Chinese Communication Training Course for Upgrading Economy and Tourism Towards Improving Quality of Life in Secondary Urban Society, Thailand

Suphasa Phupunna*

Department of Teaching Chinese Program, Faculty of Education, Rajabhat Mahasarakham University, Thailand
Corresponding author: Suphasa Phupunna, E-mail: sp.suphasa@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Although there are some Chinese language training courses for tourism in Thailand, these courses often focus on major cities or key products in large cities and lack systematic development for secondary cities that are seeing an increase in Chinese tourists. This research addresses the issue by designing a curriculum suitable for the context of secondary cities, developing local businesses that have not been studied in detail before. This research aims to develop a Chinese communication training course to promote the economy and tourism in secondary cities of Thailand. The objectives are: (1) to create a Chinese communication training course to enhance the economy and tourism towards improving the quality of life in secondary urban societies; (2) to evaluate the Chinese communication skills of the sample group after receiving training in Chinese communication to enhance the economy and tourism for the development of quality of life in secondary cities; and (3) To assess the satisfaction of participants who received Chinese communication training to enhance the economy and tourism for the development of quality of life in secondary urban areas and to utilize the benefits. Research areas include Kalasin Province and Maha Sarakham Province, focusing on developing listening and speaking skills used in daily life, conversation in simulated situations, and the use of vocabulary related to trade and services. The developed course has been evaluated as highly accurate and reliable, significantly enhancing the Chinese communication skills of the trainees. The trainees expressed a high level of satisfaction as the content is relevant to real work and can be immediately applied. The recommendation for future research is to conduct further studies on the long-term outcomes of the course by following up with the trainees 6-12 months after the training to measure the retention of skills. Additionally, the course should be developed and tested in other provinces to compare its effectiveness in different areas. This course can be adapted for Chinese tourists to communicate and promote products and services in secondary cities, helping tourists understand the benefits and effectively develop the tourism industry in Thailand's secondary cities. It can also serve as a guideline for designing future Chinese language courses.

Key words: Training Course, Chinese Communication, Secondary Urban Society

INTRODUCTION

In today's global society, learning foreign languages is extremely important and necessary in daily life as it serves as a crucial tool for communication, education, knowledge acquisition, career development, understanding cultures and worldviews, and recognizing the cultural diversity and perspectives of the global community. This fosters friendship and cooperation with different countries, helps develop trainees' self-awareness and understanding of others, and enables them to learn and comprehend the differences in language, culture, customs, traditions, thinking, society, economy, politics, and governance. It also cultivates a positive attitude towards using foreign languages and allows for effective communication in foreign languages, as well as easier and broader access to various knowledge (Mangla et al., 2018).

Due to Thailand's openness to the global community and the expansion of its economy, society, technology, and culture, Chinese investors have significantly increased their trade and investment activities in foreign markets, including Southeast Asian countries, particularly Thailand. Thailand has a long-standing harmonious blend of Thai and Chinese cultures. Therefore, the Chinese language has become essential, especially for opportunities in trade and tourism. Applying for jobs or opportunities for career advancement lead to communication related to tourism and services, such as hotels, travel agencies, restaurants, establishments, and freelance work. Therefore, it is essential to develop Chinese language skills for professional communication, especially due to government policies promoting secondary city tourism and Thai way tourism. The tourist market in Thailand

that has garnered significant attention is the Chinese tourist market. This is because Thailand has unique cultural traditions, and its location is not far from China, making travel time short. This convenience leads tourists with limited free time to choose Thailand as their travel destination. Therefore, learning Chinese is essential for Thai people who sell products or engage in businesses related to goods, services, and tourism (Greaker et al., 2023; Tangcharoensathien et al., 2020; Bago et al., 2022; Xu et al., 2022; Phupunna, 2023).

The Ministry of Tourism and Sports has had a direction in its operations over the past year regarding the effort to distribute tourists to other secondary tourist destinations beyond the main cities. This aims to expand the overall number of tourists and reduce congestion through prominent projects that promote secondary cities, which offer tax reductions, and community tourism promotion policies. Additionally, it encourages Thais to travel within Thailand more often during their holidays to discover the charm of various tourist attractions and experience new things that cannot be found anywhere else in the world except Thailand (Paganetto & Scandizzo, 2017).

