality service perspective, workforce in the industry is required to possess this ability in order to serve and satisfy the needs of visitors from different cultures (Blanton, 1981). In addition, empathy was also included in five dimensions of service quality along with tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, and assurance (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988).

Cultural empathy. According to Spitzberg and Cupach (1984), empathy refers to the ability to engage in interactive behavior both cognitively and emotionally. An empathic person tends to be more selfless and attentive to other's emotions and reactions (Davis, 1983). In intercultural literature, empathy has been addressed as a key component for intercultural sensitivity and intercultural communicative competence (Bennett, 1986; Chen, 1997; Chen & Starosta, 1996). In his study, Ruben (1976) described cultural empathy as the ability to relate oneself to other's views, feelings, and/or experiences during the intercultural interaction. As a result, cultural empathy encourages an individual to express understanding and consideration through his/her active listening and verbal language with communication counterparts (Chen, 1997). The ability to put oneself in another's shoes, as Ruben (1976) put it, is a positive attribute and will predispose an individual to intercultural communicative competence.

From a hospitality service perspective, serving and satisfying the needs of visitors and guests from different cultures require an empathic understanding based on both personal and professional experiences (Blanton, 1981). Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) also included empathy in five dimensions of service quality along with tangibles ("physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of personnel"), reliability ("ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately"), responsiveness ("willingness to help customers and provide prompt service"), and assurance ("knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence") (p. 23).

Experience. Based on Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory, personal experience was a foundation of an individual's performance accomplishment which represented one of the four factors influencing self-efficacy along with vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and psychological states. Bandura (1977) suggested that positive experiences in the past helped an individual to gain confidence and motivation to engage in similar interactions. In the intercultural context, experience refers to an individual's past experience in intercultural settings such as living abroad, studying abroad, training in intercultural communication, and/or having relationship with people from other cultures (Arasaratnam, 2006). Imahori and Lanigan (1989) pointed out that past experience in intercultural interaction was not only a foundation of an individual's skills and motivation, but also of their knowledge of appropriate behaviors during encounters with people from different cultures. In Arasaratnam's (2006) study, the results revealed that past experience in intercultural encounters generates indirect effects on an individual's intercultural communicative competence through attitude towards other cultures and motivation to engage in intercultural communication.

Interaction involvement. Interaction involvement refers to the ability to perceive, respond, and focus on the topic discussed during the interaction with communication counterparts (Cegala, 1981). According to Cegala (1981), interaction involvement consists of three dimensions: (a) perceptiveness (ability to process the meaning of interaction), (b) responsiveness (ability to handle the communication), and (c) attentiveness (ability to concentrate on the topic and contents of communication). The most ideal condition of interaction involvement occurs when an individual possesses high degrees of these three dimensions which help an individual to engage in an intercultural interaction effectively and appropriately (Chen, 1997). In addition, interaction involvement is relevant to an individual's notion of self-consciousness and self-reward (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984). In other words, an individual with a high level of interaction involvement tends to handle the conversation so confidently and satisfyingly during the intercultural interaction that he/she anticipates the next encounters.

Attitude. Attitude towards other cultures refers to perceptions and feelings that an individual holds towards other cultures and their members (Wiseman, Hammer, & Nishida, 1989). According to Gudykunst, Wiseman, and Hammer (1977), attitude towards other cultures consists of three interrelated components: (a) cognitive, (b) affective, and (c) conative. The cognitive component relates to an individual's view on other cultures and their people, whereas the affective and conative components relate to an individual's emotional perception and behavior towards other cultures and their people, respectively (Gudykunst et al., 1977). Furthermore, attitude towards other cultures can be viewed as an individual's acceptance, appreciation, and respect for similarities and differences among cultures (Fritz, Mollenberg, & Chen, 2000). In Morgan and Arasaratnam's (2003) study, a positive attitude towards other cultures and their members was described as a key variable in predicting effective intercultural communication.

Motivation. Motivation refers to an individual's desire to take part in intercultural communication with the aim of understanding and gaining knowledge of other cultures and their members (Arasaratnam, 2006). Specifically, motivation is defined as "the set of feelings, intentions, needs, and drives associated with the anticipation of or actual engagement in intercultural communication" (Wiseman, 2003, p. 195). According to Gardner (2001), motivation consists of three key elements: (a) effort, (b) enjoyment, and (c) intention. In other words, a motivated individual tends to make an effort to learn the language, and enjoys being a part of the cultural community in which the language is used with the intention of achieving intercultural communication effectively and appropriately. Thus, these three elements assist in differentiating between a high motivated and low motivated individual (Gardner, 2001).

Intercultural communicative competence. Defined by Fantini (2007), intercultural communicative competence is "a complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself" (p. 9). Lustig and Koester (2006) suggested that an interculturally competent individual possesses the ability to apply and integrate a wide range of culture-general knowledge into their behavioral performance during the intercultural interaction. An individual with intercultural communicative competence will also be able to adapt oneself and react effectively and appropriately to different patterns of intercultural communication (Lustig & Koester, 2006).

In Arasaratnam's (2006) original model, intercultural communicative competence was treated as the dependent variable and identified as an effective and appropriate behavioral outcome of intercultural communication. For the context of this study, the intercultural communicative competence construct aimed to measure Thai hotel workers' ability to integrate their culture-general knowledge into their behavioral performance during their intercultural communication with people from different cultures in the hospitality context.

2. Research Methodology

In 2017, there were 622 accommodations in Samui island listed by the Ministry of Tourism & Sports; 151, 17, and 454 of those were hotels, guesthouses, resorts and other, respectively. This study employed random sampling; 45 upscale hotels (21 four-star, and 24 five-star hotels) were selected, as it is generally accepted that hotels in the higher market sectors have offered a variety of full service and high-end facilities on site. Thus, upscale hotels can be an appropriate option to sample for this study due to the fact that hotel workforce operating in luxury hotels has more opportunities to interact with internal and external customers from different cultural backgrounds in relations to lower star hotels. Participants were management

and line-level employees who currently work in any department within those hotels selected to be part of the sample.

Arasaratnam's (2006) study of intercultural communicative competence model along with past researches in the intercultural literature (Fritz et al, 2000; Gardner, 2010; Richards & Franco, 2006; Van der Zee et al., 2003) served as the foundation for this study and was adapted into a 45-items assessing (a) cultural empathy (seven items), (b) interaction involvement (five items), (c) attitude (seven items), (d) motivation (five items), (e) intercultural communicative competence (11 items), and (f) experience (10 items) within the hospitality and tourism context. Also included were 10 and four items pertaining to the demographic and organizational profile, respectively.

The data were collected from August 2017 – May 2018. Invitation letters for participation in the study were distributed by two research assistants who had strong business connections in the hotel industry, especially in Samui island. In the invitation letter, the human resource managers were asked permission for the researchers to come on property and distribute surveys to hotel workers operating in all departments including Rooms Division, Food and Beverage, Sales and Marketing, Facilities, and Housekeeping for the purposes of completing the survey (see Appendix C). Once the researcher had been granted permission to contact hotel workers on location, the researcher distributed surveys to hotel workers during morning departmental meetings. Employees were asked to complete the surveys and deposit completed questionnaires in a designated box placed in staff dining halls or other specified staff areas. Surveys were collected during a one-week time period.

3. Results and Discussion

A total of 580 surveys were distributed of which 514 were completed and usable for the data analysis, yielding a 88.6% response rate. Nearly half of all respondents (46.0%) were between 21 and 30 years old, and 41.3% were between 31 and 40 years old. Over one-third of the respondents (37.3%) had an undergraduate degree, 42.2% currently worked in Rooms Division, 40.0% in Food and Beverage, 6.6% in Sales and Marketing, and 11.1% in other departments such as Spa and HR department. Approximately 90% of respondents currently worked in line level positions, 46.1% had worked in the hotel industry between 1 and 5 years, 22.9% had worked in the current hotel less than a year, and 65.0% had remained in the current position between 1 and 5 years. Male and female respondents represented 39.3% and 60.7% of the sample, respectively. Based upon these results the profile of the typical survey respondent was a Thai female, 21-30 years old, with an undergraduate degree, who had worked in the hotel industry between 1 and 5 years, and currently worked in a line level position within the Rooms Division (see Table 1).

