The Influence of Multilingual Competency on Service Delivery and Guest Satisfaction: A Case Study of Tourist Hotels in Thailand

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Abstract: This study investigates the influence of multilingual competency on service delivery and guest satisfaction in tourist hotels in Thailand—a global tourism hub with a linguistically diverse visitor base. Using a quantitative, descriptive-correlational design, data were collected from 400 respondents, including 200 frontline hotel staff and 200 international guests, across major tourist cities. The study measured multilingual competency, service delivery quality, and guest satisfaction using structured Likert-scale questionnaires. Findings from Pearson's correlation and multiple regression analyses indicate that multilingual competency has a significant positive effect on both service delivery and guest satisfaction. Additionally, service delivery was found to partially mediate the relationship between multilingual competency and guest satisfaction. These results underscore the strategic importance of linguistic proficiency and intercultural communication in enhancing service effectiveness and customer experience. The study contributes to the limited empirical literature on language-service dynamics in Thai hospitality and offers practical recommendations for hotel management and workforce training. It concludes that multilingual competency is a strategic asset, and investing in multilingual capacity is vital for superior guest experiences and maintaining Thailand's competitiveness in global tourism.

Keywords: *Multilingual Competency, Service Delivery, Guest Satisfaction, Hospitality, Tourism, Thailand, Language Proficiency, Intercultural Communication.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

➢ *Background of the Study*

In the era of global tourism, the hospitality industry plays a pivotal role in facilitating cross-cultural interaction and shaping travelers' perceptions of destination quality. Among the many factors that influence guest experiences, effective communication is paramount—particularly in countries that attract a high volume of international visitors. As one of the most visited countries in Southeast Asia, Thailand receives millions of tourists from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds each year. According to the Ministry of Tourism and Sports (2023), Thailand welcomed approximately 28 million foreign tourists in 2023, generating 1.2 trillion baht in revenue. By 2024, this figure rose to over 35 million visitors, contributing more than 1.8 trillion baht to the economy, marking Thailand as a global tourism hub (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2024; TAT News, 2024). Tourism plays a crucial role in Thailand's economic structure, contributing nearly 20% of national GDP before the COVID-19 pandemic, with projections expecting a rise to 30% by 2030 (UNWTO, 2022).

In just the first four months of 2025, Thailand recorded 12.09 million foreign arrivals, generating 576.85 billion baht—a 5.24% increase compared to the same period in the previous year (Nation Thailand, 2025). Such statistics emphasize the importance of the hospitality sector and the need for high-quality, culturally competent service delivery.

Thailand's reputation as the "Land of Smiles" reflects a deeply rooted tradition of warmth, politeness, and attentiveness, all of which are core elements of Thai hospitality. These qualities significantly influence the country's destination image, tourist satisfaction, and rate of return visitation (Reisinger & Turner, 2003; Sirikwan & Rattanaphinanchai, 2017). As frontline employees in hotels are the primary interface between visitors and local culture, their ability to communicate across languages is critical. In fact, hotel occupancy rates in Thailand rebounded to 69.3% in 2023, nearly matching pre-pandemic levels, while the average daily room rate (ADR) rose to THB 4,007, reflecting increased demand for quality service in key tourist cities like Phuket and Pattaya (Krungsri, 2024; Colliers, 2023). Multilingual

competency—defined as the ability to communicate effectively in more than one language—has become a vital asset in delivering superior guest service in this globalized context. It extends beyond simple translation, incorporating cultural awareness, adaptability, and emotional intelligence (Deardorff, 2006; Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009). Studies show that language barriers can cause service failure, guest frustration, and negative reviews (Torres, Adler, & Behnke, 2014; Kim, 2008). Conversely, when staff can interact in guests' native or preferred languages, it enhances personalization, comfort, and satisfaction (Hudson & Hudson, 2017; Gursoy & Chi, 2018; Koc, 2019). Despite these advantages, many Thai hotel operators still face challenges in implementing multilingual training programs and hiring linguistically skilled staff, often due to budget constraints and high turnover rates (Baum, 2007; King, 2010; Hwang & Kim, 2018). Given the rising expectations of global travelers and the increasing competitiveness of the regional hospitality sector, it is essential to assess how multilingual competency directly impacts service quality and guest satisfaction in the Thai context. This study explores the influence of multilingual competency on service delivery and guest satisfaction, using a case study approach in tourist hotels across Thailand. It aims to evaluate the language skills of frontline hotel staff, analyze how these skills affect service interactions, and examine guest perceptions of multilingual communication. The results are expected to provide practical insights for hotel managers and contribute to academic discussions on service quality enhancement in multicultural tourism environments.

