

THE EVALUATION ON THE INTERNATIONAL TOUR LEADER TRAINING
PROGRAM IN TAIWAN, R.O.C

by

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ABSTRACT

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The overall impression of the tour leader for travel business not only affects the travel service’s image, but also customer loyalty. Furthermore, tour leader is the primary factor that differentiates the tour in question from the competitors’ tour. In particular, tour leader’s ability to give service and company’s image is the crucial competitive advantage for the travel industry.

Nevertheless, not all of the international tour leaders in Taiwan are able to offer sufficient knowledge and information about the destinations to fulfill the tourists’ expectation. Although tour leaders are not responsible for all the events, the truth is that tour leader’s abilities on handling law and liability, problem solving skills, and other difficult situations should be reinforced. Other negative attitude changes are also connected to their abilities to deal with complaints and to solve difficult situations.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate whether the existing tour leader's training program is accomplishing its objectives to prepare qualified tour leaders for tourism industry in Taiwan. One hundred and twenty questionnaires were distributed to licensed tour leaders, and 84 completed and valid questionnaires were returned throughout this study. The overall response rate was 70 percent.

The findings of this study indicate that the majority of tour leaders are satisfied with the present training program in Taiwan. Indeed, tour leaders value the training program as a foundation when they first start their career in this industry. Throughout this training program, new tour leaders will have a better knowledge on the job and the industry. Also, tour leaders will be able to network with other tour leaders or experts. In addition, tour leaders perceive tourism operational knowledge and skills and personal skills are the essential for future success in the industry. For the program contents, tour leaders anticipate more practicable skills instead of theoretical knowledge. Both interpersonal and intrapersonal skills are also demanded by the tour leaders in order to maintain excellent relationship with customers and suppliers. However, tour leaders expect that each courses or curriculum should be expanded further. Tour leaders suggest that the training program should be extended to annual basis and focus on few subjects at one time.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), tourism has a remarkable growth potential, and may be far higher than other economic sectors. WTO forecasted that tourist arrivals worldwide would raise from the 528 million recorded in 1995 to 1,018 million in 2010. In the year 2005, tourism industry will create jobs for 305 million workers and will make up 11.4 percent of world Gross Domestic Production (World Tourism Organization, 1997). Similarly, the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) and American Express indicated that tourism production worldwide at around \$3.4 trillion for 1995 and forecasts this would increase to \$7.2 trillion in 2005 when the jobs in tourism would represent 11.5 percent of the total world employment. The demand for human resources in the tourism industry will continue to be very intense (1995).

However, Muqbil (1994) indicated that the demands of tourism employers will grow faster than the quantity, and in particular the quality, of people be able to service them in certain world regions, such as Asia/Pacific where tourism is undergoing rapidly growth. The needs for new human resources will cover the full spectrum of the industry's occupation levels. In Asia/Pacific in 2005, five percent of the workers' needs will be for senior management posts, 20 percent will be for supervisory posts, and 75 percent for technical posts or front-line personnel.

In the second international conference on Tourism Education and Training, tourism education and training continues to be a popular seminar theme worldwide. In recent issues of the journal "Annals of Tourism Research," many researchers bring various issues in tourism and hospitality education into focus. Lots of international

authors and participants from different countries delineated numerous old and some new tourism education challenges and opportunities. Those challenges and opportunities in tourism education included the philosophy of tourism education in the governmental and non-governmental sectors; evaluation of training in both developed and developing countries; differences between training and education; the challenges of educating to think vs. training to possess technical/production skills; and more (Jafari, 1996).

In Taiwan, training and education is still in the developing stages for the tourism industry. Indeed, many people believe that work experience is more important than anything else in the tourism industry. Furthermore, many tour leaders think training is not necessary if they have worked in the industry for several years. Nevertheless, the purpose of training and development is not only to prepare new hires but also improve employee's performance on the job.

Tourism Industry in Taiwan

Following the continuous expansion of the economy in Taiwan, people income keeps increasing yearly. The expanding economic environment has stimulated the growth of the tourism industry in Taiwan. Simultaneously, more Taiwanese think highly of living quality as well as leisure. In addition, the government put into effect the alternating two-day weekend policy, a policy of the second and fourth Saturdays of every month would be a day off, on January 10th of 1998. There had been chaotic in Taiwan for some time about making Saturdays a day off. The frequency of travel has been increased along with the rising on personal income. Travel has become one of Taiwan's hottest topics of discussion since the last few years. No doubt, tourism is certainly exploding in Taiwan.

According to 1998 Annual Survey Report on Republic of China (R.O.C) Outbound Travel, the total number of international travelers in 1997 was 6.16 million, which was 50 percent increasing comparing with the total number of international travelers in 1992. The average outbound visiting time of a traveler was 1.99 in 1997. The population of this survey was the R.O.C. citizen who ever traveled overseas in 1998, and the sample number was 6,068. Sightseeing was the primary purpose for all the traveler categories. In particular, the travel agency was still the main travel information resource for travel in Taiwan. More than 50 percent adopted group-package-tour (GPT) as their primary travel pattern (Tourism Bureau, Ministry of Transportation and Communications, R.O.C, 1998).

Statement of Problem

The overall impression of the tour leader for travel business not only affects the travel service's image, but also customer loyalty. Furthermore, tour leader is the primary factor that differentiates the tour in question from the competitors' tour. In particular, tour leader's ability to give service and company's image is the crucial competitive advantage for the travel industry (Mossberg, 1995). As the market is price sensitive, the quality of service encounter can be maintained at a constant and high level without any price increase if the tour leader can provide positive image of the given service and company image. However, tour leader's characteristics, which are resulted from the international tour leader training program and their previous experience, influence his/her abilities and knowledge to carry out their duties and responsibilities.

Nevertheless, not all of the international tour leaders in Taiwan are able to offer sufficient knowledge and information about the destinations to fulfill the tourists'

expectation. For instance, Mossberg (1995) indicated that tour leaders were considered to be less reliable, less pleasant and less helpful than expected, which affects overall tourist satisfaction with the service encounter in travel group. According to the research conducted by the Taiwan Tour Leader Association in 1987, there were many censures on the inconsistent service quality of the tour leaders during the group tour. Although tour leaders are not responsible for all the events, the truth is that tour leader's abilities on handling law and liability, problem solving skills, and other difficult situations should be reinforced. Other negative attitude changes are also connected to their abilities to deal with complaints and to solve difficult situations.

In Taiwan, all international tour leaders must pass the qualification examination, and attend tour leader training program in order to get the tour leader license. The goal of tour leader training program is to prepare the new candidates as a qualified tour leader in group tour. Notwithstanding, many of the tour leaders in Taiwan are criticized as inexperienced, and they are not service-minded. Besides, many people even conceive tour leader as a fun occupation with lots of chance for free traveling. The purpose of this study is to evaluate whether the existing tour leader's training program is accomplishing its objectives to prepare qualified tour leaders for tourism industry in Taiwan.

Objectives

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To evaluate the present tour leader training program for international tour leader in Taiwan.
2. To identify professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes which tour leaders perceive as necessary to be success in escort tours.

3. To analyze the gaps between level of importance and training needs for the professional knowledge and skills required by tour leaders.
4. To determine if additional skills, abilities, and knowledge are needed to be a professional international tour leader in Taiwan.

Limitations

The limitations of this particular study would be the following:

1. The translation of the questionnaire from English to Chinese may cause translation error.
2. The results of this study can only be represented to the specific area because the samples were drawn only from the travel agencies in Taipei, Taiwan.

Definition of Terms

Escort tour: Foreign or domestic tour using the services of a tour leader or tour guide (Metalka, 1990).

Evaluation: “The systematic collection of descriptive and judgmental information necessary to make effective training decisions related to the selection, adoption, value, and modification of various instructional activities” (Goldstein, 1980).

Learning: A relatively permanent change in behavior, cognition that is resulted from experience (DeSimon & Harris, 1998).

Package tour: a combination of two or more elements sold as a single tour product for an inclusive, in which the costs of the individual product components are not separately identifiable (Metalka, 1990).

Tourism: A combination of activities, services, and the industry that is formed by travelers’ experiences involved with transportation, accommodations, food services,

shopping, entertainment, and other hospitality services (Goeldner, Ritchie, & McIntosh, 2000).

Tour leader/tour guide: Person employed as the escort for tourists, usually for the entire travel experience (Metalka, 1990).

Training: A systematic process to provide specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for a particular job (DeSimone, & Harris, 1998).

Travel services: Travel service is the industry, which provides services on processing travel certificates (includes passport and visa), arranging tour, accommodation, meal, and other related-services (Tang, 1989).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter covers a review of literature regarding the research. The first section provides a brief overview on the tourism industry. Second, a profile of the tourism industry in Taiwan is reviewed in this study. Third, the significance of tour leader performance in tourism industry which includes basic job description, its' role and important skills and knowledge are discussed. In additional, the existing international tour leader training program in Taiwan is included in this section. Fourth, the needs of training and the method for training design are covered in this section. Fifth, this study provides an overview on the current development of training in tourism industry. Finally, the evaluation of training program is covered in the last section.

An Overview on Tourism Industry

In 1822, Robert Smart of Bristol, England, announced the first steamship service, and began booking passengers on steamers to various Bristol Channel ports and to Dublin, Ireland. In 1841, Thomas Cook led 570 passengers at a round-trip price of one shilling per passenger from Leicester to Loughborough by running a special excursion train for a 12 miles trip. Cook's company grew rapidly and started to provide escorted tour to the Continent and later to the United States and around the world (Goeldner, Ritchie, & McIntosh, 2000).

Jafari (1994) defined tourism as a study of people away from their usual habitat, of the industry, which responds to their needs, and of the impacts that both they and the industry have on the host and guest sociocultural, economic and physical environments. In particular, tourism is the activity that people travel from an originating area to a

destination for pleasure or business purpose, and it is the concept of cultural, economic and social exchange processes (Lumsdon, 1997). In addition, tourism is a combination of activities, services, and the industry that is formed by travelers' experiences involved with transportation, accommodations, food services, shopping, entertainment, and other hospitality services.

Several scholars explained tourism as a system rather than as an industry or market. Indeed, tourism marketing is a continuous, systematic and coordinated process. The tourism system includes all the products and services that are needed to create a travel experience. Each component of the tourism system is dependent based on the characteristics of the market. However, all the products and services in the tourism industry are interdependent. From a systems approach, tourism marketing management is to demonstrate the discussion linkages between consumers, suppliers, and destinations (Figure 1). The significant point of tourism system is the exchange mechanism of the market that brings consumers from generating areas to receiving destination (Lumsdon,1997).

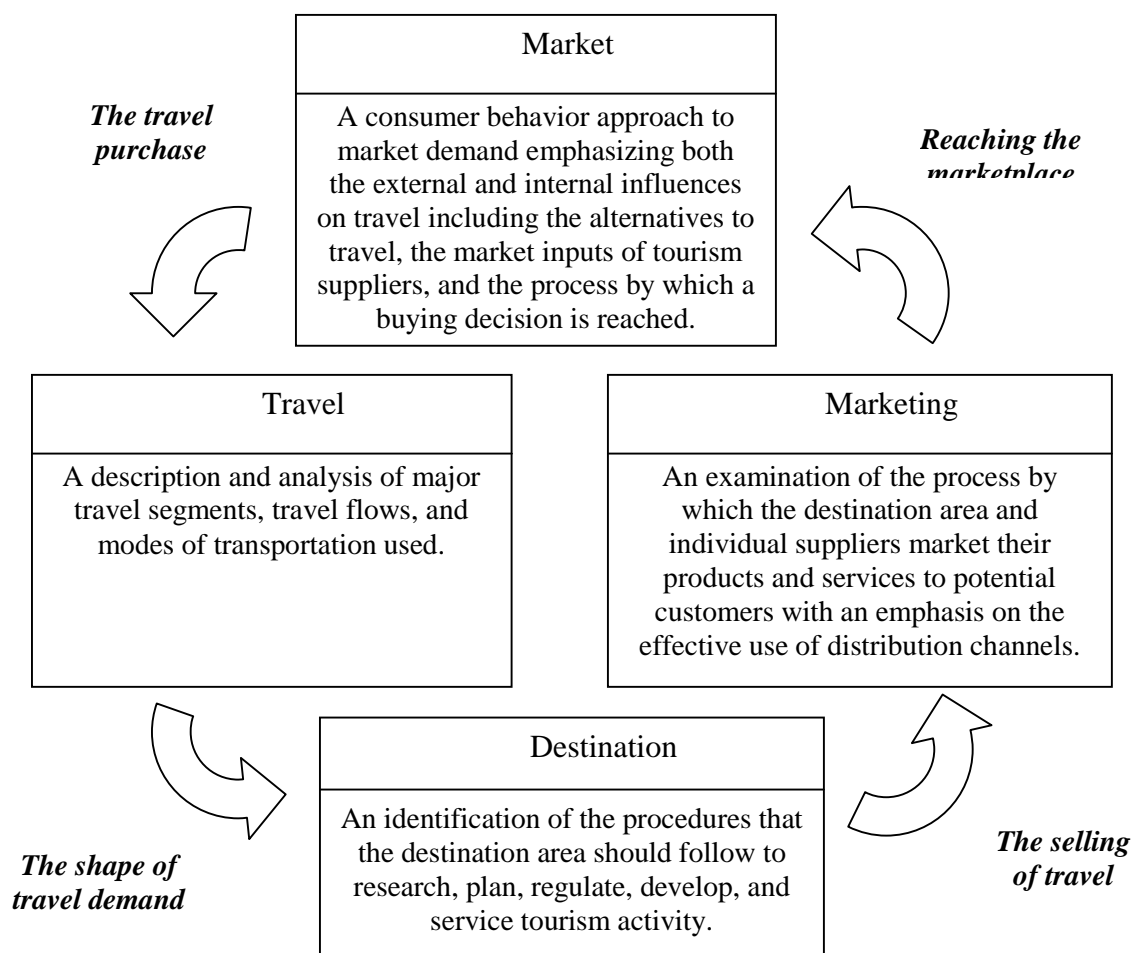


Figure 1. The Tourism System

Notes. From Tourism marketing by Lumsdon, 1997. Boston, MA: International Thomson Business Press.

According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO) of the United Nations, more than 593 million tourists traveled internationally in 1996, spending over \$425 billion (excluding transportation). Tourism account for eight percent of the total world exports, more than 31 percent of the international trade in services, and more than 100 million job worldwide. In 1994, the Yearbook of Tourism Statistics of WTO showed that tourism industry employs more people than any single industrial sector, and has

infrastructure (lodging, transportation, and restaurants) investment conservatively estimated to exceed \$3 trillion. Based on most forecasts, the future of tourism is full of promise. Comparing with 564 million in 1995, international tourist arrivals are forecast to rise to 692 million in 2000, 1 billion in 2010, and reach 1.6 billion in 2020 (Goeldner, Ritchie, & McIntosh, 2000). Over the next decade, tourism industry is adding more than 100 million new jobs across the world economy.

Travel and Tourism in Taiwan

The Taiwanese Government first removed the prohibition on foreign pleasure travel in 1979 (Lang, O'Leary, & Morrison, 1997). Prideaux (1996) indicated that Taiwan relatively grow in outbound travel from 1979 to 1994. In 1987, the restriction of "no more than two overseas trips per year" was rescinded. The tourism market was further liberalized in 1988 when males were allowed to take international trips at age 26 or older. This liberalization on international travel, along with rapid economic growth, has contributed to the boom in Taiwan outbound travel (Lang, O'Leary, & Morrison, 1997).