The development of tourism, especially in secondary cities, aims to distribute income to communities and foster a sense of good hospitality among locals, allowing them to recognize the value of their unique culture, traditions, and tourist attractions. In this era of booming tourism, the government has encouraged both Thai and foreign tourists to visit the 55 secondary cities in Thailand. Secondary cities are important revenue-generating cities for the country. For historical tourism, traveling to destinations with historical and cultural significance attracts tourists, which can greatly enhance economic value. Therefore, when both domestic and international tourists visit secondary cities, communication becomes essential. Language education plays a crucial role in building a foundation for work, trade, and self-enhancement. This creates a demand for personnel and labor with expertise and skills in foreign languages. In communication, those who know additional languages, especially Chinese, have an advantage.

Curriculum developers have created several Chinese language courses for Thais to learn Chinese for communication, tourism promotion, and services. However, there is still no course specifically developed for selling goods and services in Thailand's secondary cities, where each province has unique products and services specific to the area.

Given the importance and reasons mentioned, the researcher is interested in creating a Chinese communication training course to enhance the economy and tourism, leading to the improvement of quality of life in secondary cities. The researcher will use the 7-step curriculum development model as a guideline for developing the course. However, this course will focus on listening and speaking skills in daily Chinese conversations, simulated conversation practice, the use of basic Chinese vocabulary and sentence structures, and the application of vocabulary in various buying and selling situations. This aims to equip service providers with knowledge and understanding to effectively communicate with Chinese tourists. The teaching approach will not only focus on language forms or structures but will emphasize practical application of knowledge in daily life situations. This can elevate the standards of local cultural tourism to an international level and stimulate the economy by attracting more tourists to visit secondary cities. This creates good opportunities leading to career success and sustainable living, contributing to the development of oneself, society, and the nation.

Research Objectives

1. To create a Chinese communication training course to enhance the economy and tourism for the development of quality of life in secondary urban areas.
2. To evaluate the Chinese communication skills of the sample group after receiving Chinese communication training to enhance the economy and tourism towards improving the quality of life in secondary urban areas.
3. To assess the satisfaction of those trained in Chinese communication to enhance the economy and tourism towards improving the quality of life in secondary urban areas.

METHOD

Sample Size

The sample group used in this study consists of local residents from 2 secondary cities in the northeastern region, namely: Mahasarakham Province and Kalasin Province, calculated according to Yamane (1967, as cited in Sinlacharu, 2012) at a 95% confidence level using a 5% sampling error. A total of 100 samples were obtained through simple random sampling, with 50 samples from each province, using purposive sampling criteria. The sample group chosen by the researcher consists of individuals who have never studied Chinese before.

Research Instruments

The tools used for data collection in the research consist of three items:

1. Chinese Communication Training Course to Enhance the Economy and Tourism for the Development of Quality of Life in Secondary Urban Areas
2. Achievement test after training in Chinese communication to enhance the economy and tourism for the development of quality of life in secondary urban areas
3. Satisfaction survey for the Chinese communication training course to enhance the economy and tourism towards improving the quality of life in secondary urban societies

The development of research tools and their quality assessment took place as reported in the three sub-sections that follow.

Creation of training course and quality assessment tools

This section discusses the process of developing a Chinese communication training course to enhance the economy and

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tourism towards improving the quality of life in secondary urban areas, and the search for the quality of research tools used. The researcher divided the research process into four steps: Step 1: Study and analyze basic data, Step 2: Develop and verify the quality of the training curriculum, Step 3: Pilot the training curriculum, Step 4: Evaluate the training curriculum. The details of these steps are as follows:

Study and analysis of basic data

1. Study documents, textbooks, theories, and research related to the components of the curriculum, principles and rationale, objectives, training content, training activities, training media, and evaluation and assessment of training in creating a Chinese language communication training curriculum to enhance the economy and tourism towards improving the quality of life in secondary urban areas.