➢ *Research Problem*

As global tourism rebounds post-pandemic, Thailand is once again emerging as a leading international destination. With over 35 million visitors in 2024 and a strong start to 2025, the country's tourism and hospitality sectors are experiencing renewed momentum (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2024). However, this rapid recovery also brings renewed scrutiny on service quality, particularly in frontline hotel operations. In an environment where tourists come from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, communication becomes both a critical asset and a potential source of service failure. One of the most pressing challenges faced by Thai tourist hotels is the language barrier between hotel staff and international guests. Despite Thailand's strong reputation for warm and attentive service, the ability of hotel personnel to communicate fluently in multiple languages remains inconsistent, especially outside major cities. This issue can lead to miscommunication, unmet expectations, and diminished guest satisfaction, ultimately affecting repeat visits and international competitiveness (Torres, Adler, & Behnke, 2014; Slevitch & Back, 2013). While existing literature has established the link between service quality and guest satisfaction (Choi & Chu, 2001; Ali, Kim, & Ryu, 2016), there is limited research that specifically investigates multilingual competency as a determinant of service effectiveness in the Thai hotel industry. Much of the focus in Thai hospitality studies has been on cultural tourism, service design, or emotional labor, with insufficient emphasis on how language skills directly shape the guest experience. Furthermore, hospitality managers in Thailand often lack data-driven insights into how investments in language training or

multilingual recruitment could enhance operational performance and guest loyalty.

Therefore, a clear research gap exists regarding the measurable impact of multilingual competency on service delivery outcomes and guest satisfaction in tourist hotels across Thailand. Understanding this relationship is vital for improving staff training strategies, enhancing intercultural service readiness, and maintaining Thailand's competitive advantage in global tourism. This study aims to address this gap by assessing frontline hotel staff's language skills and analyzing how multilingual interactions influence guest perceptions and satisfaction.

➢ *Research Objectives and Research Questions*

The main objective of this study is to examine the influence of multilingual competency on service delivery and guest satisfaction in tourist hotels in Thailand. Specifically, the study aims to:

- Assess the level of multilingual competency among frontline staff in selected tourist hotels.
- Investigate the relationship between multilingual competency and
- Examine the impact of multilingual communication on guest satisfaction.
- Explore guest perceptions and expectations regarding multilingual service in Thai hotels.
- Provide practical recommendations for hotel managers on enhancing multilingual service quality through training and recruitment strategies.

To achieve the above objectives, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- What is the current level of multilingual competency among frontline hotel staff in tourist hotels in Thailand?
- How does multilingual competency affect the quality of service delivery in the hospitality sector?
- To what extent does multilingual communication contribute to guest satisfaction?
- How do international guests perceive the role of multilingual service in shaping their overall hotel experience?
- What strategies can be adopted by hotel managers to improve multilingual service delivery in response to guest needs?

This study holds both theoretical and practical significance in the fields of hospitality management, service quality, and intercultural communication. From a theoretical perspective, the research contributes to the growing body of literature on the role of multilingual competency in enhancing service experiences in multicultural tourism environments. While service quality and guest satisfaction have been widely studied (Ali, Kim,& Ryu, 2016; Choi & Chu, 2001), the specific impact of multilingual communication remains underexplored, particularly in Southeast Asian contexts such as Thailand. This study addresses this research gap by integrating multilingualism into service delivery frameworks

and guest satisfaction models, offering new insights into how language skills can enhance personalized service and cross-cultural engagement (Deardorff, 2006; Slevitch & Back, 2013).

From a practical perspective, the findings are valuable for hotel managers, human resource professionals, and tourism policymakers. By identifying the relationship between language skills and service outcomes, the study provides evidence-based recommendations on improving service quality through multilingual training, recruitment, and workforce development (Baum, 2007; King, 2010; Hwang & Kim, 2018). These insights can help hotels enhance guest satisfaction, encourage repeat visitation, and maintain Thailand's competitive position in the international hospitality market—especially as global tourism becomes increasingly diverse and language-sensitive (Gursoy & Chi, 2018).