Table 1
Demographic Profile of Thai Hotel Workers in Samui Island (N = 514)

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Age		
< 21	14	2.8
21-30	234	46.0
31-40	210	41.3
41-50	40	7.9
51-60	11	2.2
Education		
Less than high school	5	1.0
High school diploma	167	32.8
Vocational/Technical School	69	13.6
Some college/Associate degree	62	12.2
Undergraduate degree	190	37.3
Graduate degree	16	3.1
Current department		
Rooms Division	216	42.2
F&B	205	40.0
Sales & Marketing	34	6.6
Other	57	11.1
Current position level		
Management level	45	8.8
Line level	467	91.2
Years in this position		
< 1	80	15.6
1-5	333	65.0
6-10	92	18.0
11-15	6	1.2
> 15	1	0.2
Years in the hotel industry		
< 1	45	8.8
1-5	236	46.1
6-10	173	33.8
11-15	51	10.0
> 15	7	1.4

Note: Number of cases under frequency excludes missing observations

Table 1 (continued)

Demographic Profile of Thai Hotel Workers in Samui Island (N = 514)

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Years in current hotel		
< 1	117	22.9
1-5	297	58.0
6-10	91	17.8
11-15	7	1.4
Gender		
Male	200	39.3
Female	309	60.7

Note: Number of cases under frequency excludes missing observations

Approximately 54% of respondents currently worked in five-star hotels, with four-star hotels representing the remaining 46.1%. A total of 6.1% of the participants' hotels had between 200 and 299 rooms, whereas 30.9% had between 100 and 199 rooms, and approximately 60% had less than 100 guestrooms. Slightly over 40% of the participants' hotels had between 100 and 199 employees. Over half of the participants' hotels (57.3%) were managed by a hotel chain, with the rest 42.7% being independent without any affiliation (see Table 2).

Table 2

Organizational Characteristics of Hotels in Samui island (N = 514)

Variable	Frequency	Percent
No. of rooms		
< 50	30	5.9
50-99	277	54.2
100-199	158	30.9
200-299	31	6.1
300-399	14	2.7
>500	1	0.2
Hotel rating		
5 star	272	53.9
4 star	233	46.1
No. of employees		
< 50	15	2.9
50-99	135	26.4
100-199	213	41.7
200-299	114	22.3
300-399	32	6.3
400-499	2	0.4
Management style		
Independent without affiliation	218	42.7
Chain/affiliated hotel	293	57.3

Note: Number of cases under frequency excludes missing observations

3.1 Self-assessment and View on Foreign Languages

In addition to English, respondents were asked the number of languages in which they were able to communicate. Participants (38.9%) reported having a working knowledge of at least one other language with some individuals (9.5%) knowing two foreign languages, 1.4% three foreign languages, and only 0.2% four foreign languages. Chinese, French, Japanese, German were the top four foreign languages, comprising 27.4%, 12.5%, 5.8%, and 5.5% of the sample, respectively. This finding was consistent with statistics of the Ministry of Tourism & Sports (2017) showing that tourists from Germany (ranked first), China (ranked second), France (ranked sixth), and Russia (ranked seventh) were in part the top 10 international tourist arrivals to Samui island over the past five years (2013 – 2017). Employees in the industry with a working knowledge of these languages are in demand to serve this group of tourists.

With regard to specific language skills, a total of 77.1% of respondents rated speaking as most often used skills at work, 12.8% for listening, 5.1% for reading, and 4.9% for writing. Self-assessment questions generated diverse responses, with 37.0% of the sample describing their foreign language skills as satisfactory, and only 2.6% considering themselves excellent. Approximately 50% of respondents reported needing to improve their speaking, whereas writing (39.1%), listening (34.6%), and reading skills (24.0%) received less attention. Results showed 31.6% of respondents used foreign language skills daily in their place of work.

The question of motivation for studying a foreign language generated findings similar to Norris-Holt (2001) which identified that instrumental orientation would be a motive more frequently than integrative orientation for the study of language based on the attitudes and motivation in second language learning (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Instrumental orientation refers to language learners who have a goal to achieve, whereas integrative orientation defines learners who have a significant interest in the culture of that language and expect to take part in foreign community (Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Norris-Holt, 2001). This study showed that 49.7% of respondents chose to learn a foreign language for increasing their job opportunities and 36.8% expected to improve language skills, whereas only 13.2% learned the foreign language for the purpose of developing an understanding of the foreign culture (see Table 3).

Table 3
Self-assessment and View on Foreign Languages (N = 514)

Variable	Frequency	Percent
No. of foreign languages (besides English)		
0	257	50.0
1	200	38.9
2	49	9.5
3	7	1.4
4	1	0.2
Foreign language (besides English)		
Chinese	141	27.4
French	64	12.5
German	28	5.5
Italian	6	1.2
Japanese	30	5.8
Korean	15	2.9
Russian	19	3.7
Spanish	13	2.5
Other	4	0.8
Motivation to learn foreign languages		
To improve language skills	114	36.8
To increase job opportunities	154	49.7
To develop understanding of the culture of a foreign country	41	13.2
Frequency of using foreign language skills at work		
Everyday	153	31.6
2-3 days/week	88	18.2
Once a week	48	9.9
Once a month	36	7.4
Never	159	32.9

Note: Number of cases under frequency excludes missing observations

Table 3 (continued)

Self-assessment and View on Foreign Languages (N = 514)

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Foreign language skills most often used		
Listening	65	12.8
Speaking	391	77.1
Reading	26	5.1
Writing	25	4.9
Self-assessed foreign language skills		
Excellent	13	2.6
Very Good	73	14.5
Good	157	30.5
Satisfactory	186	37.0
Weak	74	14.7
Foreign language skills need improvement		
Listening	176	34.6
Speaking	253	49.7
Reading	122	24.0
Writing	199	39.1

Note: Number of cases under frequency excludes missing observations

3.2 Data Screening

Prior to model testing, the data (primarily the 45 variables) were screened for univariate and multivariate outliers, normality, and multicollinearity using SPSS v23 for Mac. Using Field's (2009) criteria of normality ($|z_{\text{skewness}}| > 2.58$) for large samples ($N > 200$), a total of 9 (1.8%) univariate outliers was deleted from the original 514 cases. Six multivariate outliers were deleted based on Mahalanobis distance criteria at .001 level (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). Finally, bivariate correlation coefficients were computed among the 45 variables and there was no evidence of multicollinearity ($r > .80$) (Field, 2009).

3.3 Structural Equation Modeling

After data screening, a subsample of 499 cases or 97.1% of the original sample was used for analysis. Using *Mplus* v7, the hypothesized model was tested. The hypothesized model was not a good fit to the data, $\chi^2(930) = 2,040.768$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2/\text{df} = 2.194$, CFI = .778, TLI = .764, RMSEA = .049 (90% CI .046 - .052). To modify the model, a principal axis factor with promax rotation (EFA) was conducted on the 45 items. Using Gorsuch's (1997) criteria, a six-factor solution was achieved. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis (KMO = .941), and all six factors in combination explained 60.8% of the variance.

Table 4

Factor Analysis of Intercultural Communicative Competence Factors (n = 499)

Factors	Factor loading	Eigenvalue	% of variance
<i>Factor 1 – ICC (Cronbach's α = .96)</i>		13.85	40.95
ICC8: I can understand the foreign language when spoken about a variety of topics within the hospitality and tourism context.	.89		
ICC9: I can use foreign language skills to present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics.	.88		
ICC11: I understand language rules through comparisons of the language studied and my own.	.87		
ICC10: I reinforce and further my knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language.	.87		
ICC7: I can understand the foreign language when written about a variety of topics within the hospitality and tourism context.	.86		
ICC5: I understand when native speakers speak their language at a normal speed (based on the foreign language that I feel I can communicate the best).	.84		
ICC6: I am able to reply to a question based on general knowledge of global issues in the foreign language.	.83		
ICC3: I understand myself in a cultural context (e.g., aware of my own origins, history, ethnic identity, community, etc.).	.75		
ICC2: I demonstrate knowledge of other cultures (e.g., religious, political, governmental, educational, family structures).	.75		
ICC4: I understand myself in a comparative cultural context.	.74		

Note: 60.8% of cumulative variance explained. Factor loadings below .40 were excluded.

Table 4 (continued)

Factor Analysis of Intercultural Communicative Competence Factors (n = 499)

Factors	Factor loading	Eigenvalue	% of variance
<i>Factor 2 – Interaction Involvement</i> (Cronbach's $\alpha = .93$)			
		10.73	6.51
IV3: I am confident interacting with hotel guests from different cultures.	.78		
IV4: I always know what to say when interacting with hotel guests from different cultures.	.78		
IV2: I enjoy interacting with my colleagues from different cultures.	.76		
IV1: I enjoy interacting with hotel guests from different cultures.	.75		
IV5: I always know what to say when interacting with my colleagues from different cultures.	.74		
<i>Factor 3 – Cultural Empathy</i> (Cronbach's $\alpha = .88$)			
		8.57	4.54
EM4: I accept that hotel guests from different cultures can react differently.	.79		
EM5: I accept that my colleagues from different cultures can react differently.	.74		
EM3: I attempt to understand by imagining the perspectives of my colleagues from different cultures.	.72		
EM2: I attempt to understand by imagining the perspectives of hotel guests from different cultures.	.68		
EM6: I notice when hotel guests from different cultures are in trouble.	.63		
EM1: I can understand the feelings of people from different cultures.	.61		
<i>Factor 4 – Experience</i> (Kuder-Richardson (KR) = .76)			
		5.21	4.05
EX9: I have lived abroad.	.82		
EX10: I have done an internship abroad.	.80		
EX2: I had formal training in intercultural communication at the hotel in which I was previously employed.	.77		
EX1: I had formal training in intercultural communication at school.	.71		
EX3: I had formal training in intercultural communication at the hotel in which I am currently employed.	.71		
EX4: I had colleagues from different cultures at the hotel in which I was previously employed.	.59		
EX8: I have studied abroad.	.57		
EX5: I have colleagues from different cultures at the hotel in which I am currently employed.	.52		

Note: 60.8% of cumulative variance explained. Factor loadings below .40 were excluded.