The Tourism Bureau, Ministry of Transportation and Communication, Republic of China (R.O.C) conduct international tourism survey in a two-year basis. The primary purpose of this survey was to develop a comprehensive understanding of the travel activities of the outbound travelers; their characteristics of travel behavior, the amount of the travel-related expenditures, and the degrees of their satisfaction while traveling abroad (Tourism Bureau, Ministry of Transportation and Communication, R.O.C, 1998). The survey was conducted at CKS international airport and Kaohsiung airport by using questionnaire to interview the outbound travelers. The sample number was 6,068. Based

on the 1998 Annual Survey Report on R.O.C Outbound Travelers, the number of international travelers was over 5.9 million in 1998, which was double from the year of 1991. The World Tourism Organization accentuates that Taiwan ranked 20th in the world in 1980 and moved to 13th in 1992 on international tourism expenditures. It is predicted that the number of international travelers will expand to almost 23 million by the year 2000 and 45 million by the year 2010 (Lang, O'Leary, & Morrison, 1997).

Generally, the high seasons for Taiwanese outbound travelers are July and August (summer vacation), followed by April (spring break), and January and February (Chinese Lunar New Year vacation). Based on the 1998 Annual Survey Report on R.O.C. Outbound Travelers, sightseeing was the top one purpose for all travelers (60.2%). Business was the second major purpose for single and married male, single female, senior citizen and professional woman (23.2%), and only 9.6 percent of the travelers visited relatives-and-friend (VRF). Oversea study was the second major purpose for teenage. The primary international travel areas were Mainland China, Hong Kong and Macao (41.2%), Southeast Asia (25.3%), North-east Asia (15.8%), North-America (12.5%), Europe (7.8%), others (3.9%), and Australia and New Zealand (2.3%) (Lang, O'Leary, & Morrison, 1997).

The top three travel durations were between 3 to 4 nights (31.4%), between 5 to 7 nights (26.3%), and between 8 to 10 nights (12.9%). The average oversea travel duration was 9.03 nights in 1998. Over fifty percent of the travelers (52.7%) adopted group-package-tour (GPT). Over 20 percent of travelers were not arranged by travel agency while 20.4 percent of travel was partially arranged by travel agency. In addition, the foreign individual tour (FIT) occupied a ratio of 45 percent of total travelers. And, the top

three resources for outbound travel were travel agency (38.3%), advertising medially agency (29.2%), and relatives-friends-neighbors (RFN) (14.3%) (Lang, O'Leary, & Morrison, 1997).

Taiwanese international tourism tends to follow the earlier Japanese model, which emphasized group inclusive travel (Prideaux, 1996). Arrangements for almost every component of the tour are made in Taiwan prior to departure, which also give very little latitude to participate in non-prescheduled activities in the tour itinerary. Yamamoto and Gill (1999) categorized overseas tourism into three types: escorted tours, package tours, and fully independent travel (FIT). Metalka (1990) defined escort tour as foreign or domestic tour using the services of a tour leader or tour guide. Escorted tours can also be divided into two subtypes, fully escorted tours and partially escorted tours, depending on the amount of usage of tour guides. In the same manner, package tours can be categorized into two subtypes, complete packages and partial packages based on the amount of prearranged tourist services within the tour, such as airline seats, ground transportation, hotel arrangement, meal, etc. Fully independent travelers are those who make all travel arrangements by themselves and follow a personally determined schedule. However, they may still use travel agents for some reasons, such as purchasing discounted airline ticket.

Travel Service

According the Tourism Development Regulation, travel service is the industry, which provides services on processing travel certificates (includes passport and visa), arranging tour, accommodation, meal, and other related-services (Tang, 1989). Furthermore, travel agents must be well-organized, accurate, meticulous to compile information from various sources, and plan and organized their customers' travel

itineraries (Occupational Outlook Handbook, 1996). In general, travel agent is the bridge between tourists and tourism service providers, which play a significant role in the tourism industry (Tang, 1989).

The Nature of Work

Travel agent is to give advice on destinations, make arrangements for transportation, hotel accommodation, car rentals, tours, and recreation, or plan the right vacation package or business/pleasure trip depending on the needs of the client. For international travel, agents also provide information on customs regulations, required papers (passports, visas, and certificates of vaccination), and currency exchange rates (Occupational Outlook Handbook, 1996). Based on the Travel Agent Regulation in Taiwan, the travel agent is primarily to organize escorted tour and provide miscellaneous travel services (Tang, 1989). The business scopes of travel agent in Taiwan are following:

- Providing potential customers a variety of travel-related information, such as tourist destinations, travel patterns, itinerary, estimate price, passport and visa, and currency.
- Advising potential customers any type of tourist destinations and itinerary.
- Arranging any type of ticketing which includes airlines, ships, or ground transportations.
- Handing travel-related insurance.
- Offering hotel, motel, and other accommodation facilities information.
- Making reservations for accommodation facilities.
- Arranging passenger transportations.
- Processing immigration needed documents, visa, and selling traveler checks.

Structure

The regular size of travel agent normally divides into two parts: main office and branch office. The main office is responsible for most of the central operation and management, such as audit, accounting, advertising, and public relations. Differently, branch office focuses on sales and marketing function. Also, travel agent should sign contracts with airline companies, accommodation facilities, locate transportations, and tour bus before any kind of selling and marketing action (Tang, 1989).

The Significance of Tour Leader Performance in Tourism Industry

Weiler and Davis (1993) characterized a tour leader or a tour guide as the person who is responsible for the delivery of the group travel experiences organized by a tour operator. Tour leader or tour guide is defined as the same with tour manager in general. In the Dictionary of Hospitality, Travel and Tourism, Metalka (1990) defined that tour manager is the person employed as the escort for tourists for the entire tour. Sometimes, tour managers are supplemented by local area guides.

In America, tour operators are approved by both the American Society of Travel Agents and a current member of that group, and they should be able to provide proof of experience, knowledge, and professionalism. Similarly, travel agent should be certified by the Institute of Certified Travel Agents. There is no existing universally accepted standard for tour managers. But the International Association of Tour managers (IATM) requires qualified tour manager for a five years of service experience in the position with at least ten independent or group tours annually (Metalka, 1990).

Job Description

Tour leader must follow planned itinerary, and escorts groups during the entire trip. According to the Dictionary of Occupational Title, the Job description of tour leader is following

Arranges transportation and other accommodations for groups of tourists, following planned itinerary, and escorts groups during entire trip, within single area or at specified stopping points of tour: Makes reservations on ships, trains and other modes of transportation, and arranges for other accommodations, such as baggage handling, dining and lodging facilities, and recreational activities, using communication media, such as cable, telegraph, or telephone. Accompanies tour group and describes points of interest. May assist tourists to plan itinerary, obtain travel certificates, such as visas, passports, and health certificates, and convert currency into travelers' checks or foreign moneys. May be designated according to method of transportation used as Guide, Cruise; or locality of tour as Guide, Domestic Tour; Guide, Foreign Tour (U. S. Department of Labor, 1991, p. 256).

Roles

Weiler and Davis (1993) indicated that the need for better understanding of tourist guide roles and the need for better tourist guide training have been identified in several studies. According to the study on the role of the resource person on educational tours conducted by Weiler and Richins in 1990, and the discussion on the professionalization of guidance to tourist in the World Leisure and Recreation Association Congress in

Sydney in 1991, tourist guides contributed a better quality travel experience for the tourists (Weiler, & Richins, 1990).

The Oxford English Dictionary (1933) defined the concept “guide” as “one who leads or shows the way, especially to a traveler in a strange country, spec. one who is hired to conduct a traveler or tourist (e.g., over a mountain, through a forest or over a city or building) and to point out objects of interest” (p. 490). Cohen (1985) highlighted that two principal conceptualizations are involved in the definition of guide. Tourist guides act as the leader because they are the one who leads or shows the way. Also, tourist guides could be defined as the mediators or middlemen who point out objects of interest. Holloway (1981) stressed “...the occupation of leading groups of tourists carries a number of different titles [e.g., tourist guide, tour leader, courier, etc.,] and there is as yet little consensus on their use...” (p. 380).

Cohen (1985) pointed out that pathfinder and mentor are the two lines of origin of the modern tourist guide. Cohen found that “The original guide’s function is to produce attractions in the marginal regions of the ecological tourist system, while that of the professional guide is to reproduce the attractions in the central regions of the system” (p. 5). Pathfinders were mostly locals with good knowledge about their home environment but no specialized training was given to the pathfinders. Differently, mentors were more complex in origin, heterogeneous in nature, and difficult to track historically.

Cohen (1985) analyzed that four roles of the tourist leader or guide were oriented to provide a quality experience from the tourist’s perspective. Cohen cited the model of the roles played by the tour leader or tour guide in mainstream tourism as a basis for examining tour guide roles (figure 2). In the roles of organizers and group leaders, tour

leaders meet group and individual needs by providing organization and management and facilitating interaction with host community that must be supported with resources from outside the tour group. As a role of entertainer and teacher, the needs could be fulfilled within the group by contributing leadership in term of social interaction, education, and interpretation. In brief, the primary role of tour leader focuses on the individual and group needs of tourist.

	<u>OUTER-DIRECTE</u>	<u>INNER-DIRECTED</u>
TOUR MANAGEMENT (focus on group)	Original guide • organizer	Animator • entertainer
EXPERIENCE MANAGEMENT (focus on individual)	Cultural broker • group leader	Professional guide • teacher

Figure 2. Roles played by the tour guide/leader in mainstream tourism

Notes. From The tourist guide – the origins, structure and dynamics of a Role by Cohen (1985). Annals of Tourism Research, 12 (1), 5-29.

In brief, tour leader played a significant role, which influence overall tourist satisfaction with the service encounter in a group tour. Tourist's demographic data, prior travel experience, the tourist's perception of the tour leader's performance and duties, and tourist's opinion regarding the importance of the various holiday activities are the primary factors that impact the tourist's satisfaction. Besides, tourist's behavior within the individual service encounter, and the interaction between tourists and tour leader during the tour could also affect tourist's satisfaction.

Skills and Knowledge Needs for Being an International Tour Leader

Tour leader, tour escort, or tour conductor is the person who travel with tour group, and arrange accommodations, meals, transportations, and other travel-related services during the tour. Tour leader is not only the leader of the travel group but also a travel director, a friend or advisor of group traveler, and a performer. Also, tour leader must have multilingual ability and certain degree of knowledge on history, geography, and customs. Tour leader often deal with a variety of people who have diversified background, nation, age, and culture. Consequently, both intrapersonal and interpersonal skills are essential for the tour leader. Since tour leaders are responsible for all activities listed on the tour group itinerary, they should maintain a good relationship with all group members in order to perform their job efficiently (Tang, 1989).

Needs of Training for the International Tour Leader

Ross (1997) indicated that adequate and ongoing training is essential in ensuring high quality service in travel agency operation. Indeed, lots of tourists experienced that tour leaders were unfamiliar with city's history. Some tour leaders even rewrote city's history for the benefit and entertainment of their guests. Arreola (1998) stated that uneducated tour leaders can hurt the city's reputation, and the damage that tourists deal with bad tour guides during their during their trip was often irreversible. According to the research conducted by Weiler and Richins, 77 percent of tour operators provide informal to relatively formal training programs for their tour leaders. Pre-trip and on-the-job training are the two primary types of training for the tour leaders (Weiler & Richins, 1990). Based on the roles that tour leaders are expected to play in group tour, and the

skills and knowledge that operators expect, there is a significant necessity for tour leader training (Arreola, 1998).

In addition, tourism is a combination of activities, services, and the industry is formed by travelers' experiences involved with transportation, accommodations, food services, shopping, entertainment, and other hospitality services (Goeldner, Ritchie, & McIntosh, 2000). Nevertheless, travel agent doesn't actually own or involve with any of those activities or services. Conversely, tour operators select appropriate activities and services to package tour products based upon their professional knowledge and tourists' requirements. Many tour groups might travel on the same planes and stay in the same hotels. Yet, they might buy the tour products from different travel agencies with a variety of price. Seemingly, tourists should receive the same service quality from the tour products. Whereas, customer satisfactions are often various among different tour groups. Mossberg (1995) indicated "It is relatively easy to create new products and new destinations, but the difficulty lies in maintaining the product differentiation; competitors can quickly imitate new ideas" (p. 437).

Mossberg (1995) indicated that not all of the tour leaders had the ability to provide sufficient knowledge and information about the destinations to fulfill the tourists' expectations. Besides, the tour leaders were considered to be less reliable, less pleasant and less helpful than expected. Many tour leaders lacked the ability to deal with complaints and solve difficult situations. Based on the tour leader's performances, duties, and situational variables, the satisfaction range is usually various. In short, tour leader is important to the tourist's perceptions of the group tour.

In order to identify the needs of training for tour leader, two questions were raised by Weiler and Davis (1993): (1) where are the gaps between what tour leaders are currently qualified to do and what they should do, and (2) what training and support are needed to fill these gaps?

The International Tour Leader Training Program in Taiwan

To assure the quality of travel services, in addition to strengthening of training for international tour, the Tourism Bureau moves upgrade the quality of tour leaders through the implementation of an accreditation system. The qualification of the licensed tour leaders has four steps: (1) recommendation from a registered travel agency, (2) certain time period of working experience in tourism industry depending on individual's education level, (3) tour leader qualification exam, and (4) tour leader training program by the Tour Leader Association. The Association of Tour Manager exams every application they receive from travel agencies. The tour leader's qualification text includes two parts: (a) second language, and (b) tourism operation/professional knowledge and skills.

Finally, all new tour leaders must attend the international tour leader training program to prepare them as qualify tour leaders in group tour with a serious of lectures and group activities, such as tourism operation skills and guest relation. The international tour leader training program contains four parts: (1) tourism policy, (2) Tourism operation /professional knowledge and skills, (3) conceptual knowledge, and (4) psychological knowledge (see Appendix C for detail program contents).

Needs of Training

Performance improvement is achieved through skilled, knowledgeable, and committed workers who want to make their work better. Indeed, most people want to do a good job. Yet, they often lack the skills and knowledge needed to operate their true potential. Besides, performance problem might occur over time due to new technologies or operating processes (Johnson, 1993). However, behavioral changes and performance improvement require solid training designed.

The term “training” is used for all systematic formal efforts by private and public organizations and enterprises to improve the level of skills and knowledge and to increase the supply of skilled manpower in accordance with present and future requirements (UIOOT Centre International, 1972). In fact, training and development focus on the improvement of the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) of individuals (Harris & DeSimone, 1994). The primary goal of training is to improve employee’s knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Generally, training is a systematic process to provide specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for a particular job. Training enables trainees to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of subjects required for a particular responsibility, and then to apply the training in their jobs in order to satisfy the consumers (Go, 1993). Furthermore, training must be implemented continuous to maintain the same level of trainee’s motivation on the job. Training activities provide chances for trainees to improve their performance on current or future jobs. On the other hand, developmental activities emphasize on the long-term preparation for a future responsibility (DeSimone & Harris, 1998).

Whereas, the shortage of training facilities is exacerbated by the lack of training in workplace. In the past, the owner is fully responsible for the success of business. Today, company competitive capacity must be built throughout the whole organization. Company must keep educating the employees through a set of training and development program to maintain their competitive capacity. Within the scope of human resources development, training and development activities play as a basic function but a significant role in the organization (DeSimone & Harris, 1998). When a new employee is hired, it becomes the immediate responsibility of the owner or the manager to get the new hire started on the job correctly. Apart from training people new to the industry, a continual process of training the experienced people is also needed.