Additionally, the study supports Thailand's national tourism development strategies by emphasizing the importance of linguistic preparedness and cultural sensitivity in service delivery. As the country continues to welcome millions of international tourists annually, equipping frontline staff with multilingual and intercultural skills is essential for sustaining growth and upholding the reputation of Thai hospitality (UNWTO, 2022; Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2024).

This study focuses on tourist hotels located in major Thai destinations such as Bangkok,nChiang Mai, Phuket, and Pattaya, where high volumes of international visitors require diverse linguistic services. The research targets frontline hotel staff(e.g., receptionists, concierge, and guest service agents) and international guests, as these two groups are central to service interactions affected by language skills.

The study examines multilingual competency, defined as both the ability to speak multiple languages and the capacity to communicate effectively and appropriately across cultures (Deardorff, 2006; Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009). Its impact is assessed in relation to two key outcomes: service delivery effectiveness and guest satisfaction. A mixed-methods approach—using surveys and interviews—will be applied to gather comprehensive data from both hotel staff and international guests.

Several limitations are acknowledged in this study:

- Geographic limitation: Although the study covers major tourist destinations, findings may not fully represent rural or smaller hotels with different guest demographics.
- Sample size and access: Accessibility to hotel participants may depend on management approval and guest willingness to engage, possibly limiting the sample.
- Self-report bias: Surveys rely on self-assessment, which may affect the accuracy of reported language proficiency or satisfaction.
- Cultural variability: The study does not encompass all language pairings or cultural expectations, which may vary widely among international travelers.

- Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into how multilingual competency enhances service delivery and guest experiences—an essential focus area for Thailand's tourism competitiveness and workforce strategy (Hwang & Kim, 2018; Baum, 2007).
- Multilingual Competency: The ability to communicate effectively two or more languages, including comprehension, speaking, and cultural appropriateness.
- Service Delivery: The execution of service tasks as experienced by guests, particularly in relation to responsiveness, reliability, and communication.
- Guest Satisfaction: The degree to which a hotel guest's expectations are met or exceeded during their stay.
- Frontline Hotel Staff: Employees who interact directly with guests, such as receptionists, bell staff, and restaurant servers.
- Tourist Hotels: Hotels primarily serving international travelers, often located in high-traffic tourist areas.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews key theoretical and empirical literature on multilingual competency, service delivery, and guest satisfaction within the context of the hospitality industry. It provides an overview of relevant communication and service quality theories, empirical findings from international and Thai contexts, and concludes with the conceptual framework that guides this study. The review highlights how multilingualism enhances service quality and addresses guest expectations in culturally diverse hotel environments.

Multilingual competency is increasingly recognized as a pivotal skill in the hospitality sector, where service interactions frequently involve guests from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Defined broadly, it encompasses the ability to communicate effectively in more than one language, along with cultural sensitivity and adaptability (Canale & Swain, 1980; Deardorff, 2006; Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009). In hotel environments, multilingual staff contribute to smoother service delivery, reduced miscommunication, and improved guest satisfaction (Gursoy & Chi, 2018; Slevitch & Back, 2013). King (2010) emphasizes the relevance of language training in Thailand, where staff often face challenges communicating with international guests. Studies by Hwang and Kim (2018) show that institutional support for language training enhances employee performance and confidence, while also improving service quality.

In addition to language fluency, intercultural communicative competence—defined as the ability to interact effectively across cultures—is equally important (Byram, 1997; Kim, 2001). This includes an awareness of cultural nuances, communication styles, and appropriate behavior during service encounters. Employees who master both verbal and non-verbal communication tend to build trust and rapport more successfully with guests (Suntikul, 2018).

Service delivery refers to how services are executed and experienced during customer interactions. In the hospitality industry, service is inseparable from human interaction, and

communication plays a central role in shaping guest experiences (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988; Grönroos, 1994). Effective communication contributes to reliability, responsiveness, and empathy—three of the five dimensions of the SERVQUAL model (Brady & Cronin, 2001).

Language barriers are a major source of dissatisfaction in service delivery. Miscommunication can lead to errors, frustration, and negative emotional responses (Torres, Adler, & Behnke, 2014). In contrast, staff who communicate in guests' native or preferred languages create a more personalized experience, which enhances emotional comfort and overall satisfaction (Hudson & Hudson, 2017; Wang, 2011).

