

COMPETENCY-BASED TRAINING PROGRAM FOR GUEST SERVICE AGENT IN BORDER REGION OF IMT-GT

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ABSTRACT. *Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT) is intended to improve economic growth and the social welfare of people living in border region of Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand. One of the most prominent sectors contributing to the economic growth in the border areas is tourism. In the development and construction of this industry, it requires the organization which is responsible to foster the tourism products and activities in each local area regarding its geographic location. Competency-Based Training Program for Guest Service Agent is believed to fill the gap to increase the contribution of tourism sector in economic growth. This paper concludes that the three IMT-GT countries have a common awareness of the weaknesses and challenges in human resources at the border area. In spite of that, the countries have a spirit and power together to build the human resources-based economy through tourism. Thus, creating an integrated tourism training based on Competency-Based Training Program for Guest Service Agent in Border Region is recommended to be done immediately.*

Keywords: *IMT-GT, Tourism, GSA, Training Program*

INTRODUCTION

Multilateral cooperation or sub-regional economic cooperation within the ASEAN region has shown very rapid development. These developments can be seen from the proliferation of the economic cooperation built by the provinces in the border area between Indonesia and neighboring countries, Malaysia and Thailand, through sub-regional economic cooperation. Indonesia Malaysia Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT). IMT-GT is aimed at improving the welfare and economic growth in the border area countries IMT-GT.

Five strategic thrusts were identified by the IMT-GT to achieve the sharing vision, those are:

1. Facilitate and promote intra- and inter-IMT-GT trade and investment.
2. Promote the growth of agriculture, agro-industry, and tourism.
3. Strengthen infrastructure linkages and support to the integration of the IMT-GT subregion.
4. Develop human resource and skills competencies, enhance mobility of labor, and strengthen environment and natural resources management.
5. Strengthen institutional arrangements and mechanisms for cooperation, including public-private sector collaboration, participation of stakeholders at the local level, and the mobilization of support from development partners.

The following figure compares economic growth in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand, since the establishment of the IMT-GT cooperation, 1993, until 2015.

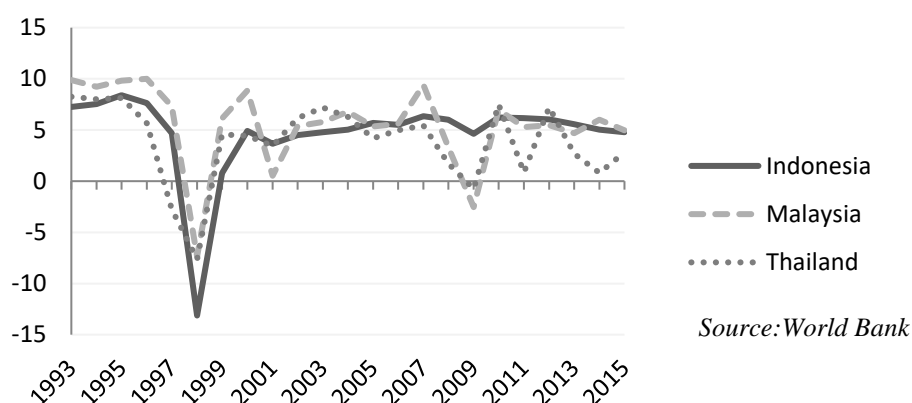


Figure 1. Economic growth (annual %)

The Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT) is a subregional initiative formed in 1993, and aims to accelerate economic transformation of the member states and provinces in the three countries by exploiting their underlying complementarities and comparative advantages. Since its establishment, IMT-GT has expanded to its present geographic scope of 32 provinces and states—14 provinces in Southern Thailand; 8 states in Peninsular Malaysia; and 10 provinces in the island of Sumatra in Indonesia (Table 1).

Table 1.
IMT-GT Participating States and Provinces

Indonesia	Malaysia	Thailand
- Aceh	- Melaka	- Nakhon Si Thammarat
- Bangka Belitung	- Kedah	- Narathiwat
- Bengkulu	- Kelantan	- Pattani
- Jambi	- Negeri Sembilan	- Phatthalung
- Lampung	- Penang (Pulau Pinang)	- Satun
- South Sumatra	- Perak	- Songkhla
- Riau	- Perlis	- Trang
- Riau Islands	- Selangor	- Yala
- North Sumatra		- Chumpon
- West Sumatra		- Krabi
		- Phangnga
		- Phuket
		- Ranong
		- Surat Thani

Source: IMT-GT Implementation Blueprint 2012-2016 (2012)

According to the Editorial Board of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Gajah Mada University (2014), the ASEAN economic situation in the second quarter of 2014 in some countries, particularly Thailand and Malaysia is able to record rapid economic growth, although is still not stable over time. While Indonesia as a driver of regional economies

showing symptoms of a slowdown in economic growth is still dealing with fundamental problems such as the economic structure of the economy that has not diversified as well as the balance of revenues and expenditures. As a result, this situation leads to economic growth that is not qualified even to record economic contraction.