Instructional Training Design

Instructional design is the method that training professional employs ensure the quality of training program without wasting money and personnel (Rothwell & Kazanas, 1998). Experts defined training as the organized activities, which are designed to bring performance improvement in an employee's on-the-job skills, knowledge and abilities. As a result, the performance improvement is the achievement of results, the outcome to which purposeful activities are directed to increase efficiency and effectiveness within the organization. Rothwell and Kazanas (1998) informed that instructional designers must establish two critical points to convince the managers with the analogy. First, instructional designers need to know who is the end-user or customer for the training program. Secondly, the training program must be able to meet customers' needs and expectations.

Instructional design analyzes the human performance problems systematically by identifying the real causes of the problems (Rothwell & Kazanas, 1998). That is, needs assessment is the process of determining gaps between what is and what should be in terms of organizational or individual performance. Furthermore, needs analysis is the process to break down identified needs into different parts, then identifying the real causes and solutions for the needs.

Depends on the information that the instructional designers gather from analysis, instructional designers will consider various solutions to solve those performance problems. Along with the design process, any kind of development will be necessary to improve the effectiveness of the training program. Based on the open system theory, Rothwell and Kazanas (1998) stressed that instructional designers will implement the most cost-effective solutions to those performance problems. Finally, evaluation for the training program is where the organizations look for the performance improvement and effectiveness. The outputs of evaluation will also impact the decision-making for future training program.

Training in Tourism Industry

Training in tourism industry is still in the early stages of development and most appropriate solution has yet to be determined. In particular, the training for the case of distribution; channels-travel agents, tour operators, and other tourist services, such as guides, hosts, recreation staffs, tourist organizations' staffs, etc. (UIOOT Centre International, 1972). In addition, UIOOT Centre International (1972) indicated that the demand for training in tourist services sector is smaller quantitatively as well as the

training institutes, and education is likely to be more difficult to operate on an economical basis.

The main problem in planning training is to design programs that will produce skills and knowledge needed without being excessively broad in scope which would entail longer training periods, extensive syllabi, additional expense, and overloading of training facilities. The primary goal of tourism industry is to keep high productivity and low operating costs by means of economies of scales, management, and development governed by quantitative criteria (WTO, 1997). The labor factor was not an input in its own right, which would not be able to generate its own value-added for the tourism experience but another cost. Thus, the expertise of human resources is not a relevant issue, and training for tourism was purely occupational and restricted to particular posts.

Since WTO's fundamental objective is to promote and develop tourism, which in terms of requiring the development of human resources for tourism services, the organization attempts to promote tourism education and training throughout the world. In particular, training of human resources in the tourism industry is critical when information, creativity, and know-how have become the most important source of value creation (WTO, 1997). In fact, World Tourism Organization intends to play a catalyst role on improving tourism education and adopting a unified training approach (WTO, 1987). World Tourism Organization conducted a survey on the education and training in tourism industry in 1987. The survey showed that most countries, even the developed countries, still have difficulties in giving clear or affirmative response to basic questions related to the situation and development of human resources in tourism. The main problems, which were identified by the survey, were as follow:

- Limited financial resources;
- Lack of insufficient statistics;
- Many tourism employees have little education and only on-the-job training without any formal pre-employment training apart from the problems of quality of services;
- Lack of in-house training program;
- Lack of legislation governing the tourism professions;
- Lack of tourism manpower planning;
- Comparatively poor working conditions;
- Over-reliance on expatriate management in key jobs;
- Shortage of training institutes;
- Lack of support and involvement from the private sector;
- Programs and instructors are not capable or efficient enough to satisfy training needs (WTO, 1987, p. 3).

Rovelstad (1981) pointed out that all of the organizations and business served in the travel industry, whether public or private sector, required first line, middle, and senior managers who understand and can utilize the tools and science of modern management and marketing as it applies to the tourism industry. Furthermore, a training and education strategy will derive from the gap between goals and the present level of qualification of the tourism industry labor force and management. The strategy will make use of a mix of interrelated components, educational institutions and staff, programs, student characteristics and economic resources (Rovelstad, 1981).

National Tourism Training councils (NTTCS) are established in the ASEAN countries with strong private sector representation. The primary objective of NTTCS is to

give advice for the training policy, encourage training activities, and set national tourism training standards for various occupations. The Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA), the leading international organization in Asia, also has a continuous trust and progress for tourism training. The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) recognizes the workforce challenges globally. In October 1994, WTTC established its Human Resources Center at the Pacific Rim Institute of Tourism in Vancouver, Canada (Jafari & Fayos-Sola, 1996).

The World Tourism Organization (WTO) developed the TEDQUAL methodology (Tourism EDucation QUALity) to provide a form of voluntary standardization for dealing with quality issues in tourism education and training (WTO, 1997). The purpose of TEDQUAL is following:

The aim is to detect the existing gaps between the needs/expectations of employers and tourism professionals and the output of educational curricula, establishments and systems. Furthermore, these gaps must be located on a map of tourism professions which will provide a model to cater for the complexity of the sector and its human capital needs, both in terms of quantity and quality. (p. 7)

TEDQUAL includes three dimensions: a subsectoral dimension to cover the diverse activities involved (e.g. hotels and resorts, food and beverage, transport, distribution, attraction, administration, etc.), a professional dimension to specify the diverse human capital needs (e.g. front-line personnel, supervisors, managers, etc.,) and a further dimension which caters for the geographical and cultural diversity of tourism.

The WTO's Tourism Education and Training Plan analyzes that tourism training programs are abide by the quality standards set and respond to the needs of future

professionals, and tourism employers in each country and member state (tourism education system, new technologies in tourism education and training, teaching materials, strategic actions, etc.) (WTO, 1997). Jafari and Ritchie (1981) propounds curricular model to the most recent WTO classification of the different disciplines related to tourism education. Whereas, tourism does not constitute a methodically-ordered corpus of doctrine (Figure 3).

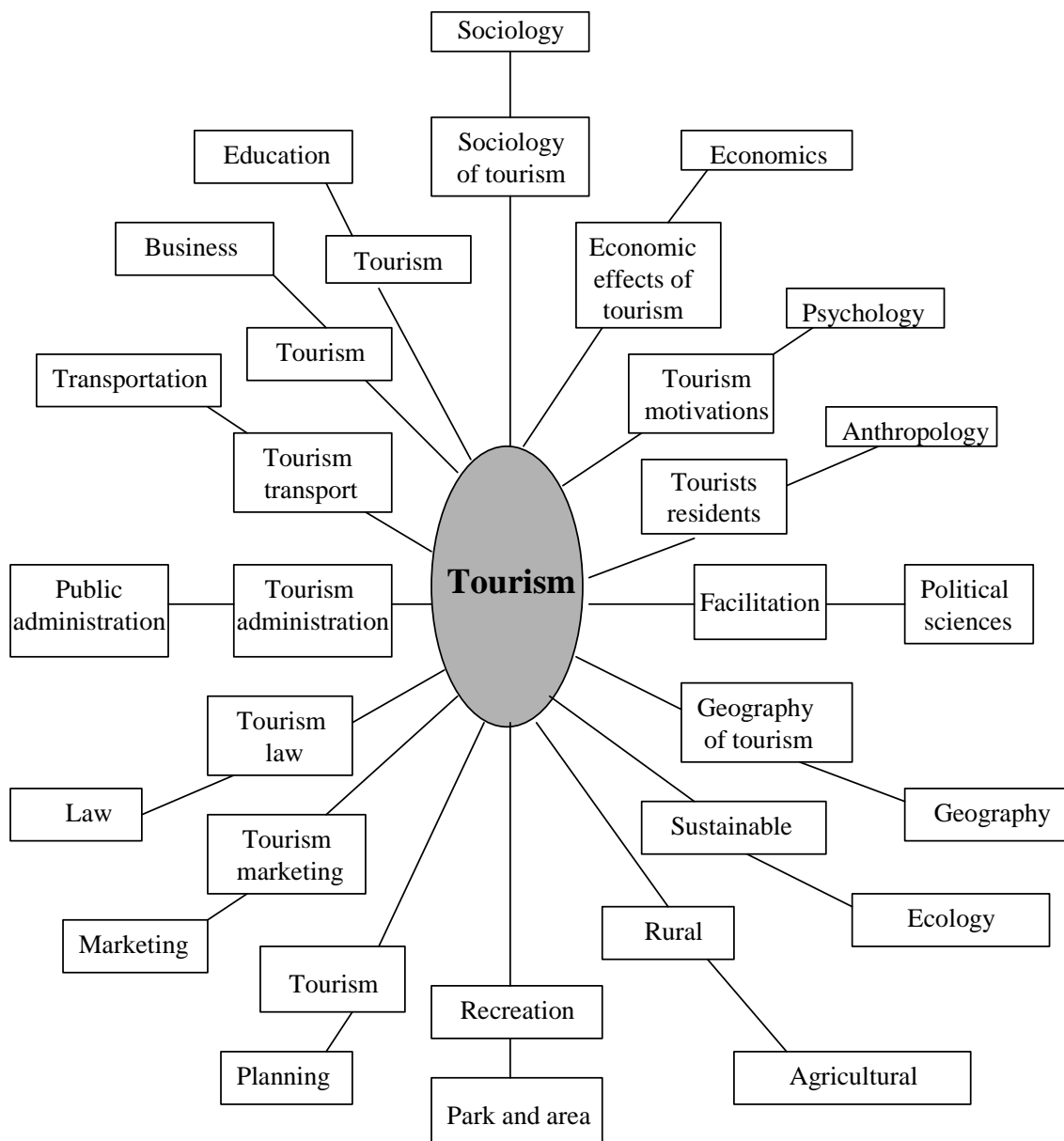


Figure 3. Areas of Knowledge in Tourism Education.

Notes. From Towards a framework for tourism education by Jafari, & Ritchie, 1981. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 8 (1), 13-34.

Evaluation

Goldstein (1980) defined evaluation as “the systematic collection of descriptive and judgmental information necessary to make effective training decisions related to the selection, adoption, value, and modification of various instructional activities” (p. 237). The purpose of evaluation is to create a feedback loop, or a self-correcting training system (Rackham, Honey, & Colbert, 1971). Spitzer (1999) indicated that evaluation is the tool that can turn training into a powerful enforcement for both organization and people in it. Moreover, a valuable and encouraging feedback system will assist training designers to set goals, monitor training process toward those goals, and look for evidence that the training programs have already achieved the goals. The more confident that the trainers feel about their interventions, the trainers will be more willing to look for meaningful ways to keep score.

Based on the system approach to the training, there are five basic steps for training design: needs assessment, design, development, delivery, and evaluation. Evaluation is named last on the list but it doesn't mean that it is least important. In fact, training evaluation plays a significant role on both ensuring quality program for performance improvement and improving future training programs (Spitzer, 1999). The main purpose of evaluation is not after-the-fact accountability but guiding training effects toward success. In addition, the primary function of evaluation for training is to enhance trainee's knowledge, skills and abilities to improve their performance. In particular, performance emphasizes the skill or expertise required to complete something according to established procedures (Rothwell & Kazanas, 1998).

Generally, trainees will not apply what they learn from training if they are not satisfied with the training experience. Evaluation provides an opportunity for training designers to have a better understand about participant's satisfaction on program design and implementation. Furthermore, evaluation doesn't only ensure the quality of current training program but also act as a guideline for future training designing and improvement. Evaluation should be concerned through out the entire systems approach.

Rothwell and Kazanas (1998) indicated three primary reasons why training evaluation is needed. First, the need of training evaluation is to gain information on how to improve future training program. Secondly, the evaluation for training is to decide whether to continue or discontinue training programs. Finally, training evaluation is to justify the existence of the training department by showing how it contributes to the organization's objectives and goals.

The Four Levels Training Evaluation

The most well-known framework for classifying evaluation developed by Kirkpatrick, contains four levels of evaluation (Phillips, 1997). This conceptual framework helps to determine the types of data to collect. According to Kirkpatrick (1994), there are four levels of evaluation: reaction, learning, behavior, and results. First level of evaluation is reaction which is a measure of trainee's satisfaction for the training program. DeSimon and Harris (1998) mentioned that positive reaction may not ensure learning but negative reaction certainly reduces possibility of learning occurring. If trainees didn't like the program or thinking they did not learn anything, they might discourage others from attending the training program. Furthermore, trainees might not even utilize the skills or knowledge obtained in the training program.

Second level of evaluation is learning. Learning is a relatively permanent change in behavior, cognition which is resulted from experience (DeSimon & Harris, 1998). In terms of performance, learning is an improvement in knowledge, skills, and abilities. The question will be asked in this level is what principles, facts, techniques are understood and absorbed by the trainees.

Level three of evaluation is behavior evaluation which focuses on the concepts learned in training used on-the-job. Behavior is the extent to which change in work behavior has occurred because the trainee attended the training. If learning does not transfer to the job, the training effort can not have an effective impact on trainees' performance. Kirkpatrick (1994) emphasized that behavior evaluation requires observation of the trainee's on-the-job behavior to measure whether training has been transferred to the job.

The highest level of evaluation is the results evaluation. Trainers have to evaluate whether the application of the training improves the organization's performance, such as cost savings, work output changes, and quality changes (Phillips, 1997). Typically, economic and operating data, such as sales or waste are collected and analyzed (DeSimon & Harris, 1998).

Based on the recent survey of corporate training program using Kirkpatrick's four levels of evaluation conducted by American Society for Training and Development in 1996, training participant's reaction, which reported using participant reactionnaires, is the most popular used criteria for determining the effectiveness of training programs (88.9%). The majority of organizations believe that trainees' reactions and opinion on the training program immediately after completion of training program is the most useful

information and most efficient method for evaluating the training program (Lee & Pershing, 1999).

This study focuses on level one reaction evaluation and level two learning evaluation since there is no involvement with the employer's observation and measurement on tourist's satisfaction.

Reaction Evaluation

Kirkpatrick (1994) defined reaction as “how well the trainees liked the training program.” Evaluating reaction is to measure the feelings of the trainees. In others words, it is a measurement of customer satisfaction. (Lee and Pershing, 1999) emphasized that the main purpose of reaction evaluation is to strengthen training program quality. There are two important reasons for reaction evaluation (Kirkpatrick, 1994). Favorable reaction means that the learners is paying attention and enjoying the experience. Another reason for reaction evaluation is to determine customer satisfaction. High level of customer satisfaction might refer to repeat business. The terminology for training profession includes two general terms – formative evaluation and summative evaluation (Krein & Weldon, 1994).

Formative evaluation Formative evaluation is utilized for program modification and the redesign of content, course materials and presentations by collecting information that is helpful for making revisions and improvements in the training program. Reaction evaluation is one type of formative evaluation when the results are used for program modification and the redesign of content, course materials, and presentations. The formative evaluation provides program designers with insights about trainees' degree of satisfaction with a program's design and implementation (Lee & Pershing, 1999). If

trainees are not satisfied with the training experience, they might not use what they have learned from the training program.

Summative evaluation Summative evaluation is to determine the effectiveness or efficiency of a training program, and it is a useful information on making judgments about a program's value for decision-makers or potential customers. The evaluation of training program could be a formative evaluation that is used to improve training program. On the other hand, a decision on the existing value of the training program could be based on the results of summative evaluation (Lee & Pershing, 1999).