In Thailand, where many hotel workers have limited English or third-language proficiency, the quality of communication may directly impact service evaluations (King, 2010). Multilingual service delivery is therefore essential for fulfilling guest expectations in high-contact settings like reception desks, concierge services, and guest inquiries (Suntikul, 2018).

Guest satisfaction is defined as the emotional or cognitive response to service performance relative to expectations (Oliver, 1997). In tourism and hospitality, satisfaction is a key predictor of repeat visits, destination loyalty, and positive word-of-mouth (Choi & Chu, 2001; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Multiple studies have shown that communication is a major factor affecting satisfaction, particularly for international travelers. Ladhari (2009) highlights that language plays an emotional role, where clear and courteous communication contributes to feelings of being welcomed and respected. Ali, Kim, and Ryu (2016) also found that personal interaction quality significantly affects guests' delight and behavioral intentions.

Barsky and Nash (2003) argue that satisfaction should not only be measured by physical amenities but also by how well guests are understood and assisted. In multilingual contexts, personalized communication enhances perceived service value and emotional engagement, which are essential for creating memorable travel experiences (Wang, 2011; Suntikul, 2018).

➢ *This Study Draws on Two Theoretical Foundations:*

- Intercultural Communication Theory: According to Deardorff (2006) and Kim (2001), intercultural competence includes empathy, flexibility, and effective multilingual communication. This theory supports the notion that successful service interactions depend on more than language—they require cultural awareness and adaptation to guests' values and behaviors.
- SERVQUAL Model: The SERVQUAL model, developed by Parasuraman et al. (1988), identifies five service quality dimensions: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Multilingual competency enhances responsiveness and empathy by allowing staff to address guest inquiries and concerns in a personalized

manner (Brady & Cronin, 2001). These theories jointly frame the link between staff language ability, quality of service interaction, and customer satisfaction.

Empirical research supports the hypothesis that multilingual competency positively influences service delivery and guest satisfaction:

- Gursoy and Chi (2018) found that hotel employees with multilingual skills received higher guest satisfaction ratings and improved guest retention outcomes.
- Slevitch and Back (2013) reported that multilingual interactions reduced service ambiguity and guest complaints.
- Torres et al. (2014) observed that linguistic mismatch during service encounters was associated with lower brand loyalty and negative online reviews.

In Thailand, King (2010) and Suntikul (2018) highlight the need for more structured language programs and intercultural training. While Thailand is known for its friendly service culture, language barriers remain a consistent challenge for tourist hotels aiming to meet global standards.

Based on the literature reviewed, this study proposes the following conceptual framework:

- Independent Variable: Multilingual Competency (Language proficiency, intercultural awareness)
- Mediating Variable: Service Delivery (Responsiveness, clarity, empathy)
- Dependent Variable: Guest Satisfaction (Emotional experience, perceived value, likelihood of return)

This framework suggests that multilingual competency enhances service delivery, which in turn positively affects guest satisfaction—particularly in international tourism environments.

III.   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology employed to investigate the influence of multilingual competency on service delivery and guest satisfaction in tourist hotels in Thailand. It provides a detailed explanation of the research design, sampling strategy, data collection procedures, research instruments, and analytical techniques used in the study. The methodology is developed to ensure academic rigor, data reliability, and ethical integrity throughout the research process. This study adopts a quantitative research design using a descriptive-correlational approach. Quantitative methods are appropriate for measuring the relationships between defined variables—namely, multilingual competency, service delivery, and guest satisfaction—in a structured and objective manner. The correlational aspect of the study allows for the identification of associations among these variables without manipulating the research environment (Creswell, 2014).

A case study strategy is used to investigate the phenomenon within a real-world hospitality context. This

approach enables a focused examination of how multilingual interactions influence service effectiveness and guest experiences in Thai tourist hotels (Yin, 2018). By selecting multiple locations across different regions, the study ensures that the results are contextually rich and relevant to both academic and professional audiences.

The population of this study includes two primary groups: frontline hotel staff and international hotel guests. The staff group comprises employees such as receptionists, concierges, and guest service agents who interact directly with foreign guests on a daily basis. The guest group includes international travelers who have stayed in Thai tourist hotels and experienced multilingual interactions during their visit.