2. Study the Chinese conversation materials necessary for Chinese communication to enhance the economy and tourism towards improving the quality of life in secondary urban areas, prepared by the researcher. The content used in the training course consists of 10 lessons covering topics for conversations in various situations that involve real communication in cultural tourism. Each lesson will take 6 hours of teaching time, and there will be an orientation and knowledge assessment before and after the training for each learning unit, taking an additional 2 hours. The total duration of the course is 64 hours.

Development and quality assurance of training courses.

The researcher considers selecting the content of each lesson to align with the objectives of the Chinese communication training course aimed at enhancing the economy and tourism for the development of quality of life in secondary urban areas, consisting of 10 lessons. Each lesson had the following components:

1. The essence is an explanation of the main points of each lesson.
2. Learning objectives indicate what is desired to happen to the trainees after the training of each lesson.
3. The content of the training course is predetermined material for the trainees to learn in order to achieve the objectives set for each learning unit.
4. Learning activities involve organizing teaching and learning activities that utilize language activities for communication. These activities provide learners with the opportunity to use Chinese for communication.
5. Media and learning resources are materials used to complement training in each lesson, varying according to the suitability of the training activities.
6. Measurement and evaluation involve assessing the results after each lesson, including pre- and post-training tests, as well as observing the behavior of trainees during the training activities.

The researcher presented the Chinese communication training course designed to enhance the economy and tourism for the development of quality of life in secondary urban areas, which they created, to three Chinese language teaching experts. They reviewed the content of each lesson and the clarity and correctness of the language used, providing feedback and suggestions for further improvement to make it more accurate, clear, and easier to understand.

Chinese language teaching experts evaluate the accuracy or congruence index between the questions and the objectives or content (IOC: Index of item objective congruence) by providing criteria for reviewing the questions. The scores obtained from the three Chinese language teaching experts are then used to calculate the IOC according to the criteria. An IOC value between 0.50-1.00 indicates acceptable accuracy. An IOC value below 0.50 needs to be revised; it is not usable yet.

Trial of the training course

The researcher performed the following activities at this stage:

1. Implement the Chinese communication training course to enhance the economy and tourism towards improving the quality of life in secondary urban communities, which the researcher has developed, and conduct a tryout with non-sample groups.
2. Received a Chinese communication training course to enhance the economy and tourism towards improving the quality of life in secondary urban societies.

Evaluation of the training course

The evaluation of the Chinese Communication Training Course to Enhance the Economy and Tourism for the Development of Quality of Life in Secondary Urban Areas was conducted by the researcher, who assessed a sample group of 100 people who answered a questionnaire regarding the training needs for the Chinese Communication Training Course to Enhance the Economy and Tourism for the Development of Quality of Life in Secondary Urban Areas. The steps for the course evaluation are as follows:

1. Study the methods of creating a questionnaire on the demand for Chinese communication training to enhance the economy and tourism towards improving the quality of life in secondary urban areas, based on textbooks, books, and various related research, to serve as a guideline for creating the assessment form.
2. Create a questionnaire on the demand for Chinese communication training to enhance the economy and tourism towards improving the quality of life in secondary urban areas, divided into 3 parts:
    a. Basic information of the respondent themselves
    b. Questionnaire on Needs/Opinions/Implementation: By assigning scores to each question, respondents are asked to evaluate their needs on a 5-point scale: very much needed, much needed, moderately needed, slightly needed, and least needed, using the following 5-point Likert scale.
    c. An open-ended part where respondents provide additional suggestions, which is located at the end of the training needs questionnaire.