Table 4 (continued)

Factor Analysis of Intercultural Communicative Competence Factors (n = 499)

Factors	Factor loading	Eigenvalue	% of variance
<i>Factor 5 – Motivation (Cronbach's α = .85)</i>		3.37	2.85
MO2: I enjoy initiating conversations with my colleagues from different cultures.	.47		
MO1: I enjoy initiating conversations with hotel guests from different cultures.	.46		
MO5: When I have problem understanding something in other cultures, I always ask people from that culture.	.42		
<i>Factor 6 – Attitude (Cronbach's α = .72)</i>		4.84	1.90
AT1: I respect the values of people from different cultures.	.56		
AT6: I accept the similarities and/or differences among cultures.	.55		
AT2: I respect the ways people from different cultures behave.	.48		
AT5: I appreciate the language(s) of different culture(s).	.48		
AT3: I would not accept the opinions of people from different cultures (reverse scored).	.47		

Note: 60.8% of cumulative variance explained. Factor loadings below .40 were excluded.

Table 4 shows the rotated factor loadings. The solution used 37 (82.2%) of the original 45 items. That is, 8 items with factor loadings below .40 were dropped from the final solution: (a) factor 1 – ICC (one item – ICC1), (b) factor 2 – interaction involvement (no item was dropped), (c) factor 3 – cultural empathy (one item – EM7), (d) factor 4 – experience (two items – EX6, EX7), (e) factor 5 – motivation (two items – MO3, MO4), (f) factor 6 – attitude (two items – AT4, AT7).

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was then conducted based on the six-factor solution given by EFA. This model was not a good fit to the data, $\chi^2(614) = 1,476.344$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2/df = 2.404$, CFI = .797, TLI = .780, RMSEA = .053 (90% CI .050 - .057). The model was modified by dropping items which had low factor loading until good model fit was achieved, $\chi^2(195) = 357.855$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2/df = 1.835$, CFI = .927, TLI = .914, RMSEA = .041 (90% CI .034 - .048). The final measurement model retained 22 (48.9%) of the original 45 items with six factors: ICC (four items), interaction involvement (four items), cultural empathy (four items), experience (four items), motivation (three items), and attitude (three items). Solutions were generated on the basis of WLSMV (Mean- and Variance-adjusted Weighted Least Square) estimation, which is technically used for a model with one or more of the categorical factor indicators (Brown, 2006). Additionally, factor determinacy scores were not available for analysis because the experience scale is categorical with “yes” or “no” responses.

Table 5 illustrates confirmatory factor analysis results for the measurement model. Factor loading estimates were statistically significant at .001 level with the values ranging from .65 to .91, suggesting that the indicators were strongly related to their purported latent factors (Brown, 2006). The average variance extracted (AVE) of all constructs ranged from .51 to .88 indicating adequate convergent validity of the measurement model (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). The composite

reliability (CR) coefficients ranged from .85 to .93 suggesting a good construct reliability (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 5

Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results for the Measurement Model (n = 499)

Constructs	Indicators	Factor loading	AVE	CR
ICC (4 items)			.51	.93
	ICC5: I understand when native speakers speak their language at a normal speed (based on the foreign language that I feel I can communicate the best).	.91		
	ICC7: I can understand the foreign language when written about a variety of topics within the hospitality and tourism context.	.86		
	ICC8: I can understand the foreign language when spoken about a variety of topics within the hospitality and tourism context.	.87		
	ICC9: I can use foreign language skills to present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics.	.84		
Interaction Involvement (4 items)			.71	.88
	IV1: I enjoy interacting with hotel guests from different cultures.	.89		
	IV2: I enjoy interacting with my colleagues from different cultures.	.87		
	IV3: I am confident interacting with hotel guests from different cultures.	.83		
	IV4: I always know what to say when interacting with hotel guests from different cultures.	.83		
Cultural Empathy (4 items)			.74	.92
	EM1: I can understand the feelings of people from different cultures.	.88		
	EM2: I attempt to understand by imagining the perspectives of hotel guests from different cultures.	.86		
	EM3: I attempt to understand by imagining the perspectives of my colleagues from different cultures.	.88		
	EM4: I accept that hotel guests from different cultures can react differently.	.83		

Note: AVE = average variance extracted; CR = composite reliability

Table 5 (continued)

Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results for the Measurement Model (n = 499)

Constructs	Indicators	Factor loading	AVE	CR
Experience (4 items)	EX1: I had formal training in intercultural communication at school.	.89	.88	.89
	EX2: I had formal training in intercultural communication at the hotel in which I was previously employed.	.79		
	EX8: I have studied abroad.	.90		
	EX9: I have lived abroad.	.65		
Motivation (3 items)	MO1: I enjoy initiating conversations with hotel guests from different cultures.	.79	.67	.86
	MO2: I enjoy initiating conversations with my colleagues from different cultures.	.86		
	MO5: When I have problem understanding something in other cultures, I always ask people from that culture.	.80		
Attitude (3 items)	AT1: I respect the values of people from different cultures.	.83	.66	.85
	AT2: I respect the ways people from different cultures behave.	.78		
	AT6: I accept the similarities and/or differences among cultures.	.83		

Note: AVE = average variance extracted; CR = composite reliability

Intercorrelations of the six constructs were examined for discriminant validity (see Table 6). The correlation matrix showed that all factor correlations did not exceed .85 which is technically used as the cutoff criterion for problematic discriminant validity (Brown, 2006; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). In other words, results indicated that the discriminant validity of the constructs was good. However, seven intercorrelations were moderately high: between attitude and interaction involvement ($r = .83$), between motivation and intercultural communicative competence ($r = .81$), between motivation and cultural empathy ($r = .81$), between motivation and interaction involvement ($r = .85$), between intercultural communicative competence and cultural empathy ($r = .74$), between intercultural communicative competence and interaction involvement ($r = .75$), and between cultural empathy and interaction involvement ($r = .76$).

Table 6

Correlation Matrix for the Measurement Model Constructs (n = 499)

	Mean	SD	AT	MO	ICC	EM	EX	IV
AT	4.09	0.94	1.00					
MO	3.80	1.05	.69***	1.00				
ICC	3.48	1.13	.48***	.81***	1.00			
EM	3.73	1.03	.69***	.81***	.74***	1.00		
EX	0.33	0.39	-.00***	.32***	.51***	.26***	1.00	
IV	3.85	1.02	.83***	.85***	.75***	.76***	.17**	1.00

Note: ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; AT = Attitude, MO = Motivation, ICC = Intercultural Communicative, EM = Cultural Empathy, EX = Experience, IV = Interaction Involvement; Experience: dichotomous measure (0 = No, 1 = Yes); All other constructs: 5-point Likert scale

Finally, the structural model was tested with ICC regressed on cultural empathy, interaction involvement, and motivation; interaction involvement regressed on cultural empathy and attitude; motivation regressed on attitude; and attitude regressed on cultural empathy, and experience. The structural model was an acceptable fit to the data, $\chi^2(159) = 411.081$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2/df = 2.585$, CFI = .904, TLI = .886, RMSEA = .056 (90% CI .050 - .063).

3.4 Significant Predictors and Main Findings

This study adapted Arasaratnam's (2006) model of ICC to investigate Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence and the relationships among the factors (cultural empathy, interaction involvement, attitude, experience, motivation, and ICC). The primary research question, "Can the ICC model explain and predict Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence?" was answered by results from the SEM analysis which showed that the structural model was an acceptable fit to the data. This result statistically suggested that the proposed model can explain and predict Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence.

Table 7

Standardized Parameter Estimates for the Structural Model (n = 499)

Hypothesized Path	Standardized Path Coefficients	p-value	Results
H1: Cultural Empathy → ICC (+)	.87	*	Supported
H2: Cultural Empathy → Interaction Involvement (-)	-.22	.21	Not Supported
H3: Cultural Empathy → Attitude (+)	.86	***	Supported
H4: Interaction Involvement → ICC (+)	.80	*	Supported
H5: Experience → Attitude (-)	-.03	.48	Not Supported
H6: Attitude → Interaction Involvement (+)	.82	***	Supported
H7: Attitude → Motivation (+)	.90	***	Supported
H8: Motivation → ICC (+)	.85	***	Supported

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

As illustrated in Table 7, cultural empathy emerged as the strongest direct predictor of intercultural communicative competence (standardized parameter estimate = .87, $p < .001$). This finding affirmed that cultural empathy generated direct effects on Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence, and hence Hypothesis 1 was supported. When Thai hotel workers internalize cultural empathy, they are bound to understand and relate themselves to others during the intercultural interaction which then leads to intercultural communicative competence as the behavioral outcome. This result was consistent with intercultural literature which identified cultural empathy as a key component for intercultural sensitivity and intercultural communicative competence (Bennett, 1986; Chen, 1997; Chen & Starosta, 1996; Kiatkiri, 2014).