Phillips (1997) highlighted that responses on reaction questionnaires assist to ensure against decisions based on the comments of a few very satisfied or disgruntled trainees. The reaction evaluations might include: program content, program material, delivery methods and technologies, instructor and facilitator, program time and length, training environment, planned action and transfer expectation, logistics and administration, overall evaluation, and recommendations for program improvement (Lee & Pershing, 1999).

Learning Evaluation

Enthusiastic reactions do not mean that learning has taken place (Kirkpatrick, 1983). Learning evaluation is often undertaken immediately after a program, in terms of amount of learning. Warr, Allan, and Birdi (1999) indicated "In most cases, learning evaluation focus upon the acquisition of declarative or procedural knowledge, but much training also has as an objective the modification of attitudes or values" (p. 351). Also, trainees' perceptions of the training materials are also measured as part of learning

evaluation. Examinations for both knowledge and attitudinal outcomes is important to increase coverage of training impacts (Warr, Allan, & Birdi, 1999).

Kirkpatrick (1994) stressed the importance of learning evaluation. No change in behavior can be expected unless one or more of these learning objectives have been achieved. Hamblin (1974) believed that three conditions must be satisfied in order to meet the learning objectives of a training program. The three conditions are following:

- Trainees must have the basic aptitude (intelligence, personality, dexterity, and etc.) to be able to acquire the desired knowledge, skills, and attitudes.
- The trainees' existing states of learning (knowledge, skills, and attitudes) must be compatible with the assumptions made in the training objectives.
- Trainees must react favorably to the training. This doesn't necessarily mean that they should like the training; it means that their reaction to it should not be incompatible with the learning objectives. At the least, it means that trainees should be receptive to the training (p. 18).

A variety of measurements could be utilized for the evaluation of learning, such as paper-and-pencil tests, skill practices, and job simulations (Phillips, 1997). However, there are often differences between trainees' level of competence, which they bring to the training, and a deeper understanding of the processes that learning requires information about what has happened longitudinally as a result of experience.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The intention of this chapter was to discuss the research methodology of this study. The research design and procedures employed for this descriptive study is to answer questions concerning the objectives of this study. This chapter includes the following sections: research, sources of data, instrumentation, pilot test, data analysis, and research schedule.

Research Design

The purpose of this study was to evaluate whether the existing tour leader's training program in Taiwan accomplish its objectives to prepare qualified tour leaders for tourism industry. The researcher sent the research package to selected licensed tour leaders in June 25, 2000, and the survey was conducted during the month of July 2000. The research package sent to each selected licensed tour leader, included a cover with consent form, a questionnaire, and a stamped return envelope addressed to the researcher. The respondents were required to send the survey back before July 31, 2000. After the researcher collect data, the research would identify the respondents by tracing the number of the questionnaire, and send a follow-up survey to the non-respondents on August 5, 2000 for a follow-up study.

Data Collection

Population

The population in this study was the licensed tour leaders registered in the Tourism Bureau, Ministry of Transportation and Communications, R.O.C during the calendar year of 2000. According to the Annual Report on Tourism in 1997, Eight

hundred and seventy-six travel agencies' main office are located in Taipei, which occupied over 55 percent of total number of travel agencies in Taiwan. Therefore, this study focused on the tour leaders in Taipei, which was also the capital city in Taiwan. Total population consisted 3,670 licensed tour leaders who attended the international tour leader training program and recently work in the registered travel agencies in Taipei. The data were collected based on a list of all licensed tour leaders in Taiwan Tourism Department.

Sampling Plan

Sample for this study consisted 120 licensed tour leaders randomly selected from the total population. The sample was divided into two groups based on its' business scope and service type in Taipei, Taiwan. Both groups contained equal number of licensed international tour leaders recently working in the registered travel agencies in Taipei. Random sampling technique was employed in this study. Based on the size, scope, and type of customer, the travel service industry is divided into three levels. The total number and the characteristics of each level of travel agency are below:

1. Consolidated travel agent (Wholesaler): 50
 - Qualification: \$300,000 deposit in the Tourism Bureau.
 - Size: over 50 employees.
 - Scope: International travel and domestic travel.
 - Type of customer: Class A and Class B travel agencies, direct contact with travelers.
2. Class A travel agent: 814
 - Qualification: \$150,000 deposit in the Tourism Bureau.

- Size: 20-50 employees.
 - Scope: International travel and domestic travel.
 - Type of customer: Direct contact with travelers.
3. Class B travel agent: 12
- Qualification: \$30,000 deposit in the Tourism Bureau.
 - Size: 5-10 employees.
 - Scope: Domestic travel.
 - Type of customer: Direct contact with travelers.

The primary sample selection focused on the tour leaders of the Consolidated travel agencies and the Class A travel agencies in Taipei, Taiwan. Based on the list of the travel agencies in 2000, the researcher stratified the population into two groups: the Consolidated travel agencies tour leaders and the Class A travel agencies tour leaders. And, a random sampling plan was utilized to yield 60 survey from each group.

Instrumentation

The primary instrument of this study was a questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed based on literature review and a pre-interview with number of licensed tour leaders in Taipei, Taiwan. The questionnaire contained three pages. An introductory and directional paragraph was placed at the beginning of the questionnaire. The instrument including a cover letter was sent to the tour leaders. The cover letter stated the purposes of the study and the method to be followed in administering the questionnaire.

The questionnaire had three sections within three pages. The questions in the first section were used to identify the important knowledge and skills needed by tour leaders for escort tour in Taiwan by 30 items. In the same section, the respondents were asked

whether they think the knowledge and skills listed on the questionnaire would be needed for training. The Likert scale was employed in this section. For the importance of the knowledge and skills needed by tour leaders in group tour, a 5-point scale will be used with 1 being determined as not important and 5 being determined as essential. In the column of need for training, a 5-point scale is also used with 1 being determined as no need and 5 being determined as very high need. Based on the review of literature, the researcher factored thirty skills and knowledge into three categories: conceptual knowledge, tourism operation/professional knowledge, and personal skills. The variables that are used in the questionnaire were selected on the basis of review of literature. The answer from question one was employed to accomplish objective two and three.

Open-ended questions in the second section of the questionnaire were used to obtain more personal opinion from licensed tour leaders toward the existing training program in Taiwan. Based on the response for each question, the researcher would be able to exam the effectiveness and efficiency of the existing tour leader's training program in Taiwan.

Question two "What type of attitude should a tour leader demonstrate when guiding a tour?" was used to achieve objective two. The answers from both question three "Does the training program for new international tour leaders in Taiwan need to be improved by introducing more new courses or curriculum?" and question four "What type of courses are needs?" were utilized to accomplish objective four. Question five "Overall, the training program for international tour leader is valuable in order to do your job effectively?" was used to carry through objective one. Question six "Does you company pay for the international tour leader training program?" and question seven

“Does your company provide any other training program within the company?” were applied to fulfill objective two.

The last section of the questionnaire was used for the demographics of the sample. The primary purpose of this section was to collect basic information from each respondent. The questions on the demographics of gender, age, years work experience, year of participating the international training program, and education level involved the validity and reliability of the collected data among a list of variables. The variables that were used in the questionnaire were selected on the basis of a review of literature and the previous research conducted by the Tourism Bureau, Ministry of Transportation and Communications, R.O.C indicated in chapter two.

Pilot Study

A Pilot study is employed to test whether the questionnaire has any error. The significant objective of administering a questionnaire is to acquire a reliable and valid measurement of an individual’s opinion on a prescribed issue. This process allows the researcher to make corrections in wording or layout prior to the full administration of the questionnaire in order to modify the questionnaire if needed.

A selected representative sample licensed international tour leaders were asked to review and to critique the questionnaire prior to full-scale administration to make sure each element was appropriate due to the accessibility and convenience. Furthermore, the pilot study exam if the questionnaire was able to get the factors the researcher intends to do. Both Chinese and English version questionnaires were e-mailed to five pre-selected licensed international tour leaders by using e-mails from May 8 to May 12, 2000.

From the pilot study, the questionnaires were made to correspond with the study, and there were necessary changes were found. The translation problem was emphasized due to two different visions of questionnaires. In addition, some respondents had difficulty answering questions due to the confusion of selected answers.

Data Analysis

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was employed to analyze the statistic. Descriptive statistics was applied for computing means, standard deviations, One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), and Paired-Samples T Test were tabulated and analyzed.

The frequencies of response were tabulated from most of the question items, which were based upon the multiple-choice. The cross-tabulation was used to describe the demography of all respondents. Rank and mean procedures were used to determine the level of importance and training need for each competency for international tour leaders. Results were analyzed to determine the needs of tour leaders' ability to provide sufficient knowledge about the destination to fulfill the tourists' expectations in escort tours.

Research Schedule

The primary data for this study was collected from July 1 to August 18, 2000. The researcher stayed in touch with the international tour leaders as data collected. After the data collection process, the researcher started coding the data and uses SPSS to analyze the result. The interpretation of the data and summary of the result were reported followed by the steps.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

The purpose of this study is to evaluate whether the existing tour leader's training program is accomplishing its objectives to prepare qualified tour leaders for tourism industry in Taiwan. As discussed earlier in chapter three, a questionnaire was designed as a research instrument for data collection. This chapter presents the results regarding the international tour leader training program in Taiwan. Data and information found in this study were analyzed and discussed in accordance with the research objectives introduced in chapter one.

The Statistic Package of the Social Sciences (SPSS) was utilized to analyze the data received in this study. The ordinal scale of measurement was used for question one of the questionnaire. The frequencies of response were tabulated from most of the question items, which were based upon multiple-choice from question two to thirteen. The nominal data involved frequency and percentage distributions from questions eight to thirteen. In addition, the nominal data involved frequency and percentage distributions for the last part of the questionnaire regarding gender, marital status, age, education background, work experience, and the year of attending training program were used for the demographics of the sample.

While 445 questionnaires were received, not all respondents answered every question. Therefore, tabulated responses were based on the number respondent to each question, and data were tabulated by individual question. The cross-tabulation was used to describe the demography of all respondents. A One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), rank, and mean procedures were used to determine if there is any significant

difference between the tour leaders of Consolidated travel agency and the tour leaders of Class A travel agency. Also, the Paired-Samples T Test was utilized to identify any significant difference between the importance and training need for each competency.

Response Rate

In this study, 120 questionnaires were distributed to tour leaders from July 1 to August 18, 2000 in Taipei, Taiwan. By August 5, 2000, 76 questionnaires were returned, and 73 questionnaires were completed and valid. A follow-up study was conducted from August 7 to 18, 2000, and twelve questionnaires were returned. Eleven questionnaires were completed and valid in the follow-up study. As a result, 84 completed and valid questionnaires were yield throughout this study. The overall response rate was 70 percent (Table 1).

Table 1

Responses rate

Population Number	120
Total responses	84
Sample of tour leaders from Consolidated travel agent	44
Sample of tour leaders from Class A travel agent	40
Overall response rate (84/120)	70%

Respondents' Profile

In the last part of the questionnaire, questions on the demographics of gender, age, years work experience, year of participating the international training program, and educational level were utilized to collect basic information from each respondent. The data served as a demographic profile of the respondents in this study.

The result in Table 2 shows that 44 percent of the respondents was male, and 56 percent of the respondents was female. Among 84 respondents, 19 percent of the

respondents was in the category of 20-25 years old; 40.5 percent of the respondents was in the category of 26-30 years old; 28.6 percent of the respondents was in the category of 31-36 years old; six percent of the respondents was in the category of 37-41 years old; less than five percent (4.8%) of the respondents was in the category of 42-50 years old; only one respondent (1.2%) was over 50 years old (Table 2).

Table 2

<u>Respondents' Profiles</u>			
N=84	n	Percent	
Gender			
Male	37	44.0%	
Female	47	56.0%	
Age Group			
20-25	16	19.0%	
26-30	34	40.5%	
31-36	24	28.6%	
37-41	5	6.0%	
42-50	4	4.8%	
Over 50	1	1.2%	

The result in Table 3 shows that slightly over 21 percent of the respondents (21.4%) had a high school degree; over one-third of the majority (36.9%) indicated they had a technical or trade school degree; forty percent of the respondents (40.5%) had a college degree; and only one respondent (1.2%) had a master's or doctorate degree.

Table 3

<u>Percentages of educational level</u>		
N=84	n	Percent
Educational level		
High school	18	21.4%
Technical/Trade school	31	36.9%
College	34	40.5%
Masters/Doctorate	1	1.2%

When the question was asked about the year attending international tour leader training program, 12 subjects did not fill out the question. Nearly 10 percent of the respondents (9.5%) indicated that they attended the training program before 1990. Almost 30 percent of the respondents (29.8%) attended the training program between 1991 and 1997, and 46.4 percent of the respondents attended the training program between 1998 and 2000.

When the question regarding working experience as an international tour leader was asked in the questionnaire, one subject did not answer the question. Nine respondents (10.8%) had less than one year work experience in the field. Nineteen respondents (22.9%) had one to two years work experience in the tourism field; eight respondents (21.7%) had three to four years work experience in the tourism field; eight respondents had four to five years work experience; seven respondents had six to seven years work experience; another 18 respondents (21.7%) worked as an international tour leader at least seven years (Table 4).

Table 4

Percentages of experience as an international tour leader

N=83	n	Percent
Experience as an international tour leader		
Less than 1 year	9	10.8%
1-2 years	19	22.9%
2-3 years	4	4.8%
3-4 years	18	21.7%
4-5 years	8	9.6%
6-7 years	7	8.4%
Over 7 years	18	21.7%

Regarding the question about the work years with current company, 27.4 percent of the respondents indicated that they worked for current company for less than one year;

21.4 percent of the respondents worked with current company for at least one year but less than two years. Among 84 respondents, 13.1 percent of the respondents had three to four years work years with current company; and another 13.1 percent of the respondents had four to five years work years with current company. Only six percent of the respondents worked for the current company for six to seven years, and 14.3 percent of the respondents worked at the current company over seven years (Table 5).

Table 5

Percentages of work years with current company

N=84	n	Percent
Work years with current company		
Less than 1 year	23	27.4%
1-2 years	18	21.4%
2-3 years	4	4.8%
3-4 years	11	13.1%
4-5 years	11	13.1%
6-7 years	5	6.0%
Over 7 years	12	14.3%

Professional Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes as a Tour Leader

The results in this section were used to analyze the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes perceived by the respondents as necessary to be success in escort tours to achieve objective two. Four issues will be discussed in this section: (1) type of attitudes, (2) perceptions of importance and training needs, (3) gaps between groups, and (4) gaps between two perceptions.

Type of Attitudes

When the respondents were asked about the type of attitudes that a tour leader should demonstrate when guiding a tour, a variety of answer were provided by the respondents, and the result is showed in Table 6. The top ten attitudes toward a

professional tour leader are as follows: being professional, being affectionate, cordial or kind, being enthusiastic or ardent, serious, service mind, observing detail, being responsible, easy to get along with, being sincere or true heartedness, and being patience.

Among 84 respondents, 27 respondents mentioned that being professional was the most important attitudes for being a tour leader. Twenty-four respondents indicated that being affectionate, cordial or kind was the key attitude; twenty-one respondents viewed being enthusiastic or ardent was the heart of a successful tour leader. Fifteen respondents indicated that being serious would be essential, and fourteen respondents indicated that service mind was critical for being a tour leader. Twelve respondents mentioned that a good tour leader should be able to observe detail and be responsible. Eleven respondents specified that tour leader should be easy to get along with the tour groups and related tourism or hospitality providers. Ten respondents mentioned that sincere or true heartedness was the foundation of a good tour leader; nine respondents indicated that patience and communication would be the key to success (Table 6).