3. The researcher presented the questionnaire on the need for Chinese communication training to enhance the economy and tourism for the development of quality of life in secondary urban areas, created by the researcher, to three experts. They reviewed the comprehensiveness of the questions and the clarity and accuracy of the language used, provided comments and suggestions, and then the questions were revised to be more accurate, clear, and easier to understand. Experts evaluated the accuracy or congruence index between the questions and the objectives or content (IOC: Index of item objective congruence) by providing criteria for reviewing the questions. Then, the researcher took the scores obtained from the three experts to calculate the IOC value according to the training needs assessment questionnaire criteria. Theta is, a questionnaire with an IOC value between 0.50-1.00 is considered valid and usable while a questionnaire with an IOC value lower than 0.50 needs to be revised and is not usable.
4. The researcher conducted a Try-Out of the Chinese communication training needs questionnaire to enhance the economy and tourism for the improvement of quality of life in secondary urban areas with non-sample groups.
5. The researcher completed the survey on the demand for Chinese communication training to enhance the economy and tourism towards improving the quality of life in secondary urban areas.
6. The researcher administered the training needs assessment questionnaire to the sample group by organizing a meeting to explain the details of the procedures, evaluation methods, and analysis of training needs to ensure mutual understanding. After the meeting concluded, the sample group filled out the questionnaire. Once the sample group completed the questionnaire, the researcher collected it personally.
7. The researcher analyzed the questionnaire to identify training needs and summarize the results and reported the progress of the operation.

Creation of achievement tests

The researcher created achievement tests after training in Chinese communication to enhance the economy and tourism towards improving the quality of life in secondary urban societies. The following steps were taken in creating this test:

1. The researcher examined the documents, textbooks, theories, and research related to the creation of achievement tests after training in Chinese communication to enhance the economy and tourism towards improving the quality of life in secondary urban societies.
2. The researcher designed and created the achievement tests after training in Chinese communication to enhance the economy and tourism towards improving the quality of life in secondary urban society.
3. The researcher aligned the tests with the objectives of the training program, including pre- and post-training knowledge assessments using the same set of knowledge tests. These tests consisted of questions that simulate real communication situations used in local cultural tourism

to evaluate the ability to communicate in Chinese. The assessment criteria were based on a rubric scale, which includes five evaluation criteria as follows:

*   *Pronunciation* refers to the assessment of the ability to engage in conversation by articulating clearly, varying pitch and volume, maintaining rhythm, using high and low tones, adjusting volume levels, and linking words, thereby being able to convey meaning to the conversation partner.
*   *Vocabulary* refers to the assessment of the ability to select and use words, phrases, sentences, and idioms appropriately in conversations, enabling effective communication with interlocutors.
*   *Grammar* rules refer to the assessment of the ability to correctly and clearly apply grammatical rules and structures, enabling effective communication with conversation partners.
*   *Understanding the topic of conversation* means assessing the ability to connect the relationship of sentences with the topic being discussed effectively. Interpreting the partner's sentences and being able to respond appropriately, conveying meaning in the conversation.
*   *Fluency in communication* refers to the assessment of the ability to speak smoothly and fluently, effectively using various conjunctions in both general conversation and in explaining relatively difficult concepts, enabling the conversation partner to understand the meaning being conveyed.

    For the scoring criteria of each issue, a 5-level scoring system has been established, ranging from low to high, from 0 to 5 points, totaling 25 points.

4. The researcher presented the achievement tests to three experts, who reviewed and evaluated them and provided comments and suggestions, which were then used to make further improvements.
5. The researcher conducted a try-out of the tests with non-sample groups.
6. The researcher completed the achievement test after training in Chinese communication to enhance the economy and tourism towards improving the quality of life in secondary urban areas.
7. The researcher conducted a post-training assessment test on Chinese communication skills to enhance the economy and tourism for the development of quality of life in secondary urban areas. The sample group was assessed on their learning outcomes before starting each lesson and at the end of each lesson, as well as their learning outcomes before and after the 64-hour training.
8. The researcher analyzed and summarized the achievement test results before reporting on the progress of findings.

Creation of satisfaction survey

The researcher created a satisfaction survey for the Chinese communication training course aimed at enhancing the economy and tourism to improve the quality of life in secondary urban areas following the steps below:

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1. The researcher examined the documents, textbooks, theories, and research related to the development of a satisfaction survey for the Chinese communication training course.
2. The researcher designed and created a satisfaction survey for the Chinese communication training course.
3. The researcher presented the satisfaction survey to three experts for review. They evaluated the comprehensiveness of the measurement and assessment of satisfaction and provided additional comments and suggestions, which were then used to make further improvements.
4. The researcher conducted a Try-Out of the satisfaction survey with non-sample groups.
5. The researcher administered the survey to the actual sample group who completed the survey after the 64-hour training was finished.
6. The researcher analyzed and summarized the satisfaction survey results before reporting the findings.