While cultural empathy also positively influenced Thai hotel workers' attitude towards other cultures, it did not significantly promote their interaction involvement in this study. That is, Hypothesis 3 was supported, whereas Hypothesis 2 was not (standardized parameter estimate = -.22, $p > .05$). This finding showed that Thai hotel workers with a high degree of cultural empathy tend to possess a positive attitude towards other cultures and their members, which then leads to the ability to serve and satisfy the needs of hotel guests from different cultures.

Apart from cultural empathy, interaction involvement emerged as another direct predictor of Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence, and Hypothesis 4 was supported. The significant relationship between interaction involvement and intercultural communicative competence in the current study suggested that Thai hotel workers' ability to handle the conversation confidently and satisfyingly during the intercultural interaction with their colleagues and hotel guests from different cultures can support their intercultural communicative competence.

In regard to the first four hypotheses, except Hypothesis 2, results were consistent with Arasaratnam's (2006) original model which proposed the positive relationships among these constructs: between cultural empathy and intercultural communicative competence, between cultural empathy and attitude towards other cultures, and between interaction involvement and intercultural communicative competence. Furthermore, as indicated by Hall's (1989) high- and low-context cultural taxonomy, Thai culture was perceived as high-context where implicit messages play a significant role and the information is inferred by the context of the communication. In a high-context culture, its members tend to be more empathic and mindful of other's feelings and the surroundings. It was along these lines not surprising to find that cultural empathy emerged as a key indicator of Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence and attitude towards other cultures.

However, Hypothesis 5 was not supported. This finding contradicted the proposition that experience positively influences attitude towards other cultures. In other words, experience in intercultural settings did not significantly appear to be predictive of Thai hotel workers' attitude (standardized parameter estimate = $-.03$, $p > .05$). For the context of this study, the counter-proposition can be explicated by descriptive statistics of the experience scale which was rated with "yes" or "no" (0 = No, 1 = Yes) questions. As shown in Table 8, four items of past experience in intercultural settings including "I had formal training in intercultural communication at school," "I had formal training in intercultural communication at the hotel in which I was previously employed," "I have studied abroad," and "I have lived abroad" were retained in the final measurement model of ICC. Results demonstrated averagely over 65% of Thai hotel workers had no past experience in these intercultural settings which could lead to their perceptions and attitude towards other cultures and their members. Although confirmatory factor analysis results for the measurement model presented proof of good construct validity and reliability (see Table 5), the relationship between past experience in intercultural settings and attitude towards other cultures should be explored further.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics of Experience Scale (n = 499)

Indicators	Mean	Frequency	Percent
Formal ICC training at school	0.57		
No (0)		212	42.7
Yes (1)		284	57.3
Formal ICC training at hotel (previously employed)	0.56		
No (0)		217	43.8
Yes (1)		279	56.3
Studied abroad	0.06		
No (0)		465	93.8
Yes (1)		31	6.3
Lived abroad	0.14		
No (0)		428	86.3
Yes (1)		68	13.7

Note: Number of cases under frequency excludes missing observations; Formal training in intercultural communication at school, Formal training in intercultural communication at the hotel in which participants were previously employed, Studied abroad, and Lived abroad were four items of experience scale retained in the final measurement model.

Although cultural empathy did not generate direct effects on interaction involvement, Thai hotel workers' attitude towards other cultures positively influenced their interaction involvement and motivation, and thus Hypothesis 6 and Hypothesis 7 were supported. This result was consistent with Kiatkiri's (2014) study which confirmed that Thai hotel workers' positive attitude towards other cultures can motivate and develop their capacity to participate in an intercultural interaction with colleagues and hotel guests from different cultures effectively and appropriately. Lastly, motivation emerged as another direct predictor of Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence, and thus Hypothesis 8 was supported. For the context of this study, motivation to communicate with people from different cultures was a significant attribute and predisposed Thai hotel workers to intercultural communicative competence. In other words, Thai hotel workers with a high degree of motivation will in general endeavor to learn and comprehend their colleagues and hotel guests from different cultures with the intention of accomplishing intercultural communication effectively and appropriately.

In summary, the results of the structural model of ICC revealed that cultural empathy generated a direct effect on Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence but the proposed indirect effect through interaction involvement was not statistically supported. Interaction involvement and motivation emerged as another two direct predictors of Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence. Contrary to expectations and Arasaratnam's (2006) study, past experience in intercultural settings was not statistically significant to

predispose Thai hotel workers' perceptions and attitude towards other cultures and their members.

The finding in the current study also revealed that cultural empathy positively influenced Thai hotel workers' attitude towards other cultures. Cultural empathy and attitude were statistically significant to generate indirect effects on Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence through interaction involvement and motivation to engage in intercultural communication. Figure 1 demonstrates the final model of ICC with standardized parameter estimates. Statistically significant relationships among factors are presented with solid lines while non-significant relationships at the .05 level are presented with dotted lines.

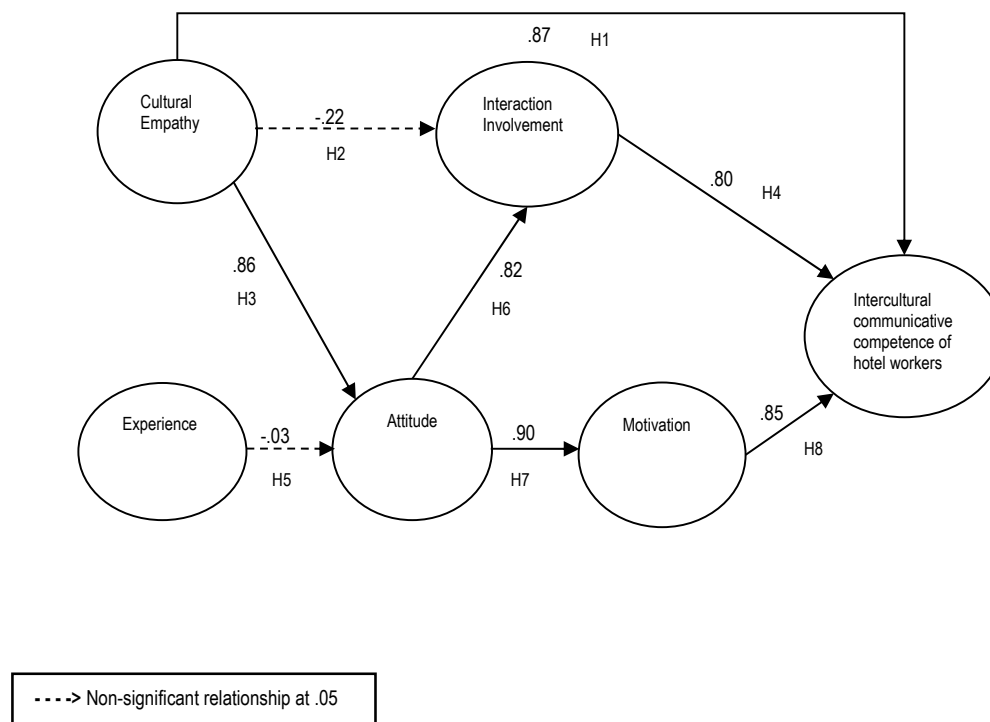


Figure 1. Results of SEM Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

4. Conclusions and Implications

While there have been a number of valuable studies applying the concept of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) to the hospitality and tourism context, no published research has specifically focused on Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence. As the hospitality and tourism industry grows, Thailand must strive to retain its international competitiveness with a supply of communicatively and interculturally competent workers. Thus, the investigation of hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence from two approaches to intercultural interactions; between guests and local workforce in the industry, and among workforce from different cultures, deserves attention from researchers.

Although data in this study were obtained from a sample of Thai hotel workers who currently worked in four- and five-star properties in Samui island, the findings may not be applicable to all hotels in Thailand and their employees. This study may serve as a gateway for future research related to intercultural communicative competence in relevant contexts such as a

study of intercultural communicative competence of Thai students in hospitality and tourism programs, a study of Thai educators' perspectives on intercultural communicative competence, and a study of intercultural communicative competence developed as part of service strategies in the Thailand hospitality industry. In addition, future research should investigate Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence in different settings to establish the generalizability of the findings. For example, future studies should be conducted in other tourist destinations in Thailand such as Phuket and Chiang Mai, and cross-comparisons might also be considered. In addition, follow-up qualitative interviews might be conducted in the future for a better understanding of Thai hotel workers' intercultural communicative competence.