Sampling is conducted in four major tourist destinations: Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Phuket, and Pattaya. These cities are selected based on their high volume of international visitors and diverse hospitality offerings. A stratified random sampling technique is employed to ensure proportional representation of staff and guests across different hotel types and locations (Israel,1992). To determine the appropriate sample size, Yamane's (1967) formula is applied, resulting in a recommended minimum sample of 385 participants. To enhance the robustness of the analysis and account for potential non-responses, the final sample is set at 400 respondents— comprising 200 hotel staff and 200 international guests.

Two separate but related questionnaires are designed for data collection—one for hotel staff and one for international guests. The staff questionnaire consists of items measuring multilingual competency, including self-reported language proficiency, frequency of language use, and cultural adaptability. This section is adapted from the Intercultural Communication Competence Scale developed by Spitzberg and Cupach (1984). The questionnaire also includes a section on service delivery, evaluating dimensions such as responsiveness, empathy, and clarity of communication, based on SERVQUAL principles (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

The guest questionnaire assesses perceptions of multilingual service quality and overall satisfaction with their hotel experience. Satisfaction-related items are adapted from Oliver's (1997) behavioral model of customer satisfaction. Both instruments utilize a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), to capture the extent of agreement with each statement. The structure of the instruments allows for statistical comparison and regression analysis.

To ensure content validity, the questionnaires are reviewed by a panel of three academic experts in the fields of hospitality management, linguistics, and research methodology. Their feedback is used to revise ambiguous items and improve alignment with the study objectives. A pilot test is conducted with 30 respondents—15 hotel staff and 15 guests—to assess the clarity, length, and internal consistency of the instruments.

The reliability of each section is evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, a measure of internal consistency. A threshold of $\alpha \geq 0.70$ is considered acceptable for social science research (Hair et al., 2019). Items falling below this threshold are revised or removed to ensure the reliability of the final instruments.

Data collection is carried out over a four-week period using both online and on-site methods. Hotel managers are contacted in advance to obtain permission for staff and guest participation. For staff, printed questionnaires and QR code links are distributed through hotel HR departments, allowing participants to choose their preferred format. For international guests, researchers distribute flyers and digital links in hotel lobbies and common areas, targeting guests who have checked in within the past 24 hours to ensure fresh recall of service experiences.

Before participation, all respondents are informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and the confidentiality of their responses. Only participants who give informed consent are included in the dataset.

After data collection, the responses are coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. Descriptive statistics—such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations—are calculated to describe the demographic characteristics and distribution of responses across variables.

To examine the relationships between the variables, Pearson's correlation coefficient is used to assess bivariate associations between multilingual competency, service delivery, and guest satisfaction. To test the predictive influence of the independent variable, multiple linear regression analysis is performed, with multilingual competency as the predictor and guest satisfaction as the outcome variable. Additionally, mediation analysis following the Baron and Kenny (1986) approach is used to determine whether service delivery mediates the relationship between multilingual competency and guest satisfaction.

IV. RESULTS

This chapter presents a comprehensive analysis of the data collected to assess the influence of multilingual competency on service delivery and guest satisfaction in tourist hotels in Thailand. The analysis follows a structured approach to explore the relationship among the three core variables: multilingual competency, service delivery, and guest satisfaction. The chapter is divided into seven main sections: demographic profile, descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, multiple regression analysis, mediation testing, hypothesis testing summary, and conclusion.

Frontline Hotel Staff (n = 200)

A total of 200 hotel staff members participated in this study. The majority were female (58%), while males accounted for 42%. In terms of age, the largest group was

between 25–34 years (46%), followed by 18–24 years (22%), 35–44 years (20%), and those aged 45 and above (12%). Most respondents worked at the front desk or reception area (45%), followed by concierge and guest service agents (30%), and customer relations officers (25%).

Regarding language usage, 92% reported speaking English in their daily work. Other commonly used languages included Mandarin (35%) and Japanese (22%). A notable 72% of staff members had received some form of formal language training, either through their employer or a language institute. 2. International Guests (n = 200)

Among the 200 international guest respondents, 59% were male and 41% were female. The largest age group was 25–34 years (48%), followed by 18–24 (22%), 35–44 (18%), and 45 years and above (12%). In terms of nationality, 34% were from Europe, 26% from East Asia, 20% from North America, and 20% from other regions including Oceania and the Middle East.