DATA COLLECTION

The researcher has collected data on Chinese communication training courses to enhance the economy and tourism for the development of quality of life in secondary urban areas as follows:

1. The researcher submitted a request letter to the agencies, offices, communities, and villages of Kalasin, and Maha Sarakham provinces to obtain permission to use the locations. They also conducted field surveys by traveling to the actual sites to collect data and study the living conditions and lifestyles of the communities and villages.
2. The researcher announced for volunteers, both male and female, according to the specified sample size. The sample would be selected using purposive sampling, with qualifications determined by the inclusion-exclusion criteria for those interested and willing to participate in the training and someone who had never studied Chinese before.
3. The researcher explained the details of the curriculum, the training procedures, the methods of measurement and evaluation, and distributed information documents about the research project. They also provided detailed explanations and guidance on data collection before participating in the Chinese communication training to enhance the economy and tourism towards improving the quality of life in secondary urban areas, ensuring mutual understanding.
4. The sample group was assessed before taking the Chinese communication training course aimed at enhancing the economy and tourism to improve the quality of life in secondary urban areas. The exam consisted of 30 multiple-choice questions in both Thai and Chinese, and it took 1 hour to complete.
5. The sample group underwent Chinese communication training to enhance the economy and tourism towards improving the quality of life in secondary urban areas, with a duration of 64 hours. In both online and onsite formats, considering the readiness and needs of the trainees.
6. After the completion of each 6-hour training lesson, the sample group measures the learning outcomes of each lesson.
7. After the completion of the 64-hour training, the sample group conducted post-training measurements.
8. After the training session, the participants evaluated their satisfaction with the Chinese communication training course aimed at enhancing the economy and tourism to improve the quality of life in secondary urban areas.
9. The researcher summarized results and analyzed statistical values before reporting the findings.

DATA ANALYSIS

The collected data was examined using statistics for data analysis, including basic statistics of the sample group to understand the distribution characteristics of the sample group with descriptive statistics, such as frequency, percentage, and nonmetric variables, and analyzed the basic statistics with metrics, including mean and standard deviation (SD). Minimum value (Min), maximum value (Max) with metric variables (Metric Variables)

RESULTS

Part 1: Evaluation of the Quality of Chinese Communication Training Courses to Enhance the Economy and Tourism for the Development of Quality of Life in Secondary Urban Societies

The data presented in Table 1 the correlation coefficients (r) of the Chinese communication training course for enhancing the economy and tourism towards improving the quality of life in secondary urban areas are shown. The content validity of the Chinese communication training course for enhancing the economy and tourism towards improving the quality of life in secondary urban societies, developed by the researcher, has an average content validity index of 0.86, which falls within the good range.

The reliability of the Chinese communication training course for enhancing the economy and tourism towards improving the quality of life in secondary urban societies, developed by the researcher has a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.91. The interpretation of the correlation coefficient indicates that the Chinese communication training course designed by the researchers to enhance the economy and tourism towards improving the quality of life in secondary urban areas has a very high reliability.

Table 1. Correlation coefficient (r) of the chinese communication training course to enhance economy and tourism for the development of quality of life in secondary urban areas

Information	Score
Content validity	0.86
Reliability	0.91

Table 2. Average chinese communication results of the sample group after receiving chinese communication training to enhance the economy and tourism towards improving the quality of life in secondary urban areas

Score (out of 50)	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Standard Deviation (SD)	t-value	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Significance (p)
Before	13.42	2.73	8.42	25.00	0.00
After	18.15	1.26			

Table 3. Results of the satisfaction assessment of participants in Chinese communication training to enhance the economy and tourism for the development of quality of life in secondary urban areas