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APPENDIX B

Questionnaire for Quantitative Survey of Thai Hotel Workers

Intercultural Communicative Competence of Thai Hotel Workers: A Study of Upscale Hotels in Samui Island

The purpose of this survey is to assess the intercultural communicative competence of Thai hotel workers. According to Fantini (2007), intercultural communicative competence is “a complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself” (p.9). Participant in this survey is voluntary. We would appreciate complete responses as they will help with this research and be beneficial for human resource development in the Thailand hospitality and tourism industry.

การเก็บแบบสอบถามครั้งนี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของโครงการวิจัยเรื่อง “แนวทางการพัฒนาความสามารถในการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรมของพนักงานในโรงแรมระดับสูงในอำเภอเกาะสมุย” ซึ่งได้รับการสนับสนุนจากสำนักงานกองทุนสนับสนุนการวิจัย (สกว.) ภายใต้ทุนพัฒนาศักยภาพในการทำงานวิจัยของอาจารย์รุ่นใหม่ประจำปีงบประมาณ 2560 โดยมีจุดประสงค์เพื่อเป็นการประเมินความสามารถในการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรมของพนักงานโรงแรม ตามที่ Fantini (2007) ให้ความหมายไว้ ความสามารถในการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรม คือ “ความสามารถในการสื่อสารอย่างมีประสิทธิภาพและอย่างเหมาะสมเมื่อมีปฏิสัมพันธ์กับบุคคลที่แตกต่างไปจากตนเองทั้งทางด้านภาษาและวัฒนธรรม” (หน้า 9) การตอบแบบสอบถามจะเป็นไปตามความสมัครใจของผู้ให้ข้อมูล แต่จะเป็นพระคุณอย่างยิ่งหากผู้ตอบแบบสอบถามให้ข้อมูลครบทุกข้อเพราะจะเป็นประโยชน์ต่องานวิจัยและการพัฒนาทรัพยากรบุคคลในอุตสาหกรรมบริการและการท่องเที่ยวของอำเภอเกาะสมุย

Part 1 – Instructions: For each of the following items, please select an answer that best describes you. กรุณาเลือกคำตอบที่ตรงกับความรู้สึกและความคิดเห็นของคุณที่มีต่อข้อความในแต่ละข้อ

1. How many foreign languages (besides English) can you communicate in?

คุณสามารถใช้ภาษาต่างประเทศ (นอกเหนือจากภาษาอังกฤษ) ได้กี่ภาษา _____

2. What are the foreign languages (besides English) that you can communicate in?

ภาษาที่คุณสามารถสื่อสารได้ (นอกเหนือจากภาษาอังกฤษ) ได้แก่:

☐ Chinese ☐ Korean ☐ French ☐ Russian ☐ German

☐ Spanish ☐ Italian ☐ Japanese ☐ Other (please specify): _____

3. Why did you choose to learn these languages? (Check only one)

ทำไมคุณถึงเลือกเรียนภาษาเหล่านั้น (เลือกเพียงข้อเดียว)

☐ To improve language skills เพื่อพัฒนาทักษะทางภาษา

☐ To increase job opportunities เพื่อเพิ่มโอกาสในหน้าที่การงาน

☐ To develop understanding of the culture of a foreign country เพื่อพัฒนาความเข้าใจในวัฒนธรรมต่างชาติ

☐ Other (please specify) อื่นๆ (โปรดระบุ): _____

4. How often do you use foreign language (besides English) at work? (Check only one)
 คุณใช้ภาษาต่างประเทศ (นอกเหนือจากภาษาอังกฤษ) ในที่ทำงานบ่อยแค่ไหน (เลือกเพียงข้อเดียว)
☐ Every day ทุกวัน ☐ 2-3 days/week 2-3 วันต่อสัปดาห์ ☐ Once a week สัปดาห์ละครั้ง
☐ Once a month เดือนละครั้ง ☐ Never ไม่เคย
☐ Other (please specify) อื่นๆ (โปรดระบุ): _____
5. What kind of foreign language skills do you use most often? (Check only one)
 ทักษะภาษาต่างประเทศด้านใดที่คุณใช้บ่อยที่สุด (เลือกเพียงข้อเดียว):
☐ Listening การฟัง ☐ Speaking การพูด ☐ Reading การอ่าน ☐ Writing การเขียน
6. How would you rate your foreign language skills? (Check only one)
 ทักษะภาษาต่างประเทศของคุณจัดอยู่ในระดับใด (เลือกเพียงข้อเดียว)
☐ Excellent ดีเยี่ยม ☐ Very Good ดีมาก ☐ Good ดี
☐ Satisfactory พอใช้ ☐ Weak ขาดทักษะ
7. In which areas do you feel you need improvement? (Check all that apply)
 ทักษะภาษาต่างประเทศด้านใดที่คุณเห็นควรปรับปรุง (เลือกได้มากกว่า 1 ข้อ):
☐ Listening การฟัง ☐ Speaking การพูด ☐ Reading การอ่าน ☐ Writing การเขียน

Part 2 – Instructions: For each of the following items, please circle the number that best describes how you feel about each one. Please read each statement carefully. (Circle only ONE number in each line)

กรุณาวางกลมตัวเลขที่ตรงกับความรู้สึกและความคิดเห็นของคุณที่มีต่อข้อความในแต่ละข้อ
 โดย เลข 1 = ไม่เห็นด้วยเป็นอย่างยิ่ง/ เลข 5 = เห็นด้วยเป็นอย่างยิ่ง/ และ N/A = ไม่มีความเห็น

	ไม่เห็นด้วยเป็นอย่างยิ่ง Strongly disagree			เห็นด้วยเป็นอย่างยิ่ง Strongly agree			
1. I can understand the feelings of people from different cultures. ฉันสามารถเข้าใจความรู้สึกของผู้คนที่มีมาจากวัฒนธรรมอื่น	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	
2. I attempt to understand by imagining the perspectives of hotel guests from different cultures. ฉันพยายามเข้าใจแขกของโรงแรมที่มีมาจากวัฒนธรรมอื่นด้วยการจินตนาการว่าพวกเขามีความคิดเห็นอย่างไร	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	
3. I attempt to understand by imagining the perspectives of my colleagues from different cultures. ฉันพยายามเข้าใจเพื่อนร่วมงานที่มีมาจากวัฒนธรรมอื่นด้วยการจินตนาการว่าพวกเขามีความคิดเห็นอย่างไร	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	
4. I accept that hotel guests from different cultures can react differently. ฉันยอมรับได้ว่าแขกของโรงแรมที่มีมาจากวัฒนธรรมอื่นสามารถปฏิบัติตัวแตกต่างกันออกไป	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	
5. I accept that my colleagues from different cultures can react differently. ฉันยอมรับได้ว่าเพื่อนร่วมงานที่มีมาจากวัฒนธรรมอื่นสามารถปฏิบัติตัวแตกต่างกันออกไป	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	
6. I notice when hotel guests from different cultures are in trouble. ฉันสังเกตเห็นเวลาที่แขกของโรงแรมที่มีมาจากวัฒนธรรมอื่นกำลังเดือดร้อน	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	