The purpose of travel varied, with 70% visiting Thailand for leisure, 20% for business, and 10% for other purposes such as education or medical tourism. Language proficiency data revealed that 80% of guests had a high level of English proficiency, while 60% reported no proficiency in the Thai language. Only 5% indicated intermediate or advanced Thai language ability.

These demographic findings support the context for this study: a multilingual service environment where English serves as the primary language. However, the presence of other languages such as Chinese and Japanese, along with limited Thai proficiency among guests, underscores the value of multilingual competency as staff must accommodate linguistic diversity.

➤ *Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables*
To understand overall trends in participant responses, descriptive statistics were computed for the three main variables.

Table 1 Mean and Standard Deviation of Key Variables

Variable	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Multilingual Competency	3.71	0.76
Service Delivery	3.65	0.81
Guest Satisfaction	3.79	0.73

The average score for multilingual competency (M = 3.71) indicates that most hotel staff perceive themselves as moderately to highly capable in using foreign languages at work. The mean service delivery score (M = 3.65) suggests that guests rated service quality positively, with a particular emphasis on communication clarity and responsiveness. Guest satisfaction yielded the highest average score (M = 3.79),

indicating a generally favorable perception of the hotel experience among international visitors.

➤ *Correlation Analysis*
Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to explore the relationships among the three variables. The results are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2 Pearson's Correlation Coefficient Matrix

Variables	1. Multilingual Competency	2. Service Delivery	3. Guest Satisfaction
1. Multilingual Competency	1.00	0.62**	0.58**
2. Service Delivery		1.00	0.67**
3. Guest Satisfaction			1.00

Note: $p < 0.01$

There is a statistically significant and strong positive correlation between multilingual competency and service delivery (r = 0.62, p < 0.01), suggesting that staff with better language skills are more effective in delivering services. Additionally, there is a positive correlation between multilingual competency and guest satisfaction (r = 0.58, p < 0.01), which implies that communication in preferred languages contributes to positive guest experiences. Finally, the strongest relationship was observed between service

delivery and guest satisfaction (r =0.67, p < 0.01), reinforcing the importance of quality service in shaping guest perceptions.

➤ *Multiple Linear Regression Analysis*
Multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the simultaneous effects of multilingual competency and service delivery on guest satisfaction. The regression results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Regression Results for Guest Satisfaction

Predictor	B	β	t	p-value
Multilingual Competency	0.38	0.41	7.62	< .001
Service Delivery	0.46	0.49	8.89	< .001

- *Model Summary:*

$R^2 = 0.56$

$F(2, 397) = 251.64$

$p < .001$

The model is statistically significant and explains 56% of the variance in guest satisfaction.Both predictors are significant at $p < 0.001$. Service delivery shows a slightly stronger effect ($\beta = 0.49$) than multilingual competency ($\beta = 0.41$), indicating that while communication skills are important, the overall quality of service has a greater direct influence on guest satisfaction. These findings affirm that hotels that invest in multilingual communication skills and emphasize service quality are more likely to satisfy international guests.

➢ *Mediation Analysis*

To explore whether service delivery mediates the relationship between multilingual competency and guest satisfaction, the Baron and Kenny (1986) four-step approach was applied.

Table 4 Mediation Analysis

Path Description	Path	Standardized Coefficient (β)	p-value
Multilingual Competency → Guest Satisfaction	c	0.58	< .001
Multilingual Competency → Service Delivery	a	0.62	< .001
Service Delivery → Guest Satisfaction (controlling for Multilingual Competency)	b	0.49	< .001
Multilingual Competency → Guest Satisfaction (controlling for Service Delivery)	c′	0.41	< .001

The direct effect (c′) is reduced but remains significant when the mediating variable (service delivery) is introduced, indicating partial mediation. This means that part of the influence of multilingual competency on guest satisfaction occurs through improvements in service delivery. However, multilingual skills also exert an independent effect beyond the mediation path.