Table 6

Type of attitudes a tour leader should demonstrate when guiding a tour

Attitude N=84	Frequency		Rank
	n		
Professional	27	1	
Affectionate, cordial, kind	24	2	
Enthusiastic, ardent	21	3	
Serious	15	4	
Service mind	14	5	
Observing detail	12	6	
Be responsible	12	6	
Easy to get along with	11	8	
Sincere, true heartedness	10	9	
Patience	9	10	
Communication	9	10	
Compact, rigorous	7	12	
Good reaction	6	13	
Respectful/polite	6	13	
Humorous	5	15	
Equal treatment, without discrimination	5	15	
Modesty	5	15	
Active, energetic, positive	4	18	
Neither overbearing nor servile	4	18	
Leadership	2	20	
To clearly distinguish right and wrong	2	20	
Not frivolous	2	20	
Optimistic	2	20	
Ensure service quality	2	20	
Learning	2	20	
Self-confident	1	26	
Mature	1	26	
Objective	1	26	
International view	1	26	

Perceptions of the Importance

According to sampling plan in chapter three, the sample was divided into two groups (the Consolidated travel agent and the Class A travel agent) based on its' business scope and services in Taiwan. This section corresponded with the overall perceptions of

important knowledge and skills perceived as necessary to be success in escort tours by the tour leaders from both the Consolidated travel agent and Class A travel agent.

By Tour Leaders from the Consolidated Travel Agent

The top ten important competencies were ranked based on the mean score. The result in Table 7 shows the top ten important competencies perceived by tour leaders from the Consolidated travel agent as follow: professional terms and characteristics, emergency training, safety and emergency handling skills, leadership, communication, international etiquette, tour leader terminology, tour operation procedure, traveler psychology, and customer relations.

Among 44 respondents from Consolidated travel agent, 65.9 percent of the respondents rated “professional terms and characteristics” as “essential.” Over sixty percent (63.6%) of the respondents rated “emergency training” as “essential.” The competency of safety and emergency handling skills had 61.4 percent of the respondents rated as “essential.” Although the total number of the respondents who rated “leadership”, “communication”, “international etiquette”, and “tour leader terminology” were different, the mean score for these four competencies were the same ($M=4.48$). However, the responses in leadership was more consentaneous than other competencies based on it’s standard deviation ($SD=.55$).

The least five important competencies were introduction of hospitality, China relationship and law, China regulation and administration, introduction of tourism, and scenic area administration. Yet, these five competencies still had a mean score higher than 3.0. For these five least important competencies, the majority of respondents rated “important” instead of “very important” or “essential.”

Table 7

The important competency as perceived by tour leaders from the Consolidated agent

N=44	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	Level of importance					Rank
			1	2	3	4	5	
Professional Terms/Characteristics	4.61	.58			4.5	29.5	65.9	1
Emergency Training	4.57	.62			6.8	29.5	63.6	2
Safety/Emergency Handling Skills	4.55	.63			6.8	31.8	61.4	3
Leadership	4.48	.55			2.3	47.7	50.0	4
Communication	4.48	.63			6.8	38.6	54.5	4
International Etiquette	4.48	.63			6.8	38.6	54.5	4
Tour Leader Terminology	4.48	.70		2.3	4.5	36.4	56.8	4
Tour Operation Procedure	4.45	.66			9.1	36.4	54.5	8
Traveler Psychology	4.41	.62			6.8	45.5	47.7	9
Customer Relations	4.41	.66			9.1	40.9	50.0	9
International Tourism Geography	4.39	.65			9.1	43.2	47.7	10
Transportation/Accommodation	4.34	.64			9.1	47.7	43.2	
Travel Certificates (P. V. S.)	4.32	.64			9.1	50.0	40.9	
Problem Solving/Identification	4.30	.63			9.1	52.3	38.6	
Immigration/Custom Regulation	4.27	.73			15.9	40.9	43.2	
Travel Insurance Knowledge	4.25	.69			13.6	47.7	38.6	
Destination Explanation Skills	4.23	.71			15.9	45.5	38.6	
World Culture Arts	4.23	.74			18.2	40.9	40.9	
Handling Complaints	4.20	.76			20.5	38.6	40.9	
Foundation of Water Activities	4.11	.72			20.5	47.7	31.8	
Quarantine/Travel Health Care	4.07	.73			22.7	47.7	29.5	
Negotiating	4.05	.78			27.3	40.9	31.8	
Public Relations	4.02	.70			22.7	52.3	25.0	
Airline Ticketing	3.93	.79		2.3	27.3	45.5	25.0	
Case Study on Special Issue	3.89	.72			31.8	47.7	20.5	
Introduction of Hospitality	3.52	.88	2.3	6.8	38.6	40.9	11.4	
China Relationship/Law	3.50	.88		9.1	47.7	27.3	15.9	
China Regulation/Administration	3.45	.87		11.4	45.5	29.5	13.6	
Introduction of Tourism	3.43	.90	2.3	4.5	56.8	20.5	15.9	
Scenic Area Administration	3.41	.84	2.3	4.5	54.5	27.3	11.4	

Note. Judgment of importance is made on 5-point scale (1=NI=Not Important,

5=E=Essential). M=Mean; SD=Standard Deviation.

By Tour Leaders From the Class A Travel Agent

The result in Table 8 shows the top ten important competencies perceived by tour leaders from the Class A travel agent as follow: emergency training, safety and emergency handling skills, communication, travel certificates, customer relations, traveler psychology, transportation and accommodation, negotiating, professional terms and characteristics, international etiquette, and leadership.

Emergency training was ranked as the most important skills for being a professional international tour leader. Seventy percent of the respondents from Class A travel agent rated “emergency training” as “essential.” Although both safety/emergency handling skills and communication were ranked in the second place with the mean score 4.43, the standard deviation of safety and emergency handling skills ($SD=.78$) was lower than communication skills ($SD=.81$). That is, the response from safety and emergency handling skills was more consentaneous than the responses from communication. The fourth important competency was travel certificates, which had 85 percent of the respondents rated the level of importance above “very important.” In the same manner, customer relations and traveler psychology were both ranked 5 with the mean score 4.37. In fact, customer relations ($SD=.74$) had a lower standard deviation than traveler psychology ($SD=.87$), which means customers, had more consensus among responses (Table 8).

In contrast with those top ten competencies, the five least important competencies perceived by tour leaders from the Class A travel agent are followed: scenic area administration, introduction of hospitality, introduction of tourism, China regulation and administration, and China relationship and law. All of those competencies had less than

50 percent of the responses above “very important.” Yet, these five competencies still had a mean score higher than 3.0 (Table 8).

Table 8

The competency as perceived by tour leaders from the Class A agent

N=40	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	Level of importance					Rank
			1	2	3	4	5	
Emergency Training	4.55	.78		2.5	10.5	17.5	70.0	1
Safety/Emergency Handling Skills	4.43	.78		2.5	10.0	30.0	57.5	2
Communication	4.43	.81		2.5	12.5	25.0	60.0	2
Travel Certificates (P. V. S.)	4.38	.74			15.0	32.5	52.5	4
Customer Relations	4.37	.74			15.0	32.5	52.5	5
Traveler Psychology	4.37	.87		5.0	10.0	27.5	57.5	5
Transportation/Accommodation	4.35	.74			15.5	35.0	50.0	7
Negotiating	4.35	.77			17.5	30.0	52.5	7
Professional Terms/Characteristics	4.30	.76		2.5	10.0	42.5	45.0	9
International Etiquette	4.28	.78		2.5	12.5	40.0	45.0	10
Leadership	4.28	.82		5.0	7.5	42.5	45.0	10
Problem Solving/Identification	4.25	.71			15.0	45.0	40.0	
Tour Operation Procedure	4.25	.84		2.5	17.5	32.5	47.5	
Immigration/Custom Regulation	4.25	.84		2.5	17.5	32.5	47.5	
Tour Leader Terminology	4.25	.93		5.0	17.5	25.0	52.5	
Travel Insurance Knowledge	4.23	.92		5.0	17.5	27.5	50.0	
Foundation of Water Activities	4.20	.82			25.0	30.0	45.0	
Destination Explanation Skills	4.18	.87		5.0	15.0	37.5	42.5	
International Tourism Geography	4.15	.77		2.5	15.0	47.5	35.0	
Public Relations	4.13	.82		2.5	20.0	40.0	37.5	
Handling Complaints	4.10	.84		2.5	22.5	37.5	37.5	
Quarantine/Travel Health Care	4.05	.85		2.5	25.0	37.5	35.0	
Airline Ticketing	4.00	.78			30.0	40.0	30.0	
World Culture Arts	3.90	.84		2.5	32.5	37.5	27.5	
Case Study on Special Issue	3.78	.92		5.0	40.0	27.5	27.5	
Scenic Area Administration	3.65	.92		7.5	42.5	27.5	22.5	
Introduction of Hospitality	3.60	.71			52.5	35.0	12.5	
Introduction of Tourism	3.50	.78		2.5	60.0	22.5	15.0	
China Regulation/Administration	3.48	.75		5.0	52.5	32.5	10.0	
China Relationship/Law	3.35	.74		7.5	57.5	27.5	7.5	

Note. Judgment of importance is made on 5-point scale (1=NI=Not Important,

5=E=Essential). M=Mean; SD=Standard Deviation.

Gaps Between Two Groups

Although most of the competencies were rated similarly by both the Consolidated travel agent and the Class A travel agent, some skills were ranked within the top ten by only one group. The competencies of tour leader terminology, tour operation procedure and international tourism geography were ranked 4th, 8th, and 10th by the Consolidated travel agent tour leaders, but these competencies were only ranked 11th, and 18th by the Class A travel agent tour leaders. Conversely, the competencies of travel certificates, transportation an accommodation, and negotiating were ranked 4th, and 7th by the Class A travel agent tour leaders, but these competencies were only ranked 11th, 12th, and 21 by the Consolidated travel agent tour leaders (Table 7 & 8).

Thus, A One-Way ANOVA procedure was utilized to compare the mean score of each competency on the level of importance between two groups. The result in Table 9 indicates that only the competency of professional terms and characteristics had a significant difference (Sig. = 0.035 < 0.05) with a F value 4.589 between the Class A travel agent and the Consolidated travel agent (Table 9).

As presented earlier in Table 7, the perception of importance for the competency of professional terms and characteristics was placed number one by the Consolidated travel agent. Also, the highest response for the importance level was 65.9 percent in “5-point important”, and the second highest response was 29.5 percent in “4-point important.” Yet, the perception of important perceived by the Class A travel agent was only placed 9, and the highest response was 45 percent in “5-point important” in Table 8.

Table 9

Statistical difference on level of importance between two groups

N=84	Mean score		F value	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Class A Agent	Consolidated Agent		
Introduction of Tourism	3.50	3.43	.136	.713
Introduction of Hospitality	3.60	3.52	.195	.660
Scenic Area Administration	3.65	3.41	1.564	.215
Emergency Training	4.55	4.57	.014	.906
Travel Insurance Knowledge	4.22	4.25	.020	.887
International Etiquette	4.28	4.48	1.171	.194
Traveler Psychology	4.38	4.41	.043	.835
Foundation of Water Activities Quarantine, and Travel Health Care	4.20	4.11	.262	.610
	4.05	4.07	.011	.916
Professional Terms/Characteristics	4.30	4.61	4.589	.035*
Immigration/Custom Regulation	4.25	4.27	.018	.895
International Tourism Geography	4.15	4.39	2.311	.132
World Culture Arts	3.90	4.23	3.585	.062
Tour Operation Procedure	4.25	4.45	1.549	.217
Destination Explanation Skills	4.18	4.23	.091	.763
Airline Ticketing	4.00	3.93	.157	.693
Travel Certificates (P. V. S.)	4.38	4.32	.143	.707
Tour Leader Terminology	4.25	4.48	1.629	.205
Transportation/Accommodation	4.35	4.34	.004	.952
Case Study on Special Issue	3.78	3.89	.385	.537
Safety/Emergency Handling Skills	4.43	4.55	.613	.436
China Relationship/Law	3.35	3.50	.715	.400
China Regulation/Administration	3.48	3.45	.013	.909
Problem Solving/Identification	4.50	4.30	.097	.756
Leadership	4.28	4.48	1.805	.183
Communication	4.43	4.48	.110	.741
Customer Relations	4.38	4.41	.050	.824
Negotiating	4.35	4.05	3.251	.075
Handling Complaints	4.10	4.20	.356	.552
Public Relations	4.13	4.02	.380	.540

Notes. *-Indicated statistically significant. Significant different level $\leq .05$.

Perceptions of the Training Need

This section corresponded with the overall perceptions of the training need on professional knowledge and skills, which tour leaders perceived as necessary to be included in the training program. Tour leaders' perceptions on training needs from both the Consolidated and the Class A travel agent were covered. Furthermore, the researcher compared mean score for training needs from both the Consolidated and the Class travel agent to analyze if any difference was occurred between two groups.

By Tour Leaders From the Consolidated Travel Agent

In Table 10, the result indicates the top ten competencies perceived as a training need by tour leaders from the Consolidated travel agent as follow: emergency training, professional terms and characteristics, safety and emergency handling skills, communication, tour operation procedure, tour leader terminology, leadership, customer relations, travel psychology, travel certificates, and destination explanation skills.

Emergency training was ranked as the top one competency, which should be incorporated into the training program. Sixty-eight percent (68.2%) of the respondents rated "emergency training" as "very high need", and less than five percent of response rated "emergency training" as "slightly need" or "moderate need." Professional terms and characteristics placed 2nd with mean score 4.59, and safety and emergency handling skills was ranked 3rd with mean score 4.52 (Table 10).

The competency of communication had 56.8 percent of the respondents rated as "very high need", and 36.4 percent of the respondents rated as "high need", placing in 4th; the competency of tour operation procedure had 54.5 percent of response in "very high need", and 36.4 percent of response in "high need", and placed 5th.

Tour leader terminology had 88.6 percent of the respondents rated above “high need” with a mean score 4.43, and placed 6th. Leadership had a mean score 4.41 with 90.9 percent of the respondents rated above “high need,” placing in 7th. Although the competency of leadership had 90.9 percent of the respondents rated above “high need”, the competency of tour leader terminology had higher response rate (56.8%) on “very high need.” Thus, the competency of tour leader terminology was ranked higher than the competency of leadership by the tour leaders from the Consolidated travel agent (Table 10).

Both customer relations and traveler psychology had a mean score 4.39 which were ranked 8th. Yet, the competency of traveler psychology (SD=. 69) had a higher standard deviation than customer relations (SD=. 65). Indeed, the competency of customer relations had more consensus than the competency of traveler psychology.

The least five competencies, which were not as much required as other competencies for the training program, are following: China relationship and law, introduction hospitality, China regulation and administration, introduction of tourism, and scenic area administration. These five competencies had at least 38 percent of response on “moderately need.” Less than 20 percent of the respondents rated these five competencies as “very high need” for training. The competencies of introduction of hospitality, introduction of tourism, and scenic area administration even had 2.3 percent of the respondents rated as no need for training. (Table 10).