	ไม่เห็นด้วยเป็นอย่างยิ่ง Strongly disagree			เห็นด้วยเป็นอย่างยิ่ง Strongly agree		
7. I notice when my colleagues from different cultures are in trouble. ฉันสังเกตเห็นเวลาที่ เพื่อนร่วมงาน ที่มาจากวัฒนธรรมอื่นกำลังเดือดร้อน	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
8. I enjoy interacting with hotel guests from different cultures. ฉันเพลิดเพลินกับการมีปฏิสัมพันธ์กับ แขกของโรงแรม ที่มาจากวัฒนธรรมอื่น	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
9. I enjoy interacting with my colleagues from different cultures. ฉันเพลิดเพลินกับการมีปฏิสัมพันธ์กับ เพื่อนร่วมงาน ที่มาจากวัฒนธรรมอื่น	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
10. I am confident of interacting with hotel guests from different cultures. ฉันมีความมั่นใจเมื่อต้องมามีปฏิสัมพันธ์กับแขกของโรงแรมที่มาจากวัฒนธรรมอื่น	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
11. I always know what to say when interacting with hotel guests from different cultures. ฉันรู้ว่าต้องพูดอย่างไรเมื่อต้องมามีปฏิสัมพันธ์กับ แขกของโรงแรม ที่มาจากวัฒนธรรมอื่น	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
12. I always know what to say when interacting with my colleagues from different cultures. ฉันรู้ว่าต้องพูดอย่างไรเมื่อต้องมามีปฏิสัมพันธ์กับ เพื่อนร่วมงาน ที่มาจากวัฒนธรรมอื่น	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
13. I respect the values of people from different cultures. ฉันเคารพในคุณค่าของผู้คนที่มาจากวัฒนธรรมอื่น	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
14. I respect the ways people from different cultures behave. ฉันเคารพในวิถีปฏิบัติของผู้คนที่มาจากวัฒนธรรมอื่น	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
15. I would not accept the opinions of people from different cultures. ฉันจะไม่ยอมรับความคิดเห็นของผู้คนที่มาจากวัฒนธรรมอื่น	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
16. I think Thai culture is better than other cultures. ฉันคิดว่าวัฒนธรรมไทยดีกว่าวัฒนธรรมอื่นๆ	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
17. I appreciate the language(s) of different culture(s). ฉันชื่นชมภาษาของวัฒนธรรมอื่น	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
18. I accept the similarities and/or differences among cultures. ฉันยอมรับความคล้ายคลึงหรือความแตกต่างระหว่างวัฒนธรรม	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
19. People from other cultures should be treated the same way as people of my own culture. ผู้คนที่มาจากวัฒนธรรมอื่นสมควรได้รับการปฏิบัติแบบเดียวกับผู้คนที่มาจากวัฒนธรรมเดียวกัน	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
20. I enjoy initiating conversations with hotel guests from different cultures. ฉันเพลิดเพลินกับการเป็นฝ่ายเริ่มบทสนทนากับ แขกของโรงแรม ที่มาจากวัฒนธรรมอื่น	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
21. I enjoy initiating conversations with my colleagues from different cultures. ฉันเพลิดเพลินกับการเป็นฝ่ายเริ่มบทสนทนากับ เพื่อนร่วมงาน ที่มาจากวัฒนธรรมอื่น	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
22. I make a point of trying to understand hotel guests from different cultures. ฉันมีความพยายามที่จะเข้าใจ แขกของโรงแรม ที่มาจากวัฒนธรรมอื่น	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
23. I make a point of trying to understand colleagues from different cultures. ฉันมีความพยายามที่จะเข้าใจ เพื่อนร่วมงาน ที่มาจากวัฒนธรรมอื่น	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
24. When I have a problem understanding something in other cultures, I always ask people from that culture. เมื่อฉันสงสัยเกี่ยวกับวัฒนธรรมอื่น ฉันมักจะถามหาคำตอบจากผู้คนที่มาจากวัฒนธรรมนั้น	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
25. I demonstrate knowledge of global issues and basic concepts (e.g., political events, globalization). ฉันสามารถแสดงความรู้เกี่ยวกับสิ่งที่เกิดขึ้นทั่วโลกและมีความคิดเห็นพื้นฐานต่างๆ เช่น สถานการณ์ทางการเมือง และ ความเป็นโลกาภิวัตน์	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
26. I demonstrate knowledge of other cultures (e.g., religious, political, governmental, educational, family structures). ฉันสามารถแสดงความรู้เกี่ยวกับวัฒนธรรมอื่นๆ เช่น ศาสนา การเมือง รัฐบาล การศึกษา ระบบครอบครัว	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
27. I understand myself in a cultural context (e.g., aware of my own origins, history, ethnic identity, community, etc.). ฉันเข้าใจความเป็นตัวเองในบริบททางวัฒนธรรม เช่น ฉันรู้จักที่มาของครอบครัว ประวัติศาสตร์ เชื้อชาติ สังคมของฉัน	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

	ไม่เห็นด้วยเป็นอย่างยิ่ง Strongly disagree			เห็นด้วยเป็นอย่างยิ่ง Strongly agree		
28. I understand myself in a comparative cultural context. ฉันเข้าใจความเป็นตัวเองในบริบททางวัฒนธรรมเปรียบเทียบ	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
29. I understand when native speakers speak their language at a normal speed (based on the foreign language that I feel I can communicate the best). ฉันเข้าใจเมื่อชาวต่างชาติพูดภาษาต่างประเทศในระดับความเร็วปกติ (โดยวัดจากภาษาต่างประเทศที่ฉันสามารถสื่อสารได้ดีที่สุด)	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
30. I am able to reply to a question based on general knowledge of global issues in the foreign language. ฉันสามารถโต้ตอบเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศเกี่ยวกับความรู้ทั่วไปที่เกิดขึ้นในโลก	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
31. I can understand the foreign language when written about a variety of topics within the hospitality and tourism context. ฉันสามารถเข้าใจภาษาเขียนต่างประเทศในหัวข้อที่หลากหลายในบริบทของธุรกิจบริการและการท่องเที่ยว	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
32. I can understand the foreign language when spoken about a variety of topics within the hospitality and tourism context. ฉันสามารถเข้าใจภาษาพูดต่างประเทศในหัวข้อที่หลากหลายในบริบทของธุรกิจบริการและการท่องเที่ยว	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
33. I can use foreign language skills to present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics. ฉันสามารถใช้ทักษะภาษาต่างประเทศในการนำเสนอข้อมูลและความคิดในหัวข้อที่หลากหลายแก่ผู้ฟังและผู้อ่าน	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
34. I reinforce and further my knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language. ฉันใช้ทักษะภาษาต่างประเทศในการหาความรู้เพิ่มเติมในด้านอื่นๆ	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
35. I understand language rules through comparisons of the language studied and my own. ฉันเข้าใจกฎการใช้ภาษาศวดยการเปรียบเทียบภาษาของตนเองกับการใช้ภาษาอื่นๆ	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

Instructions: For each of the following items, please check “Yes” or “No” which best describes you. กรุณาเลือกตอบ “เคย” หรือ “ไม่เคย” ในข้อความข้างล่างนี้

36. I had formal training in intercultural communication at school. ฉันเคยผ่านการฝึกอบรมเรื่องการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรมอย่างเป็นทางการที่โรงเรียนหรือมหาวิทยาลัย	Yes เคย	No ไม่เคย
37. I had formal training in intercultural communication at the hotel in which I was previously employed . ฉันเคยผ่านการฝึกอบรมเรื่องการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรมอย่างเป็นทางการที่โรงแรมที่ฉันเคยทำงาน	Yes เคย	No ไม่เคย
38. I had formal training in intercultural communication at the hotel in which I am currently employed . ฉันเคยผ่านการฝึกอบรมเรื่องการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรมอย่างเป็นทางการที่โรงแรมที่ฉันกำลังทำงานอยู่	Yes เคย	No ไม่เคย
39. I had colleagues from different cultures at the hotel in which I was previously employed . ฉันเคยมีเพื่อนร่วมงานที่มาจากวัฒนธรรมอื่นที่โรงแรมที่ฉันเคยทำงาน	Yes เคย	No ไม่เคย
40. I have colleagues from different cultures at the hotel in which I am currently employed . ฉันมีเพื่อนร่วมงานที่มาจากวัฒนธรรมอื่นที่โรงแรมที่ฉันกำลังทำงานอยู่	Yes เคย	No ไม่เคย
41. I have close friends from different cultures. ฉันมีเพื่อนสนิทที่มาจากวัฒนธรรมอื่น	Yes เคย	No ไม่เคย
42. I watch movies/TV series from different cultures on a regular basis. ฉันดูหนัง/ละครที่มาจากวัฒนธรรมอื่นเป็นประจำ	Yes เคย	No ไม่เคย
43. I have studied abroad. ฉันเคยเรียนหนังสือที่ต่างประเทศ	Yes เคย	No ไม่เคย
44. I have lived abroad. ฉันเคยใช้ชีวิตในต่างประเทศ	Yes เคย	No ไม่เคย
45. I have done an internship abroad. ฉันเคยฝึกงานในต่างประเทศ	Yes เคย	No ไม่เคย

Part 3 – Instructions: For each of the following items, please select an option that best describes you. กรุณาเลือกคำตอบที่ตรงกับความรู้สึกและความคิดเห็นของคุณที่มีต่อข้อความในแต่ละข้อ

1. How many years have you worked in the hotel industry? (Check only one)

คุณทำงานในธุรกิจโรงแรมมาเป็นเวลากี่ปี (เลือกเพียงข้อเดียว)

☐ Less than 1 year น้อยกว่า 1 ปี

☐ 11-15 years 11-15 ปี

☐ 1-5 years 1-5 ปี

☐ More than 15 years มากกว่า 15 ปี

☐ 6-10 years 6-10 ปี

2. How long have you been employed at your current hotel? (Check only one)

คุณทำงานในโรงแรมนี้มาเป็นเวลากี่ปี (เลือกเพียงข้อเดียว)

☐ Less than 1 year น้อยกว่า 1 ปี

☐ 1-5 years 1-5 ปี

☐ 6-10 years 6-10 ปี

☐ 11-15 years 11-15 ปี

☐ More than 15 years มากกว่า 15 ปี

3. What is your current department? (Check only one) คุณทำงานอยู่ในแผนกใด (เลือกเพียงข้อเดียว)

☐ Rooms Division แผนกห้องพัก

☐ Food & Beverage Department แผนกอาหารและเครื่องดื่ม

☐ Sales & Marketing Department ฝ่ายขายและการตลาด

☐ Other (please specify) อื่นๆ (โปรดระบุ): _____

4. What is your current position level? (Check only one) คุณทำงานอยู่ในระดับตำแหน่งใด (เลือกเพียงข้อเดียว)

☐ Management level ระดับบริหาร

☐ Line level ระดับปฏิบัติการ

5. How long have you been in this position? (Check only one)

คุณทำงานในตำแหน่งนี้มาเป็นเวลากี่ปี (เลือกเพียงข้อเดียว)