Question	$\bar{x}$	SD	Perceptions
The curriculum aligns with the objectives of the program.	4.58	0.60	Excellent
The course content is appropriate and meets the needs of the learners.	4.36	0.76	Good
The content of the course is clear and easy to understand.	4.33	0.71	Good
The learning management process in the curriculum aligns with the objectives.	4.47	0.60	Good
The training course can be applied in practice.	4.28	0.70	Good
Learning activities are activities that promote thinking process of learners	4.47	0.68	Good
The materials, media, and learning resources in the curriculum are diverse.	4.33	0.67	Good
The methods of measurement and evaluation are consistent with the indicators.	4.56	0.60	Excellent
The evaluation measurement tool is aligned with the indicators.	4.47	0.65	Good
The duration of the event is appropriate.	4.28	0.70	Good
Total	4.41	0.67	Good

Part 2: Evaluation results of Chinese Communication Skills Among the sample Group after Receiving Chinese Communication Training to Enhance the Economy and Tourism towards Improving the Quality of Life in Secondary Urban Areas

The data presented in Table 2 it was found that the Chinese communication skills of the sample group after receiving training in Chinese communication to enhance the economy and tourism towards improving the quality of life in secondary urban areas had an average score of 18.15 with a standard deviation of 2.73. This was higher than the pre-training average score of 13.42 with a standard deviation of 2.73, and there was a statistically significant difference at the .05 level.

Part 3: Study Results on the Satisfaction of Trainees in Chinese Communication Training to Enhance the Economy and Tourism for the Development of Quality of Life in Secondary Urban Areas

The data presented in Table 3, it was found that the overall evaluation results had an average score of 4.41 and a standard deviation of 0.67. The overall satisfaction evaluation results of the trainees in Chinese communication for enhancing the economy and tourism towards improving the quality of life in secondary urban areas were at a high level of satisfaction.

DISCUSSION

The evaluation results of the quality of the Chinese communication training course to enhance the economy and tourism for the development of quality of life in secondary urban societies found that the content validity of the Chinese communication training course to enhance the economy and tourism for the development of quality of life in secondary urban societies, created by the researcher, has a content validity average of 0.86, which is considered good. The reliability of the Chinese communication training course for enhancing the economy and tourism to improve the quality of life in secondary urban areas, developed by the researcher, has a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.91. This correlation coefficient indicates that the reliability of the Chinese communication training course for enhancing the economy and tourism to improve the quality of life in secondary urban areas, developed by the researcher, is very good.

The results of Chinese communication among the sample group after receiving Chinese communication training to enhance the economy and tourism towards improving the quality of life in secondary urban areas showed an average score of 18.15 with a standard deviation of 2.73, which is higher than the post-training average score of 13.42 with a standard deviation of 2.73. There was a statistically significant difference at the .05 level.

The study on the satisfaction of participants in the Chinese communication training program aimed at enhancing the economy and tourism to improve the quality of life in secondary cities found that the overall evaluation results had an average score of 4.41 with a standard deviation of 0.67. The overall satisfaction evaluation of the participants in the Chinese communication training program aimed at enhancing the economy and tourism to improve the quality of life in secondary cities was at a high level of satisfaction. Therefore, the Chinese communication training program created by the researcher is accurate, reliable, capable of developing Chinese language skills for the residents of secondary cities, and is widely accepted and applicable.

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CONCLUSION

The evaluation of the Chinese communication training course for enhancing the economy and tourism in secondary urban areas demonstrates its effectiveness and reliability. The course achieved a content validity score of 0.86 (good) and a reliability coefficient of 0.91 (very good). Post-training results showed a significant improvement in participants' Chinese communication skills, with an average score rising from 13.42 to 18.15, a statistically significant difference at the .05 level. Participant satisfaction was high, with an average score of 4.41, indicating the course's acceptance and applicability. Overall, the training program successfully enhances Chinese language skills, supporting economic and tourism development in secondary cities.

Future research should focus on the continuous improvement and review of training course content to ensure it remains accurate, comprehensive, and up-to-date. This can serve as a guideline for developing courses for learners at various levels or organizations interested in learning Chinese for tourism purposes. Additionally, there should be studies on the durability of course usage to collect both short-term and long-term data for further course development.

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