Each individual country has diverse natural resources such as beaches, mountains, rivers, lakes, and tropical forests. Resources that are in the Indonesian border area is quite large, but so far the effort management is not optimal. The key sectors that are along the border areas including forestry, mining, agriculture, fisheries, and tourism. On various occasions, tourism is one sector that has contributed to the socio-economic growth in many countries, especially countries with tourism as its flagship economic sectors (Lincoln, 2013).

Holding of a training program intended that the participants have the knowledge, ability and skills in accordance with the expected outcomes. The training program will provide the knowledge and skills and the ability to grow on a person who is closely related to the results of the performance of the human resources.

The role of tourism in many countries has contributed to develop communities life, has been able boost the regional economy, as well as has increased economic growth of the country. In developing tourism sector on the border area of a country, there should be a solid cooperation between the government of the countries and other stakeholders involved. With the establishment of the multilateral cooperation IMT-GT, each country must concern to develop tourism sector between countries and their own country particularly. In addition, this multilateral cooperation will also strengthen the community development between countries in border area.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Character is a trait carried by everyone. To develop the character of the community, we have to go through an education that provides knowledge for everyone. Character development in a country is motivated by the lack of knowledge in the community about the formation of character. The purpose of the construction of public character in a given state is not merely knowledge, but can also foster the ability and willingness of people to change for the better. Having characters can demonstrate the readiness and the understanding of someone to build the country becomes more developed. Character growth for a country determines whether the countries are poor. The construction of public character in a country will foster the global values that can change country.

The formation of the character on the communities in the border regions of Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand is to provide a Competency Based Training Program in Tourism. There are four stages that must be considered in the program as training (Critten), namely: needs analysis, planning, implementation, and evaluation. In this competency-base training program, these stages are described as follows:

Challenge in building a sustainable tourism is the unreadiness in responding changes of the local inhabitants. To address this problem, it is expected that there are significant contribution from local organizations both governmental organization / public or private organizations.

In connection with the increase in the organization in the field of tourism, there are four aspects to be considered within an organization according to Francisco, Maryo (2014), namely:

1. Operation: The process of achieving resources to manufacture or produce goods that are useful in the organization. In the context of management, operational acts as an object in an organization and also plays an important role in human resources to operate.
2. Human Resources: The process of dealing with various issues on the scope of the labor, employees, managers and other workers to be able to support the activities of the organization in order to achieve a predetermined goal. So human resources is closely related to the man himself who plays the role.
3. Marketing: The main activities of the organization to maintain the continuity, development, and benefit the organization. Marketing functions include communication research, product development, communication, promotion, distribution, pricing and delivering services. All of these activities are done to understand, serve, meet and satisfy the needs of the customers/ people. Substantially, the essence of marketing is about communication and human interaction activities.
4. Finance: Activity of an organization to obtain the capital that are used effectively, efficiently, and as productive as possible to generate profits. The performance of all the financial activities to achieve efficiency is also called a behavior in the organization.

With the above explanation, it can be concluded that there is a correlation between the four aspects that must be considered in establishing an umbrella organization in which human resources is a center for the development, construction, and growth of a country.

Need Analysis

Human resources in a country has a different ability level from each other. Sometimes it's ability to rise but sometimes decreases. There are also the ability is not in accordance with expectations. Therefore, the need to adding the ability of people with the training program.

Guest Service Agent is the general public service that have a lack of ability or who want to add a character in himself by taking the Competency-Based Training Program of Tourism. The underlying is that everyone has different levels, namely upper level, middle level, or basic level. The basic level in this Competency-Based Training Program is priority to build a people personality in the border area. Therefore, this training is based on everything about tourism in the border region.

In developing a sustainable tourism, it requires an organization or a container that can function in fostering tourism. In the establishment of tourism organizations, it requires an underlying policies or rules, so that cooperation between countries can be recognized and running effectively and efficient. Which became the basis of the policies and rules of this training program is the quality of the global value which is divided into two things: Global Code Ethic for Tourism and Asean Skills Competency.

Global Code Ethics for Tourism(GCET) is a set of principles designed to assist communities in the development of tourism. The fundamental principle is the article 2 that describes 'Tourism as a vehicle for individual and collective fulfilment'. And in point 5 of previous article number 2 is 'The introduction into curricula of education about the value of tourist exchanges, their economic, social and cultural benefits, and also their risks, should be encouraged'. Thus, Asean Skills Competency (ACS) is a basic ability of competent education that has been done and has been recognized by the Asean.