☐ Less than 1 year น้อยกว่า 1 ปี

☐ 1-5 years 1-5 ปี

☐ 6-10 years 6-10 ปี

☐ 11-15 years 11-15 ปี

☐ More than 15 years มากกว่า 15 ปี

6. Age อายุ

- ☐ Under 21 years old น้อยกว่า 21 ปี
- ☐ 21-30 years old 21-30 ปี
- ☐ 31-40 years old 31-40 ปี
- ☐ 41-50 years old 41-50 ปี
- ☐ 51-60 years old 51-60 ปี
- ☐ Above 60 years old มากกว่า 60 ปี

7. Gender เพศ

- ☐ Male ชาย
- ☐ Female หญิง

8. Are you a Thai citizen? คุณเป็นคนไทยใช่หรือไม่

- ☐ Yes ใช่
- ☐ No ไม่ใช่

9. If No, which of the following best describes your ethnic identification?

ถ้าไม่ใช่ โปรดเลือกคำตอบข้างล่างนี้

- ☐ African/African-American
- ☐ Asian/Pacific Islander
- ☐ Hispanic
- ☐ White/Non-Hispanic
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

10. What is the highest level of education you have received? (Check only one)

การศึกษาขั้นสูงสุด (เลือกเพียงคำตอบเดียว)

- ☐ Less than high school ต่ำกว่ามัธยมศึกษา
- ☐ High school diploma จบมัธยมศึกษา
- ☐ Vocational/Technical school ระดับอาชีวศึกษา
- ☐ Some college/Associate degree ระดับอนุปริญญา
- ☐ Undergraduate degree ระดับปริญญาตรี
- ☐ Graduate degree ระดับบัณฑิตศึกษา
- ☐ Other (please specify) อื่นๆ (โปรดระบุ): _____

Part 4 – Instructions: For each of the following items, please select an option that best describes you. กรุณาเลือกคำตอบที่ตรงกับความรู้สึกและความคิดเห็นของคุณที่มีต่อข้อความในแต่ละข้อ

1. What is the size of the hotel where you currently work? โรงแรมที่คุณกำลังทำงานอยู่นี้มีทั้งหมดกี่ห้อง

☐ Less than 50 rooms น้อยกว่า 50 ห้อง	☐ 50 – 99 rooms 50-99 ห้อง
☐ 100-199 rooms 100-199 ห้อง	☐ 200-299 rooms 200-299 ห้อง
☐ 300-399 rooms 300-399 ห้อง	☐ 400-499 rooms 400-499 ห้อง
☐ 500+ rooms มากกว่า 500 ห้อง	

2. What is your hotel's rating? โรงแรมนี้จัดอยู่ในระดับกี่ดาว

☐ 5 stars	☐ 4 stars	☐ 3 stars	☐ 2 stars	☐ 1 star
☐ Other (please specify) อื่นๆ (โปรดระบุ): _____				

3. How many employees does your hotel have? โรงแรมนี้มีพนักงานทั้งหมดกี่คน

☐ Less than 50 น้อยกว่า 50 คน	☐ 50 – 99 คน	☐ 100-199 คน
☐ 200-299 คน	☐ 300-399 คน	☐ 400-499 คน
☐ 500+ มากกว่า 500 คน		

4. What is your hotel's management? ระบบบริหารของโรงแรมเป็นแบบใด

☐ Independent hotel without affiliation แบบอิสระไม่อยู่ภายใต้เครือโรงแรมอื่น
☐ Chain (brand name) affiliated hotel แบบเครือโรงแรม
☐ Other (please specify) อื่นๆ (โปรดระบุ): _____

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

ขอขอบคุณที่ให้ความร่วมมือในการตอบแบบสอบถาม

APPENDIX C

Invitation Letter for Quantitative Survey of Thai Hotel Workers

Dear Human Resource Manager,

My name is Sansanee Kiatkiri, Ph.D. and I have currently served as a faculty member of International School of Tourism at Suratthani Rajabhat University. I am conducting my research project funded by The Thailand Research Fund (TRF) regarding the study of the intercultural communicative competence of Thai hotel workers in Samui Island.

I am writing to you to request access to front-line hotel workers in your property who might agree to participate in a survey about intercultural communicative competence. I would like participants to complete surveys and then deposit those completed surveys in a designated box placed in the staff dining hall or any staff areas as you see fit. Surveys will then be collected by my research assistant within a one-week time period. Participation in this study is voluntary and confidential. No personal information will be asked and responses will be ethically recorded so that participants cannot be identified. The study will take no more than ten minutes of their time. I have also enclosed a copy of the survey with this letter for your review.

Your assistance in completing the project would be much appreciated. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me either at [sansanee@srุ.ac.th](mailto:sansanee@srु.ac.th) or 095-441-2525.

Best Regards,

Sansanee Kiatkiri, Ph.D.
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Surat Thani 84100
Thailand

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APPENDIX D

Interview Script

Qualitative Interviews with Human Resource Professionals

Oral Script

RAPPORT BUILDING (2 minutes):

การสัมภาษณ์เก็บข้อมูลครั้งนี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของโครงการวิจัยเรื่อง “แนวทางการพัฒนาความสามารถในการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรมของพนักงานในโรงแรมระดับสูงในอำเภอเกาะสมุย” ซึ่งได้รับการสนับสนุนจากสำนักงานกองทุนสนับสนุนการวิจัย (สกว.) ภายใต้ทุนพัฒนาศักยภาพในการทำงานวิจัยของอาจารย์รุ่นใหม่ ประจำปีงบประมาณ 2560 โดยมีจุดประสงค์เพื่อเป็นการศึกษามุมมองของผู้ปฏิบัติงาน (ระดับผู้จัดการขึ้นไป) ในแผนกทรัพยากรบุคคลที่มีต่อความสามารถในการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรมของพนักงานในโรงแรม

ตามที่ Fantini (2007) ให้ความหมายไว้ **ความสามารถในการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรม** คือ “ความสามารถในการสื่อสารอย่างมีประสิทธิภาพและเหมาะสมเมื่อมีปฏิสัมพันธ์กับบุคคลที่แตกต่างไปจากตนเองทั้งทางด้านภาษาและวัฒนธรรม” (หน้า 9)

Let me first introduce the concept of intercultural communicative competence. Intercultural communicative competence is defined as “a complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself” (Fantini, 2007, p.9). The concept of intercultural communicative competence has gained the attention from researchers and has been widely used in the fields of psychology, anthropology, cultural studies, linguistics, and communication. In the late 1970s and 1980s, the intercultural competence research expanded to broader contexts including study abroad, international business, cross-cultural training (Sinicrope et al., 2007).

As the hospitality and tourism industry is internationally oriented in its nature, being knowledgeable and interculturally competent would be an asset to one’s career opportunities in the industry. As a direct practitioner in the industry, I am interested in talking to you today about your ideas, opinions, and comments regarding the intercultural communicative competence of hotel workers and its significance from a human resources perspective. This interview will take approximately 30-40 minutes of your time.

OPENING QUESTIONS (3 minutes):

Please briefly introduce yourself:

1. What is your current position; how long have you been employed at your current hotel; how many years have you worked in the hotel industry; how many employees does your hotel have (ratio of Thai and foreign employees)?
ปัจจุบันคุณทำงานอยู่ในตำแหน่งใด คุณทำงานที่โรงแรมนี้มานานเท่าไร คุณทำงานในธุรกิจโรงแรมมาเป็นเวลากี่ปี และโรงแรมของคุณมีพนักงานจำนวนเท่าไร (กรุณาระบุสัดส่วนพนักงานโรงแรมชาวไทยและชาวต่างชาติ)
2. Approximately what percentage of Thai hotel workers at your property have obtained a degree in hospitality and tourism?
พนักงานชาวไทยในโรงแรมของคุณที่เรียนจบทางด้านอุตสาหกรรมบริการและการท่องเที่ยวคิดเป็นสัดส่วนเท่าไร (กี่เปอร์เซ็นต์)

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS (5 minutes):

Next I would like to discuss the skills and competencies which are important for employees in the Thailand hotel industry.