Table 10

The competency perceived by the Consolidated agent as a training need

N=44	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	Training needs					Rank
			1	2	3	4	5	
Emergency Training	4.61	.65		2.3	2.3	27.3	68.2	1
Professional Terms/Characteristics	4.59	.58			4.5	31.8	63.6	2
Safety/Emergency Handling Skills	4.52	.63			6.8	34.1	59.1	3
Communication	4.50	.63			6.8	36.4	56.8	4
Tour Operation Procedure	4.45	.66			9.1	36.4	54.5	5
Tour Leader Terminology	4.43	.63		2.3	9.1	31.8	56.8	6
Leadership	4.41	.66			9.1	40.9	50.0	7
Customer Relations	4.39	.65			9.1	43.2	47.7	8
Traveler Psychology	4.39	.69			11.4	38.6	50.0	8
Travel Certificates (P. V. S.)	4.36	.61			6.8	50.0	43.2	10
Destination Explanation Skills	4.36	.66		2.3	9.1	38.6	50.0	10
International Tourism Geography	4.34	.68			11.4	43.2	45.5	
International Etiquette	4.32	.71			13.6	40.9	45.5	
Transportation/Accommodation	4.30	.67			11.4	47.7	40.9	
Problem Solving/Identification	4.25	.65			11.4	52.3	36.4	
Immigration/Custom Regulation	4.25	.72			15.9	43.2	40.9	
Handling Complaints	4.23	.74			18.2	40.9	40.9	
World Culture Arts	4.20	.73			18.2	43.2	38.6	
Travel Insurance Knowledge	4.18	.69			15.9	50.0	34.1	
Negotiating	4.18	.72			18.2	45.5	36.4	
Foundation of Water Activities	4.16	.71			18.2	47.7	34.1	
Public Relations	4.07	.70			20.5	52.3	27.3	
Quarantine/Travel Health Care	4.00	.78			29.5	40.9	29.5	
Airline Ticketing	3.95	.71		2.3	9.1	31.8	56.8	
Case Study on Special Issue	3.89	.84		2.3	34.1	36.4	27.3	
China Relationship/Law	3.57	.87			6.8	47.7	27.3	18.2
Introduction of Hospitality	3.52	.88	2.3	6.8	38.6	40.9	11.4	
China Regulation/Administration	3.48	.85			9.1	47.7	29.5	13.6
Introduction of Tourism	3.39	.81	2.3	4.5	54.5	29.5	9.1	
Scenic Area Administration	3.36	.92	2.3	11.4	45.5	29.5	11.4	

Note. Judgment of importance is made on 5-point scale (1=N=No Need, 5=VH=Very High Need). M=Mean; SD=Standard Deviation.

By Tour Leaders From the Class A Travel Agent

The result in Table 11 shows the top ten competencies perceived as a training need by tour leaders from the Class A travel agent as follow: emergency training, safety and emergency handling skills, traveler psychology, immigration and custom regulation, communication, international etiquette, travel certificates, transportation and accommodation, travel insurance knowledge, and tour operation procedure.

The top ten competencies required for the international tour leader training program recognized by the Class A travel agent were ranked based on the mean score. The competency of emergency training had a mean score 4.68 with over 77.5 percent of the respondents rated “very high need.” The second place was the competency of safety and emergency handling skills (M=4.60), and the third place was the competency of travel psychology (M=4.50).

Based on the value of standard deviation, the competency of immigration and customer regulation (SD=. 71) was more consentaneous than the competency of communication (SD=. 75) even both immigration/customer regulation and communication placed 4th with the same mean score 4.45. Differently, the competencies of international etiquette and travel certificates placed 6th had exactly same mean score 4.43 and standard deviation .78.

In the same manner with the Consolidated travel agent, the least five competencies required for the international tour leader training program are as follow: introduction of hospitality, scenic area administration, China regulation and administration, China relationship and law, and introduction of tourism (Table 11).

Table 11

The competency perceived by the Class A agent as a training need

N=40	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	Training needs					Rank
			1	2	3	4	5	
Emergency Training	4.68	.69		2.5	5.0	15.0	77.5	1
Safety/Emergency Handling Skills	4.60	.67			10.0	20.0	70.0	2
Traveler Psychology	4.50	.85		5.0	7.5	20.0	67.5	3
Immigration/Custom Regulation	4.45	.71			12.5	30.0	57.5	4
Communication	4.45	.75		2.5	7.5	32.5	57.5	4
International Etiquette	4.43	.78		2.5	10.0	30.0	57.5	6
Travel Certificates (P. V. S.)	4.43	.78		2.5	10.0	30.0	57.5	6
Transportation/Accommodation	4.40	.78		2.5	10.0	32.5	55.0	8
Travel Insurance Knowledge	4.40	.87		5.0	10.0	25.0	60.0	8
Tour Operation Procedure	4.37	.74			15.0	32.5	52.5	10
Destination Explanation Skills	4.35	.77			17.5	30.0	52.5	
Customer Relations	4.30	.79		2.5	12.5	37.5	47.5	
Negotiating	4.30	.82		2.5	15.0	32.5	50.0	
Tour Leader Terminology	4.27	.91		5.0	15.0	27.5	52.5	
Leadership	4.25	.81		2.5	15.0	37.5	45.0	
Professional Terms/Characteristics	4.22	.83		5.0	10.0	42.5	42.5	
Foundation of Water Activities	4.20	.79			22.5	35.0	42.5	
Problem Solving/Identification	4.20	.85		2.5	20.0	32.5	45.0	
Handling Complaints	4.15	.83		2.5	20.0	37.5	40.0	
Airline Ticketing	4.07	.86		2.5	25.0	35.0	37.5	
Quarantine/Travel Health Care	4.05	.81		2.5	22.5	42.5	32.5	
Public Relations	4.00	.82			32.5	35.0	32.5	
International Tourism Geography	4.00	.85		5.0	20.0	45.0	30.0	
Case Study on Special Issue	3.95	.90		2.5	35.0	27.5	35.0	
World Culture Arts	3.85	.83			42.5	30.0	27.5	
Introduction of Hospitality	3.55	.78		2.5	55.0	27.5	15.0	
Scenic Area Administration	3.53	.89		15.0	37.5	27.5	20.0	
China Regulation/Administration	3.48	.91		12.5	42.5	30.0	15.0	
China Relationship/Law	3.38	.93		15.0	47.5	22.5	15.0	
Introduction of Tourism	3.33	.92	2.5	10.0	52.5	22.5	12.5	

Note. Judgment of importance is made on 5-point scale (1=N=No Need, 5=VH=Very

High Need). M=Mean; SD=Standard Deviation.

Gaps Between Two Groups

Although most of the competencies were mentioned by both the Consolidated travel agent and the Class A travel agent, some skills were ranked by only one group. The competencies of professional terms and characteristics, tour leader terminology, leader, customer relations, and destination explanation skills were ranked 2nd, 6th, 7th, 8th, and 10th by the Consolidated travel agent, but these competencies were out of the top ten competencies by the Class A travel agent. Yet, the competencies of immigration and custom regulation, international etiquette, transportation and accommodation, and travel insurance knowledge were ranked 4th, 6th, 8th by the respondents from Class A travel agent, but these competencies were just ranked 13th, 14th, 15th, and 19th by the respondents from the Consolidated travel agent.

A One-Way ANOVA was used to identify the significant differences between the Consolidated travel agent respondents and the Class A travel agent respondents. The result in Table 12 indicates that the competencies of professional terms and characteristics, international tourism geography, and world culture arts had a significance value lower than .05 (Sig. = .021, .044, .041) between two groups. As stated earlier in Table 10 and 11, the competency of professional terms/characteristics was ranked 2nd by the Consolidated travel agent with a high response rate (68.2%) on “very high need,” but it was only ranked 16th by the Class A travel agent with a 42.5 percent of response on “very high need.” Similarly, the competency of international tourism geography had 47.7 percent of the respondents rated it as “very high need” by the Consolidated travel agent, and only 35 percent of the respondents from the Class A travel agent rated it as “very high need.” The competency of world culture arts had 40.9 percent of the respondents

from the Consolidated travel agent rated it as “very high need,” but only 27.5 percent of the respondents from the Class A travel agent rated it as “very high need.”

Table 12

Statistical difference on training needs between two groups

N=84	Mean score		p value	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Class A Agent	Consolidated Agent		
Introduction of Tourism	3.33	3.39	.106	.746
Introduction of Hospitality	3.55	3.52	.022	.881
Scenic Area Administration	3.53	3.36	.603	.440
Emergency Training	4.68	4.61	.174	.678
Travel Insurance Knowledge	4.40	4.18	1.613	.205
International Etiquette	4.43	4.32	.433	.513
Traveler Psychology	4.50	4.39	.458	.500
Foundation of Water Activities Quarantine, and Travel Health Care	4.20	4.16	.062	.804
	4.05	4.00	.083	.774
Professional Terms/Characteristics	4.22	4.59	5.528	.021*
Immigration/Custom Regulation	4.45	4.25	1.630	.205
International Tourism Geography	4.00	4.34	4.170	.044*
World Culture Arts	3.85	4.20	4.297	.041*
Tour Operation Procedure	4.38	4.45	.270	.605
Destination Explanation Skills	4.35	4.36	.007	.935
Airline Ticketing	4.08	3.95	.492	.485
Travel Certificates (P. V. S.)	4.43	4.36	.162	.688
Tour Leader Terminology	4.28	4.43	.744	.391
Transportation/Accommodation	4.40	4.30	.439	.509
Case Study on Special Issue	3.95	3.89	.112	.739
Safety/Emergency Handling Skills	4.60	4.52	.297	.587
China Relationship/Law	3.38	3.57	.969	.328
China Regulation/Administration	3.48	3.48	.000	.991
Problem Solving/Identification	4.20	4.25	.092	.762
Leadership	4.25	4.41	.985	.324
Communication	4.45	4.50	.110	.741
Customer Relations	4.30	4.39	.299	.586
Negotiating	4.30	4.18	.490	.486
Handling Complaints	4.15	4.23	.202	.654
Public Relations	4.00	4.07	.171	.681

Notes. *Indicated statistically significant. Significant different level $\leq .05$.

Gaps Between Perceptions of the Importance and the Training Need

In further examining if differences exist between the perception of the importance and the training need for thirty competencies listed on the questionnaire, the perceptions of importance and training needs were compared as they distinguished by tour leaders in Taiwan. The Paired-Samples T Test was utilized to accomplish objective two.

Overall Perceptions of the Importance

The result in Table 15 shows the top ten competencies perceived as a training need by tour leaders from both Consolidated travel agent and Class A travel agent as follow: emergency training, safety and emergency handling skills, professional terms and characteristics, communication, customer relations, travel psychology, international etiquette, leadership, tour leader terminology, and tour operation procedure. The top ten important competencies were ranked by mean score.

The competency of emergency training was the most important competency. Sixty-six percent (66.7%) of the respondents rated “emergency training” as “essential”, and twenty-three percent (23.8%) of the respondents rated it as “very important.” Almost sixty percent (59.5%) of the respondents rated “safety and emergency handling skills” as “essential”, and 31 percent of respondents rated it as “very important.” The third important competency was professional terms and characteristics, which had over 90 percent (91.7%) of the respondents rated important above “very important.” Communication was the fourth most important competency recognized by respondents with slightly over 89 percent (89.2%) of response above “very important.”

Both competency of customer relations and traveler psychology was ranked 5th with a mean score of 4.39. However, the competency of traveler psychology (SD=. 74)

was less consentaneous than the competency of customer relations (SD=. 69). In the same manner, both international etiquette and leadership were ranked seventh but the competency of leadership (SD=. 69) was more consentaneous than the competency of international etiquette (SD=. 71) based on the standard deviation (Table 13). Fifty-four percent (54.8%) of the respondents rated “tour leader terminology” as “essential” and it was ranked 9. The last one competency of the top ten important competencies was tour operation procedure, in which slightly over 50 percent (51.2%) of the respondents rated as “essential.”

In spite of the top ten important competencies, the competency of travel certificates, transportation/accommodation, problem solving/identification, negotiation, and foundation of water activities were with all respondents rated at least as “important”, while most of the skills had some responses in “moderately important.” In addition, there were still some competencies with at least one-third (33.3%) of the respondents rated as “essential”, such as international tourism geography, immigration/custom regulation, travel insurance knowledge, destination explanation skills, and handling complaints.

In contrast with those top ten competencies, the least five important competencies were introduction of hospitality, scenic area administration, China regulation/administration, introduction of tourism, and China relationship/law. Although these five competencies were the least important, the mean score were still higher than 3.0. In fact, none of the respondents perceived either the competency of China regulation and administration, or China relationship and law was not important at all. Among these five competencies, less than twenty percent of respondents viewed the competency as “essential”. The competencies of introduction of hospitality, scenic area administration,

and introduction of tourism had at least two percent (1.2%) of the respondents viewed the competency as “not important” (Table 13).

Table 13

The important competency as perceived by tour leaders

N=84	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	Level of importance					Rank
			1	2	3	4	5	
Emergency Training	4.56	.70	1.2	8.3	23.8	66.7		1
Safety/Emergency Handling Skills	4.49	.70	1.2	8.3	31.0	59.5		2
Professional Terms/Characteristics	4.46	.68	1.2	7.1	35.7	56.0		3
Communication	4.45	.72	1.2	9.5	32.1	57.1		4
Customer Relations	4.39	.69		11.9	36.9	51.2		5
Traveler Psychology	4.39	.74	2.4	8.3	36.9	52.4		5
Leadership	4.38	.69	2.4	4.8	45.2	47.6		7
International Etiquette	4.38	.71	1.2	9.5	39.3	50.0		7
Tour Leader Terminology	4.37	.82	3.6	10.7	31.0	54.8		9
Tour Operation Procedure	4.36	.75	1.2	13.1	34.5	51.2		10
Travel Certificates (P. V. S.)	4.35	.69		11.9	41.7	46.4		
Transportation/Accommodation	4.35	.69		11.9	41.7	46.4		
Problem Solving/Identification	4.27	.66		11.9	48.8	39.3		
International Tourism Geography	4.27	.72	1.2	11.9	45.2	41.7		
Immigration/Custom Regulation	4.26	.78	1.2	16.7	36.9	45.2		
Travel Insurance Knowledge	4.24	.80	2.4	15.5	38.1	44.0		
Destination Explanation Skills	4.20	.79	2.4	15.5	41.7	40.5		
Negotiating	4.19	.78		22.6	35.7	41.7		
Foundation of Water Activities	4.15	.77		22.6	39.3	38.1		
Handling Complaints	4.15	.80	1.2	21.4	38.1	39.3		
Public Relations	4.07	.76	1.2	21.4	46.4	31.0		
World Culture Arts	4.07	.80	1.2	25.0	39.3	34.5		
Quarantine/Travel Health Care	4.06	.78	1.2	23.8	42.9	32.1		
Airline Ticketing	3.96	.78	1.2	28.6	42.9	27.4		
Case Study on Special Issue	3.83	.82	2.4	35.7	38.1	23.8		
Introduction of Hospitality	3.56	.80	1.2	3.6	45.2	38.1	11.9	
Scenic Area Administration	3.52	.88	1.2	6.0	48.8	27.4	16.7	
China Regulation/Administration	3.46	.81		8.3	48.8	31.0	11.9	
Introduction of Tourism	3.46	.84	1.2	3.6	58.3	21.4	15.5	
China Relationship/Law	3.43	.81		8.3	52.4	27.4	11.9	

Note. Judgment of importance is made on 5-point scale (1=NI=Not Important,

5=E=Essential). M=Mean; SD=Standard Deviation.