Plan

Human resources role is very important for a country. People who have the knowledge, skills, and behavior should be encouraged by the character of its own. The development of one's character can be supported by the presence of organizations in the field of tourism. Based on the above-described exposure, the author will explain the necessity of building an integrated educational institutions in shaping the character of the community that supports the growth of tourism through Competency-Based Training Program for Guest Service Agent in border area of Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand.

Guest Service Agent Training Program is one of the educational training programs with competency-based of tourism that have been planned, built, and designed in such a way. This program planning as follows:

1. The place for this training program adapts to the deal in the three countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand).
2. It will be implemented and executed if it is the agreement between the three countries.
3. The target or the participants of this training program is Guest Service Agent in border region of Indonesia Malaysia Thailand.
4. Planning the training program will be developed and run by a container or organization, be it a public organization (government) or private organizations.
5. Each trainee will be given training material poured into a module that has been conceived and designed to facilitate the learning process.
6. Learning outcomes of this training program are : to improve the quality of life in border region of Indonesia Malaysia Thailand, to increase cooperation in these three countries, to boost the economy of each country, and to develop the country in the field of tourism.

Implementation

Henderson (2010) stated that the regions created by growth triangles offer possibilities for new tourism products, promotion and routes for strategic planning. As previous literature identified feasible areas for cooperation as 'a trilateral tourism development and promotion committee, improving transport links, bilateral and trilateral travel packages and programmes and tourism training programmes' (Lim 1996).

Moreover, Thant and Tang (1996) explained that growth triangles have the capacity to 'accelerate the pace of tourism development and create synergies that expand the area's potential' from which individual countries gain. The relationship between regionalisation as a whole and tourism is mutually beneficial because, 'while tourism provides an avenue for fulfilling the regionalisation mission, simultaneously regionalism also creates opportunities for sustaining the country's tourism growth' (Chang 1998).

The growth triangle was welcomed with some enthusiasm by the tourism industry because of its perceived direct and indirect benefits. The key to achieve full potential of tourism sector is from the quality of the human resources. And it is perceived that educational institution is necessary in order to support sustainable tourism. The extent to which this potential has been realised is discussed below.

Competency-Based Training Program for Guest Service Agentis education and learning processes are observed and adjust the level of development of society in the field of tourism. This program learning patterns using an integrated approach which is expected to be able to improve the quality of life, increase the economy, and develop the advancement of tourism in the border region.

In general, the public has the character of a heterogeneous, both in Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, the people in these three countries should be given education based on universal values, especially those in the field of tourism which refers to the Asean Competency Skills (ACS).

Training programs in the field of tourism was established under the auspices of an Institution and refers to Asean Competency Skills (ACS) and will produce graduates who have the knowledge, skills, and strong character in the field of international tourism, especially in technical skills of Guest Service Agent.

Here is a flow diagram of the reason for the establishment of the Guest Service Agent Training Program :

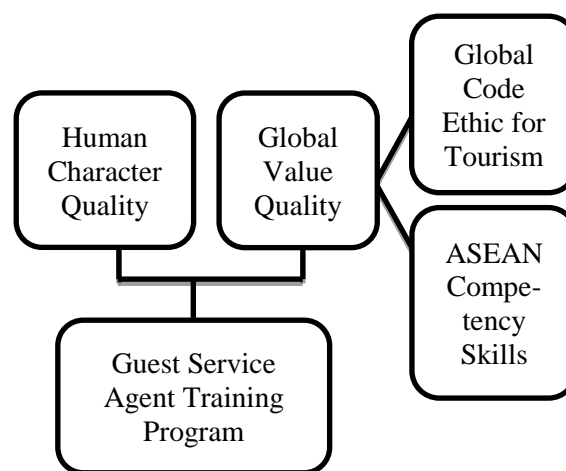


Figure 2. A flow diagram of the reason for the establishment of the Guest Service Agent Training Program.

Evaluation

Any training program has been running, must be given assessment by evaluating to measure the effectiveness of the training program. The evaluation process will be done is through a process of regular and ongoing. This is done to measure the extent to which the training program is running, whether in accordance with the achievement of learning or have problems and challenges in the learning process. So it will proceed to the stage of fixing the program so that repairs can be carried out as soon as possible.

CONCLUSION

The conclusions of this paper are:

1. Indonesia Malaysia Thailand-Growth Triangle (IMT-GT) have a common awareness of the weaknesses and challenges in Human Resources at the border area.
2. Indonesia Malaysia Thailand-Growth Triangle (IMT-GT) has a spirit and power together to build the human resources-based economy through tourism.

3. Creating a new innovation of the training program is based on an agreement made by the Thailand-Growth Triangle Malaysia Indonesia (IMT-GT) in the form of Training Program for Guest Service Agent with Competency-Based in the field of Tourism.

Recommend

This paper recommends to immediately establish a working group to develop and run Guest Service Agent Training Program, in the three border countries, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand.

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