3. What skills or competencies do you think are needed for line-level workers in the Thailand hotel industry?
คุณคิดว่าทักษะหรือสมรรถนะใดบ้างที่จำเป็นสำหรับพนักงานระดับปฏิบัติการในโรงแรม
4. What skills or competencies do you think are needed for management level in the Thailand hotel industry?
คุณคิดว่าทักษะหรือสมรรถนะใดบ้างที่จำเป็นสำหรับพนักงานระดับบริหารในโรงแรม

TRANSITION QUESTIONS (5 minutes):

As hotels are increasingly branded and managed by global hotel management companies, workplace diversity has become a critical dimension for those hotel companies seeking to establish themselves as global players. As you may know, the major hotel companies have recognized that they can better serve customers in various markets by generating workforce diversity. For instance, InterContinental Hotels Group benefits from the workforce diversity when approximately 22,000 people working for the group can speak no less than 47

languages and can serve non-English speaking guests with their native language when needed (Anklin, 2007). From the perspective of Human resource managers in the Thailand hotel industry, let me ask you this following questions:

5. What does workplace diversity mean to you?
คำว่า “ความหลากหลายของบุคลากรในองค์กร หรือ workplace diversity” มีความหมายว่าอย่างไรในมุมมองของคุณ
6. Does your hotel have workplace diversity?
โรงแรมของคุณมี “ความหลากหลายของบุคลากรในองค์กร หรือ workplace diversity” หรือไม่
7. How does your hotel manage workplace diversity? For instance, are there policies, programs or training which takes place to facilitate workplace diversity?
โรงแรมของคุณจัดการกับ “ความหลากหลายของบุคลากรในองค์กร หรือ workplace diversity” อย่างไร
ยกตัวอย่างเช่น โรงแรมของคุณมีนโยบาย โปรแกรม กิจกรรม หรือ การฝึกอบรมที่เอื้อต่อประเด็นเรื่องความหลากหลายของบุคลากรในองค์กร หรือ workplace diversity บ้างหรือไม่

KEY QUESTIONS (20 minutes):

As I have mentioned earlier, intercultural communicative competence is defined as “a complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself” (Fantini, 2007, p.9). Although the concept of intercultural competence has gained an ongoing attention from many researchers, a multiplicity of frameworks and approaches to defining and assessing intercultural competence persists today (Sinicrope et al., 2007).

For example, Arasaratnam’s (2006) intercultural communicative competence was comprised of five constructs: cultural empathy (ability to relate oneself to other’s view, feelings, and/or experiences during the intercultural interactions), experience, interaction involvement (ability to perceive, respond, and focus on the topic discussed during the interaction with communication counterparts), attitude towards other cultures, and motivation.

8. In your opinion, what constitutes intercultural communicative competence?
ในความเห็นของคุณ “ความสามารถในการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรม” ประกอบไปด้วยอะไรบ้าง

9. What do you consider to be the key component of intercultural communicative competence?

คุณคิดว่าอะไรคือองค์ประกอบหลักของ “ความสามารถในการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรม”

10. How do these following components promote intercultural communicative competence and help employees in the Thailand hotel industry?

คุณคิดว่าองค์ประกอบต่อไปนี้จะช่วยทำให้พนักงานโรงแรมพัฒนาความสามารถในการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรมได้อย่างไรบ้าง

- 1) **attitudes** towards other cultures - “ทัศนคติ” ของพนักงานโรงแรมที่มีต่อวัฒนธรรมอื่นๆ
- 2) the **cultural empathy** (ability to relate oneself to other’s view, feelings, and/or experiences during the intercultural interactions) – ความสามารถในการเข้าใจความรู้สึกของผู้ที่มาจากวัฒนธรรมอื่น
- 3) individual’s **experience** with other cultures – ประสบการณ์ส่วนบุคคลที่มีต่อวัฒนธรรมอื่นๆ
- 4) individual’s **interaction involvement** with people from other cultures – การมีปฏิสัมพันธ์และความเกี่ยวข้องกับบุคคลที่มาจากวัฒนธรรมอื่นๆ
- 5) individual’s **motivation** to interact with people from other cultures – แรงจูงใจส่วนบุคคลที่มีต่อการปฏิสัมพันธ์กับบุคคลที่มาจากวัฒนธรรมอื่นๆ

11. Do you think intercultural communicative competence is a requirement in the Thailand hospitality and tourism industry? Why?

คุณคิดว่า ความสามารถในการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรมเป็นคุณสมบัติที่จำเป็นในอุตสาหกรรมบริการและการท่องเที่ยวหรือไม่ เพราะเหตุใด

12. To what extent do you think Thai hotel workers (at line-level) currently possess intercultural communicative competence?

คุณคิดว่าพนักงานระดับปฏิบัติการในโรงแรมของคุณ มีความสามารถในการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรมอยู่ในระดับใด

13. To what extent do you think Thai hotel workers (at management level) currently possess intercultural communicative competence?

คุณคิดว่าพนักงานระดับบริหารในโรงแรมของคุณ มีความสามารถในการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรมอยู่ในระดับใด

14. To what extent do you think Thai hospitality and tourism undergraduate programs support intercultural communicative competence of their graduates?

คุณคิดว่าการจัดการเรียนการสอนในหลักสูตรปริญญาตรีทางการบริการและการท่องเที่ยวของประเทศไทยช่วยสนับสนุนหรือส่งเสริมความสามารถในการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรมของนักศึกษา (บัณฑิต) ในระดับใด

ENDING QUESTIONS (5 minutes):

I just have two final questions before we conclude:

15. To what extent do you think Thai hospitality and tourism undergraduate programs are meeting the needs of the Thailand hospitality and tourism industry?

คุณคิดว่าการจัดการเรียนการสอนในหลักสูตรปริญญาตรีทางการบริการและการท่องเที่ยวของประเทศไทยตอบโจทย์ความต้องการของอุตสาหกรรมบริการและการท่องเที่ยวของไทยในระดับใด

16. Are there any suggestions about the concept of intercultural communicative competence that you believe are really important for human resource development in the Thailand hospitality and tourism industry that we have not discussed?

คุณมีความคิดเห็นหรือข้อเสนอแนะเพิ่มเติมเกี่ยวกับแนวคิดเรื่องความสามารถในการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรมที่คุณเชื่อว่ามีสำคัญต่อการพัฒนาทรัพยากรบุคคลในอุตสาหกรรมบริการและการท่องเที่ยวของไทยเราในปัจจุบันหรือไม่

Thank you very much for your participation in this research.

APPENDIX E

List of Participated Hotels for Quantitative Survey

List of Participated Hotels for Quantitative Survey

Total 45 upscale hotels

(21 four-star, and 24 five-star hotels) in Samui island

Hotels	Stars
Amari Koh Samui	4
Anantara Bophut Koh Samui Resort	5
Anantara Lawana Koh Samui Resort	5
Bandara Samui	4
Banyan Tree Samui	5
BayWater Resort Koh Samui	4
Belmond Napasai	5
Bhundhari Spa Resort & Villas Samui	4
Bo Phut Resort	4
Briza Beach Resort & Spa	5
Buri Rasa Village Samui	4
Centara Grand Beach Resort	5
Chaba Cabana Beach Resort	4
Chaweng Regent Beach Resort	4
Conrad Koh Samui	5
Fair House Villas & Spa	4
Four Seasons	5
Iyara Beach Hotel & Plaza	4
Kanok Buri Resort	4
Kirikayan Luxury Pool Villas & Spa Hotel	5
Luxury Villa Samui	5
Mai Samui Beach Resort & Spa	5
Mantra Samui Resort	5
Mimosa Resort & Spa	4

Hotels	Stars
Muang Samui Spa Resort	5
Nikki Beach Resort	5
Nora Beach Resort & Spa	4
Nora Buri Resort & Spa	5
Poppies Samui Resort & Spa	4
SALA Samui Choengmon Beach Resort	5
Samui Buri Beach Resort	4
Samui Palm Beach	4
Samui Paradise Chaweng Beach Resort & Spa	4
Samui Resotel Beach Resort	4
Santiburi Beach Resort & Spa	5
Saree Samui Resort & Spa	4
SENSIMAR Resort and Spa Koh Samui	4
Sheraton Samui Resort	5
Six Senses Samui	5
The Library	5
The Ritz-Carlton	5
Tongsai Bay	5
Vana Belle	5
W Koh Samui	5
Zazen Boutique Resort & Spa	4

APPENDIX F

List of Interview Participants

List of Interview Participants

Name and Job Position	Upscale Hotels in Samui Island	No. of Participant
Local Brand Hotels		
Mr. Jirayus Yangyeun (จิรายุส ยั่งยืน) Director of Human Resources	Centara Grand Beach Resort Samui	1
Ms. Tassanee Titakan (ทัศนีย์ ฐิตะกาญจน์) Human Resources Manager	Muang Samui Spa Resort	1
Ms. Thitirat Doisaman (ธิติรัตน์ โดยสมาน) HR & Training Manager	Silavadee Pool Spa Resort	1
Ms. Supharat Sangkhao HR & Training Manager	The Library Koh Samui	1
International Brand Hotels		
Mr. Worawit Sawangrut Training Manager	Conrad Koh Samui	1
Ms. Piyarat Gunama Shifau (ปิยรัชต์ กุณามา ชิฟาว) Learning Manager	Four Seasons Resort Koh Samui	1
Ms. Juthamas Waritt (จุฑามาส วาฤทธิ์) Director of Human Resources	InterContinental Samui Baan Taling Ngam Resort	1
Mr. Chethaphol Pokawarakorn (เชษฐพล โภควรรกร) Learning & Development Manager	Sheraton Samui Resort	1
Total Number of Participants		<u>8</u>