Overall Perceptions of the Training Need

The competency of emergency training had the highest need for training as perceived by respondents. The top ten training needed competencies were ranked by mean score as follow: emergency training, safety/emergency handling skills, communication, traveler psychology, tour operation procedure, professional terms/characteristics, travel certificates, international etiquette, destination explanation skills, and tour leader terminology (Table 14).

Seventy-two percent (72.5%) of the respondents rated emergency training as “very high need”, and 21 percent (21.4%) of the respondents rated it as “high need” for training. The second highest need for training was the competency of safety and emergency handling skills with 64 percent (64.3%) of the respondents rated as “very high need”, and 27 percent (27.4%) of the respondents rated it as “high need” for training. The competency of communication was ranked 3rd highest training need with 57 percent (57.1%) of the respondents rated as “very high need” for tour leader training program. Slightly over 88 percent (88.1%) of the respondents rated the competency of traveler psychology as “high need” for training, placing in 4th (Table 14).

Both the competency of tour operation procedure and professional terms/characteristics were ranked 5 with a mean score 4.42. However, the competency of tour operation procedure (SD=. 70) was more consentaneous than the competency of professional terms/characteristics (SD=. 73) due to a lower standard deviation. In fact, none of the respondents rated tour operation procedure lower than “moderately need” while two percent (2.4%) of the respondents rated professional terms/characteristics as only “slightly need” (Table 14).

The competency of travel certificates was ranked 7 with half of respondents (50%) rated as “very high need”, and over 40 percent (40.5%) of the respondents rated as “high need.” Over 86 percent (86.9%) of the respondents rated “international etiquette” above “high need”, placed 8th. Although both destination explanation skills and tour leader terminology were ranked nine, the competency of destination explanation skills (SD=. 75) was more consentaneous than the competency of tour leader terminology (SD=. 83) with a lower standard deviation (Table 14).

Besides the top ten competencies perceived as a training need by tour leaders, there were still some competencies had a mean score higher than 4.0, such as transportation/accommodation, customer relations, immigration/customer regulation, leadership, travel insurance knowledge, negotiating, problem solving/identification, handling complaints, foundation of water activities, international tourism geography, public relations, world culture arts, quarantine/travel health care, and airline ticketing. Slightly over 63 percent (63.1%) of the respondents rated “case study on special issue” above “high need” with a mean score 3.92.

The least five competencies recognized as a training need were introduction of hospitality, China regulation/administration, China Relationship/law, scenic area administration, and introduction of tourism. In fact, over half of respondents viewed these five competencies for training in “moderately need” or below. The mean score for the least five competencies for training was lower than 4.0 (Table 14).

Table 14

The competency perceived as a training need by tour leaders

N=84	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	Training needs					Rank
			1	2	3	4	5	
Emergency Training	4.64	.67		2.4	3.6	21.4	72.6	1
Safety/Emergency Handling Skills	4.56	.65			8.3	27.4	64.3	2
Communication	4.48	.69		1.2	7.1	34.5	57.1	3
Traveler Psychology	4.44	.77		2.4	9.5	29.8	58.3	4
Tour Operation Procedure	4.42	.70			11.9	34.5	53.6	5
Professional Terms/Characteristics	4.42	.73		2.4	7.1	36.9	53.6	5
Travel Certificates (P. V. S.)	4.39	.69		1.2	8.3	40.5	50.0	7
International Etiquette	4.37	.74		1.2	11.9	35.7	51.2	8
Destination Explanation Skills	4.36	.75		1.2	13.1	34.5	51.2	9
Tour Leader Terminology	4.36	.83		3.6	11.9	29.8	54.8	9
Transportation/Accommodation	4.35	.72		1.2	10.7	40.5	47.6	
Customer Relations	4.35	.72		1.2	10.7	40.5	47.6	
Immigration/Custom Regulation	4.35	.72			14.3	36.9	48.8	
Leadership	4.33	.73		1.2	11.9	39.3	47.6	
Travel Insurance Knowledge	4.29	.78		2.4	13.1	38.1	46.4	
Negotiating	4.24	.77		1.2	16.7	39.3	42.9	
Problem Solving/Identification	4.23	.75		1.2	15.5	42.9	40.5	
Handling Complaints	4.19	.78		1.2	19.0	39.3	40.5	
Foundation of Water Activities	4.18	.75			20.2	41.7	38.1	
International Tourism Geography	4.18	.78		2.4	15.5	44.0	38.1	
Public Relations	4.04	.75			26.2	44.0	29.8	
World Culture Arts	4.04	.80			29.8	36.9	33.3	
Quarantine/Travel Health Care	4.02	.79		1.2	26.2	41.7	31.0	
Airline Ticketing	4.01	.78		2.4	22.6	46.4	28.6	
Case Study on Special Issue	3.92	.87		2.4	34.5	32.1	31.0	
Introduction of Hospitality	3.54	.83	1.2	4.8	46.4	34.5	13.1	
China Regulation/Administration	3.48	.87		10.7	45.2	29.8	14.3	
China Relationship/Law	3.48	.90		10.7	47.6	25.0	16.7	
Scenic Area Administration	3.44	.95	1.2	13.1	41.7	28.6	15.5	
Introduction of Tourism	3.36	.86	2.4	7.1	53.6	26.2	10.7	

Note. Judgment of importance is made on 5-point scale (1=N=No Need, 5=VH=Very High Need). M=Mean; SD=Standard Deviation.

Gaps Between Two Perceptions

The Paired-Samples T Test procedure was used to compare the means of importance and training need for this study. It computed the differences between values of importance and training need for each respondent and tests whether the average differs from 0. The result in Table 15 indicates that only the competency of destination explanation skills had a significant difference ($p=0.011$) between the level of importance and training need (Table 15).

As presented earlier in Table 13, the perception of importance for the competency of destination explanation skills was only placed 17. The highest response for the importance level of destination explanation skills was 41.7 percent in “4-point important”, and the second highest response was 40.5 percent in “5-point important” (Table 13). Yet, the perception of training need for the competency of destination explanation skills was placed 9 as stated in Table 14. The highest percent of response for the training need of destination explanation skills was 51.2 percent in “5-point training need” while the second highest response was 34.5 percent in “4-point training need” (Table 14).

By looking at the difference between importance and training needs on each individual competency, some competencies had higher perceptions on level of importance rather than training needs. Conversely, some competencies had higher perception on training needs rather than level of importance.

First, under the conceptual knowledge, the competencies of emergency training, travel insurance knowledge, traveler psychology, and foundation of water activities had a higher mean score on training needs ($M=4.64, 4.29, 4.44, 4.18$) than on level of

importance (M=4.56, 4.24, 4.39, 4.15). Differently, the competencies of introduction of tourism, introduction of hospitality, scenic area administration, international etiquette, and quarantine/travel health care had lower mean score on training needs (M=3.36, 3.54, 3.44, 4.37, 4.02) than on the level of importance (M=3.46, 3.56, 3.52, 4.38, 4.06). In the category of conceptual knowledge, the competency of emergency had the most significant different between level of importance and training needs (Sig.=0.145).

Secondly, in the category of tourism operational knowledge and skills, the competency of immigration/customer regulation, tour operation procedure, destination explanation skills, airline ticketing, travel certificates, safety/emergency handling skills, China relationship/law, and China regulation/administration had a higher mean score on training needs (M=4.35, 4.42, 4.36, 4.01, 4.39, 3.92, 4.56, 3.48, 3.48) than on the level of importance (M=4.26, 4.36, 4.20, 3.96, 4.35, 3.83, 4.49, 3.43, 3.46). The competency of professional terms/characteristics, international tourism geography, world culture arts, and tour leader terminology had a lower mean score on training needs (M=4.42, 4.18, 4.04, 4.36) than on the level of importance (M=4.46, 4.27, 4.07, 4.37). Among all the competencies in the category of tourism operation, immigration/customer regulation had the most significant different between level of importance and training needs (Sig.=0.090). In particular, the competency of transportation and accommodation had an exactly same mean score on both level of importance and training needs (Sig.=1.000).

Table 15

Statistical difference between level of importance and training need

N=84	Mean score		Sig. (2-tailed)
	Level of Importance	Training needs	
Introduction of Tourism	3.46	> 3.36	.171
Introduction of Hospitality	3.56	> 3.54	.708
Scenic Area Administration	3.52	> 3.44	.225
Emergency Training	4.56	< 4.64	.145
Travel Insurance Knowledge	4.24	< 4.29	.436
International Etiquette	4.38	> 4.37	.859
Traveler Psychology	4.39	< 4.44	.469
Foundation of Water Activities	4.15	< 4.18	.734
Quarantine, and Travel Health Care	4.06	> 4.02	.495
Professional Terms/Characteristics	4.46	> 4.42	.251
Immigration/Customer Regulation	4.26	< 4.35	.090
International Tourism Geography	4.27	> 4.18	.145
World Culture Arts	4.07	> 4.04	.516
Tour Operation Procedure	4.36	< 4.42	.278
Destination Explanation Skills	4.20	< 4.36	.011*
Airline Ticketing	3.96	< 4.01	.453
Travel Certificates (P. V. S.)	4.35	< 4.39	.496
Tour Leader Terminology	4.37	> 4.36	.829
Transportation/Accommodation	4.35	= 4.35	1.000
Case Study on Special Issue	3.83	< 3.92	.225
Safety/Emergency Handling Skills	4.49	< 4.56	.159
China Relationship/Law	3.43	< 3.48	.469
China Regulation/Administration	3.46	< 3.48	.836
Problem Solving/Identification	4.27	> 4.23	.436
Leadership	4.38	> 4.33	.469
Communication	4.45	< 4.48	.708
Customer Relations	4.39	> 4.35	.469
Negotiating	4.19	< 4.24	.453
Handling Complaints	4.15	< 4.19	.615
Public Relations	4.07	> 4.04	.593

Notes. *-Indicated statistically significant. Significant different level $\leq .05$.

Finally, in the category of personal skills, the competency of communication, negotiating, and handling complaints had a higher mean score on training needs (M=4.48, 4.24, 4.19) than on the level of importance (M=4.45, 4.19, 4.15). The competency of problem solving/identification, leadership, customer relations, and public relations had a lower mean score on training needs (M=4.23, 4.33, 4.35, 4.04) rather than on the level of importance (M=4.27, 4.38, 4.39, 4.07). The most significant difference between level of importance and training needs in this category was the competency of problem solving/identification (Sig.=.436).

Respondent's Satisfaction on the Training Program

When the question was asked whether the training program was valuable or not, 5 subjects did not fill out the question. The majority of respondents (72.6%) believed that the training program was valuable in order to do the job effectively. Slightly over twenty-one percent (21.6%) of the respondents did not consider the training program was helpful. In addition, one respondent checked on both positive and negative answers with comments on both positive and negative views about the training program (Table 16).

Table 16

Value of the training program

N=79	n	Percent
Yes	61	77.2%
No	17	21.6%
Both	1	1.2%

Question five also asked the respondents to indicate the reason why they think whether the training program was valuable or not. Among 61 respondents who thought the training program as valuable, 31 respondents indicated that the training program

would be able to enhance professional knowledge to meet the job requirement, ranked 1st. Twenty-eight respondents mentioned that the training program provide a chance to meet other tour leaders and to absorb others' experiences, placing 2nd. Fourteen respondents felt the training program was helpful for new tour leaders when they first entered tourism industry (Table 17).

Table 17

The rationales why the training program is valuable

N=61	n	Rank
Enhancing professional knowledge	31	1
Absorbing others' experiences	28	2
Helpful for new tour leader	14	3
Improving service quality	4	4
European Art history	1	5
Program contents	1	5
Better understanding on multi-culture	1	5
Understanding on the development of the tour leader	1	5

Among 79 responses on question five of the questionnaire, 17 respondents did not feel the training program was valuable for improving their job. The reasons on this particular response are showed in Table 18.

Table 18

The rationales why the training program is not valuable

N=17	n	Rank
The training program is too short	5	1
Too many standardize course contents	4	2
Too many theories	4	2
Lack of practical contents	4	2
The contents is too broad	3	5
The classroom is too crowded	2	6
Not impeccable	1	7

Additional Courses or Curriculum Needs for the Training Program

When the question was asked whether the training program needed additional courses or curriculum, 2 subjects did not fill out the question. The result in Table 19 shows that fifty-nine percent (59.8%) of the respondents believed the training program needed to be improved by introducing new courses or curriculum. And, the additional courses or curriculum needed for the training program are listed in Table 20.

Table 19

Additional courses or curriculum needed for the training program

N=82	n	Percent
Yes	49	59.8%
No	32	40.2%

Table 20

Courses or curriculum suggested by tour leaders

Skills on guiding tour	Travel laws and liabilities
EQ training	Leadership
Professional knowledge	Handing emergency situation
Language	Tour leader terminology
Communication skills	Emergency training
Tourist destination explanation skills	Introduction to art history
Introduction on multi-culture	Group discussions
Case study	International etiquette
Traveler psychology	Travel insurance
Tour operation procedure	

Expectations for the Future Foreseeable Comments on the Training Program

The result from the last part of the questionnaire provides suggestions for the industry and the training program. To the industry, respondents suggested that tour leaders should enrich their own professional knowledge and skills in order to improve

service quality. Besides, interpersonal relationship was the key to successful tour leader. Tour leader is the person employed as the escort for tourists for the entire tour. Tour leader should be sleek and easy to get along with both local suppliers and group members. Good physical strength was also required for tour leaders. Some people viewed tour leader as a fun job without many responsibility but travel around the world. In fact, tour leaders played a variety of roles in the group tour, such as interpreter, entertainer, negotiator, security, and friend. In order to provide quality service, tour leaders should learn and practice by themselves or exchange experience with others.

To the training providers, respondents recommended the training program should be available continuous in a yearly basis and the program length should be adjusted to match the industry. The program content should be more practicable and hands-on or focus on single subject. For instance, a real case study along with experts' knowledge would be more useful for tour leaders. The training programs for long-term and short-term trips should be divided into two individual training program due to the variation of operation procedure and knowledge requirement. A separated short-term training program on language, architecture, culture diversity, history, music or recreational activity would be considered necessary for different tour group. The program materials, delivery methods, and technologies should be improved to provided a better learning environment. The quality of instructors and facilitators on the training programs should be enhanced. The networking should be promoted among all international tour leaders, such as workshops, seminars, colloquiums, or discussion meetings.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY

With the growth of the tourism industry in Taiwan, the importance of tour leader in a group tour is continuously increased. Indeed, tour leader is the person who is responsible for the delivery of the group travel experiences organized by a tour operator. As a result, tour leader plays a significant role impacting overall tourist satisfaction with the service encounter in a group tour. Based on the role that tour leaders are expected to play in group tour, there is a need of tour leader training for all international tour leaders. Yet, not all tour leaders participated in the training program value it as a useful training program for their career. Thus, a study on the evaluating of the tour leader training program is necessary.

The purpose of this study was to evaluate whether the existing tour leader's training program is accomplishing its objectives to prepare qualified tour leaders for tourism industry in Taiwan. This chapter provides a summary of the major research findings and discussions, conclusion, and recommendations for the training program, and further research.

Findings and Discussions

In this study, 120 questionnaires were distributed to licensed tour leaders, and 84 completed and valid questionnaires were returned throughout this study. The overall response rate was 70 percent. The majority of the respondents were female in the age group of 26-36, and with a college degree. Almost thirty percent of the respondents attended the training program between 1991 and 1997, and the majority of respondents attended the training program between 1998 and 2000. Over forty percent of the

respondents had at least one year's work experience in the tourism field. The objectives listed in chapter one were achieved based on the results and findings regarding the data obtained from response of the questionnaire.

Objective one was to evaluate the present tour leader training program for international tour leader in Taiwan. The majority of tour leaders believed that the training program was valuable in order to do the job effectively. They thought the training program provided a chance for them to enhance knowledge and skills. The training program was also a place for networking with other international tour leaders in the industry. In particular, the training program prepared new tour leaders for their future job. During the one-week training program, new tour leaders would gain a brief overview about the industry and basic knowledge and skills required for a successful tour leader in the group tour. However, some tour leaders felt the training program was over standardized with too many theories and concepts within short period of time. Due to the qualification of the international tour leader, most people had worked in the industry for few years before they attended the training program. Thus, the primary complaint about the training program was lack of practical contents.

Objective two was to identify professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes that tour leaders perceived as necessary to be success in escort tours. A majority of tour leaders mentioned that a tour leader should be professional, affectionate, cordial or kind, enthusiastic or ardent, serious, service mind, observing detail, responsible, easy to get along with, sincere or true heartedness, and patience.

In general, the majority of tour leaders perceived those competencies related to tourism operation and personal skills as more important and those conceptual knowledge

as less important. Differently, most of the tour leaders considered those competencies related to tourism operation and conceptual knowledge as higher training needs than those personal skills.

Based on the sampling plan in chapter three, the tour leaders were divided into two groups: the Consolidated travel agent and the Class A travel agent. The majority of tour leaders from the Consolidated travel agent viewed the people skills and operational skills as very important skills. The personal skills including leadership, communication, and customer relations were indicated on both level of importance and need for training by the Consolidated travel agent. Tour leaders from the Consolidated travel agent had a very high perception on the competency of professional terms and characteristics but the training needs was lower than the emergency training. The handling skills on safety and emergency were as important as it's training need. Besides, another two tourism operation related competencies, tour leader terminology and tour operation procedure, were also important as well as the training needs.

Tour leaders from the Class A travel agent perceived emergency training and safety and emergency handling skills as the top two most important competencies, and these two competencies were also the most needed competencies for training. Unlike the Consolidated travel agent, tour leaders from the Class A travel agent had higher requirements on the operational knowledge on travel certificates and transportation/accommodation. Negotiating was the only one within the top ten important competency by the Class A travel agent besides communication, consumer relations, and leadership, but not viewed as much important by the Consolidated travel agent.

Objective three was to analyze the gaps between level of importance and training needs for the professional knowledge and skills required by tour leaders. The overall perceptions on the level of importance and need of training from both two groups are only slightly different. Some competencies had higher perceptions on level of importance rather than training needs, and some competencies had higher perception on training needs rather than level of importance.

Among the top ten important competencies, these tourism operation competencies were safety/emergency handling skills, professional terms/characteristics, tour leader terminology, and tour operation procedure ranked 2nd, 3rd, 9th, and 10th. In spite of the competencies of airline ticketing, case study on special issue, China regulation/administration and China relationship/law, the majority of tourism operation related competencies had over half of tour leaders recognized as very important competencies when guiding a tour. According to the perception of training needs perceived by tour leaders, tourism operation related competencies occupied over half of the top ten highly training needs. Indeed, the majority of tourism operational knowledge and skills had a higher requirement on the training need over the level of importance. Tour leaders felt those tourism operation related competencies could be improved through training and should be included in the training program.

The only two tourism related operational competencies perceived as least important and least training need were China regulation/administration and China relationship/law. In fact, two different tour leader licenses are offered in Taiwan. Thus, another training program is particularly provided for the Mainland China licensed tour leaders in Taiwan at the same time with the international tour leader training program.

Based on the tourism policy, international tour leaders can escort the tour group anywhere around the world. The tour leaders with the Mainland China tour leaders license can only lead the tour group to the Mainland China. As a result, these two competencies related to government policy, regulation, administration and the relationship with the Mainland China are still important but with the moderately training need for international tour leaders.

Since tour leader is the person employed as the escort for tourists for the entire tour, those people related skills are exceptionally essential during the tour. In fact, the results in this study showed that all personal skills listed on the questionnaire were very important, and these personal skills were highly required for training. Those personal skills, such as communication, customer relations, and leadership were also perceived in the top ten important competencies. The competency of problem solving/identification, leadership, customer relations, and public relations were perceived as high important for the tour leaders but these competencies were not necessary to be included in the training program. Tour leaders viewed the competency of communication, negotiating, and handling complaints as a higher need for training but not as important as other personal skills. However, the variations between level of importance and need for training for all personal skills listed on the questionnaire are not many.

Although three competencies of conceptual knowledge: emergency training, traveler psychology, and international etiquette, were ranked within the top ten important competencies, the other three competencies, introduction of hospitality, scenic area administration, and introduction of tourism, were ranked in the least five important competencies. This result was consistent with the dislike rationales of the training

program from tour leaders in this study. In fact, most of people learned those conceptual knowledge either from school education or informal to relatively formal training provided by their companies. Also, the primary goal of training is to improve trainees' knowledge, skills, and abilities in order to improve performance. As a result, conceptual knowledge is not perceived as a high perception in the training program.

Objective four was to determine if additional skills, abilities, and knowledge were needed to be a professional international tour leader in Taiwan. The majority of the tour leaders believed that additional courses or curriculum should be put into the training program. Tour leaders recommended that the program contents should be more practicable and hands-on. In fact, trainings on any single subject were necessary to be added into the program continuously for international tour leaders, such as language, EQ training, leadership, communication, tour operation procedure, and emergency training. In particular, tour leaders stated that people skills were extremely important when guiding a tour. Besides, the instructors and facilitators on the training program was the key to improve the training program. In addition, tour leaders believed that the networking between international tour leaders as well as the industry was another form of informal training, such as workshops, seminars, colloquiums, or discussion meetings.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the results in this study indicated that the majority of tour leaders are satisfied with the present training program in Taiwan. Indeed, tour leaders valued the training program as a foundation when they first start their career in tourism industry. Throughout this training program, new tour leaders will have a better knowledge on the

job and the industry. Also, tour leaders will be able to network with other tour leaders or experts.

Tour leaders think tourism operational knowledge and skills and personal skills are the essential for future success in the industry. In fact, most of the important professional knowledge and skills perceived by the tour leaders are covered in the present training program by now. For the program contents, tour leaders anticipate more practicable skills instead of theoretical knowledge. Both interpersonal and intrapersonal skills are also demanded by the tour leaders in order to maintain excellent relationship with customers and suppliers. However, tour leaders expect that each courses or curriculum should be expanded further. Indeed, tour leaders experience the present training program is too broad and too intensive, and they will not be capable of absorbing all materials and contents within few days or one week. Tour leaders suggest that the training program should be extended to annual basis and focus on few subjects at one time.

Recommendations

This study was based on tour leaders' perceptions on the present training program in Taiwan. Based on the analysis of data and review of literature, some recommendations can be made to the training providers and future study.

Recommendations for the training providers

1. Tour leaders felt that the training program is a good start for new tour leaders in the industry. Yet, tour leaders experience the training program was too broad and too intensive due to the training program length and program contents. Thus, the

training should be provided more frequently with focusing on few subjects at one time in order to improve the training quality.

2. On-the-Job training for the tour leaders should be made available for further improvement on job performance.
3. Because of the limitation on the training budget and personal, the training program might not be offered as many as the tour leaders' demands. Thus, the cooperation with the industry would be feasible to promote the training program.
4. The further evaluation level on behavior and results could be conducted with the travel agent to check if the training program is helpful for tour leaders on the job.

Recommendations for future study

1. This study was based on tour leaders' perceptions of the tour leader training program, which only cover the first two levels of evaluations, reaction and learning evaluations. The perception from tour leaders' company, the travel agent, was not included in this study. Therefore, future study could be conducted on both tour leaders and their company for another two levels of evaluation, behavior and results evaluations.
2. Because the survey was mailing to tour leaders who attended the training program with a wide range of time, the results did not really focus on any specific term of the training program. For the future study, the survey could be conducted by directing contact with tour leaders after the training program to evaluate one single training term. Also, the number of survey could also be increased.

3. Many tour leaders provided lots of opinions on the open-ended questions and comments in the questionnaire. Thus, further researchers could conducted the study with interview or focus group technique.

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Appendix A

No. _____

Questionnaire

The purpose of this study is to evaluate whether the tour leader's training program is accomplishing its objectives to prepare qualified tour leaders for tourism industry in Taiwan. This questionnaire is to help to determine the skills that are needed for a consistent standard of tour leaders' performance in Taiwan. Please answer the following questions utilizing your current knowledge.

1. Important competency by international tour leader in group tour and its training needs. In **Column A**, rate the importance of each competency. Base your response on the frequency that you use the knowledge or skills and how critical it is to doing your work correctly. In **Column B**, rate the extent to which you feel a need for training related to the specific knowledge or skills. Please rate the following skills by using the following scale.

A. Importance

1=NI=Not Important

B. Training Need

1=N=None/No Need

2=MI=Moderately Important
 3=I=Important
 4=VI=Very Important
 5=E=Essential

2=S=Slightly Need
 3=M=Moderately Need
 4=H=High Need
 5=VH=Very High Need

COMPETENCY	A. Importance					B. Training Need				
	NI	MI	I	VI	E	N	S	M	H	VH
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Conceptual Knowledge										
Introduction of Tourism	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Introduction of Hospitality	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Scenic Area Administration	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Emergency Training -----	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Travel Insurance Knowledge	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
International Etiquette	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Traveler Psychology	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Foundation of Water Activities	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Quarantine, and Travel Health Care	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Tourism Operation/Professional Knowledge and Skills										
Professional Terms and Characteristics	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Immigration and Custom Regulation	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
International Tourism Geography	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
World Culture Arts	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Tour Operation Procedure	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Tourist Destination Explanation Skill	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Airline Ticketing	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Travel Certificates (P. V. S.)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

COMPETENCY	A. Importance					B. Training Need				
	NI	MI	I	VI	E	N	S	M	H	VH
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Tourism Operation/Professional Knowledge and Skills										
Tour Leader Terminology	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Transportation and Accommodation	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Case study on Special Travel Issue	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Travel Safety and Emergency handling skills	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Mainland China Relationship and Law	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
China Regulation And Administration	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Personal Skills										

Problem Solving and Identification	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Leadership	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Communication	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Customer Relations	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Negotiating	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Handling Complaints	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Public Relations	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

2. What type of attitude should a tour leader demonstrate when guiding a tour?

3. Does the training program for new tour leaders in Taiwan need to be improved by introducing more new courses or curriculum?

- Yes...Please answer #4
- No...Please skip to #5

4. What types of courses are needed?

5. Overall, the training program for tour leader is valuable in order to do your job effectively?

- Yes, Why? _____
- No, Why not? _____

6. Does your company pay for the international tour leader training program?

- Yes
- No

7. Does your company provide any other training programs within the company?

- Yes
- No

If Yes, Please indicate:

Demographic Information

8. Gender:

- Male
- Female

9. What is your age?

- 20 – 25
- 26 – 30
- 31 – 36
- 37 – 41
- 42 – 50
- Over 50

10. What is your education level?

- ❑ Less than high school
- ❑ High school
- ❑ Technical /Trade school
- ❑ College graduate
- ❑ Masters/Doctorate

11. When did you attend the international tour leader training program? _____
12. How many years of work experience with the current company?

- ❑ Less than 1 year
- ❑ 1-2 years
- ❑ 2-3 years
 - ❑ 3-4 years
 - ❑ 4-5 years
 - ❑ 6-7 years
- ❑ Over 7 years

13. How many years have you been worked as an international tour leader?

- Less than 1
year
- 1-2 years
- 2-3 years
 - 3-4
years
 - 4-5
years
 - 6-7
years
- Over 7 years

14. Your written comments are valued:

Thank you for responding.

Appendix B

June 15, 2000

Dear participant:

I am conducting a study on the international tour leader's training program in Taiwan. This study is advised by the Department of Training and Development Graduate Program, University of Wisconsin-Stout. The enclosed questionnaire is designed to research the knowledge and skills needed by tour leaders. Furthermore, the results will provide much valuable information for a consistent standard of tour leaders' performance in Taiwan.

Lots of tourists experienced that tour leaders were unfamiliar with tourist destinations' history and background information. In particular, many tour leaders were considered to be less reliable, less pleasant and less helpful than expected, which affects overall tourist satisfaction with the service encounter in Taiwan.

You are one of a small number in which licensed tour leaders are being asked to give their opinion on these matters. It was drawn in a random sample of the entire country. In order that the results will truly represent the value of the tour leader training program in Taipei, Taiwan, it is important that each questionnaire be completed and returned.

I would be greatly appreciated if you would take this opportunity to advise me that you think it is important for the tour leader's training program in Taiwan. Please use the enclosed envelope to return your completed questionnaire by August 1, 2000. If you have any question regarding the study, please contact me at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your time and cooperation in completing this questionnaire.

Sincerely yours,

Yi-Ping Lan
Graduate Students, Hospitality and Tourism
University of Wisconsin-Stout

Encl. Research Questionnaire

lany@post.uwstout.edu
715-235-4105
305 Micheels Ln. #4
Menomonie, WI 54751

Appendix B (Cont')**Invitation**

Yi-Ping Lan, a graduate student in the Department of Training and Development, College of Technology, Engineering and Management, University of Wisconsin-Stout, under the advisement of Dr. Joseph Benkowski, Graduate Program Director, is researching the international tour leader training program in Taiwan.

You are one of a small number of people are being asked to give their opinion on these matters. It was drawn in a random sample of the entire country. In order that the results will truly represent the valuable information for a consistent standard of tour leaders' performance in Taiwan, it is important that each questionnaire be completed and returned.

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary and your participation at any time without any adverse consequences. Confidentiality will be maintained by using a code number rather than your name on all forms. It is not anticipated that this study will present any potential risk to you.

You may direct any questions related to this questionnaire to the researcher Yi-Ping Lan, 715-235-4105, lany@post.uwstout.edu, or research advisor, Graduate Program Director, Dr. Joseph Benkowski, 715-232-5266, benkowskij@uwstout.edu, Department of Training and Development, or Dr. Ted Knous, 715-232-1126, Chair, UW-Stout Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research, 11 HH, UW-Stout, Menomonie, WI 54751.

Thank You For Your Participation

Appendix C

The International Tour Leader Training Contents in Taiwan

- I. Regulation and Policy
 - A. Tourism Policy in Taiwan
 - B. Travel Contract and Consumers' Rights and Obligation
- II. Professional Knowledge and Skills
 - A. Professional Terms and Characteristics
 - B. Airline Ticketing
 - C. Immigration and Custom Regulation
 - D. Emergency Handling and Travel Safety
 - E. Destination Explanation Skills
 - F. Travel Certificates
 - G. Tour Operation Procedure
 - H. Transportation and Accommodation
 - I. Tour Leader Terminology
 - J. International Tourism geography
 - K. Case Study on Special Travel Issue
 - L. Arrangement of Optional Activities
 - M. China Regulation and Administration
 - N. China Relationship and Law
- III. Conceptual Knowledge
 - A. Introduction of Hospitality
 - B. International Etiquette
 - C. Foundation of Water Activities
 - D. Emergency Training
 - E. Quarantine, and Travel Health Care
 - F. Travel Insurance Knowledge
 - G. The Role of Tour Leader from consumer's view
- IV. Psychology abilities
 - A. Traveler Psychology
 - B. Tour Leader life plan