➢ *Hypothesis Testing Summary*

Table 5 Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Result
H1: Multilingual competency significantly affects service delivery	Supported
H2: Multilingual competency significantly affects guest satisfaction	Supported
H3: Service delivery significantly affects guest satisfaction	Supported
H4: Service delivery mediates the effect of multilingual competency on guest satisfaction	Supported

All four hypotheses proposed in the conceptual framework are empirically supported by the data. This provides strong evidence that multilingual competency is both a direct and indirect driver of guest satisfaction in the hotel context. The findings presented in this chapter confirm that multilingual competency plays a vital role in shaping guest perceptions and experiences in Thai tourist hotels. Staff who are linguistically and culturally equipped are more effective in delivering personalized and empathetic services. Moreover, service delivery quality not only enhances guest satisfaction directly but also partially mediates the relationship between language skills and satisfaction outcomes. These insights underscore the importance of strategic investments in language training and service management for hotels that cater to international markets.

V. CONCLUSION

➢ *Conclusion*

The results revealed a strong and statistically significant relationship between multilingual competency and service delivery ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.01$). This supports Hypothesis 1 (H1) and confirms prior literature suggesting that the ability to communicate in more than one language enhances staff responsiveness, empathy, and overall communication clarity (Gursoy & Chi, 2018; Deardorff, 2006). In a tourism-dependent context like Thailand, where English is widely used by staff and guests, multilingualism remains important, not as a value-added skill but as a practical necessity. This is especially true for accommodating visitors who are not proficient in English or Thai, as it helps ensure smoother service encounters.

The significant correlation between multilingual competency and guest satisfaction ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.01$) provides support for Hypothesis 2 (H2). This finding is aligned with studies by Wang (2011) and Hudson and Hudson (2017), which highlight the role of personalized communication in enhancing guest comfort and emotional engagement. Guests who feel linguistically understood are more likely to feel welcomed, respected, and valued—key emotional drivers of satisfaction in service industries.

The strongest correlation observed in the study was between service delivery and guest satisfaction ($r = 0.67$, $p < 0.01$), supporting Hypothesis 3 (H3). This confirms the findings of Choi and Chu (2001) and Parasuraman et al. (1988), who emphasize that high-quality, consistent service delivery significantly impacts guest perceptions. Particularly in hospitality, where service is intangible and highly

interpersonal, the quality of service delivery becomes a key determinant of perceived value.

The mediation analysis confirmed Hypothesis 4 (H4)—that service delivery partially mediates the relationship between multilingual competency and guest satisfaction. This finding implies that multilingual skills enhance satisfaction both directly and indirectly by improving the quality of service interactions. This two-step influence highlights the strategic importance of both linguistic ability and service systems that support effective delivery.

➢ *Theoretical Contributions*

This study makes several key contributions to the existing literature:

- First, it positions multilingual competency as a central independent variable, whereas most prior studies address it as a secondary factor or a barrier.
- Second, it uses a mediation model to explore the mechanism through which multilingual competency affects guest satisfaction—an approach rarely applied in tourism and hospitality studies.
- Third, the study contributes to the Thai context specifically, adding empirical data to a country that, while well-studied in terms of service culture, lacks detailed examination of language-service linkages in a quantitative framework.

➢ *Practical Implications*

The findings offer several actionable insights for hotel managers and hospitality educators:

- Invest strategically in Multilingual Training: While English is widely used, hotels should prioritize language development programs, particularly in Mandarin, Japanese, and Russian—languages frequently spoken by inbound tourists to Thailand.
- Hire for Language Proficiency: Recruitment strategies should emphasize not only hospitality experience but also linguistic capabilities and intercultural sensitivity.
- Enhance Service Culture Through Language: Managers should encourage staff to complement language learning with cultural understanding to improve interaction quality and reduce service friction.
- Guest Feedback Systems: Hotels can tailor satisfaction surveys to include multilingual components, allowing more accurate measurement of guest perceptions based on language match.

➢ *Limitations of the Study*

While the study presents robust findings, several limitations should be acknowledged:

- Geographic Scope: The research was limited to four major tourist destinations in Thailand. Smaller or rural hotels may have different service dynamics.
- Self-Report Bias: Both staff and guests self-reported their perceptions, which may include social desirability bias or misestimation of language ability.

- Cross-Sectional Design: Data were collected at a single point in time, limiting the ability to observe changes over time or causality.
- Language Variance: The study primarily assessed general multilingual competency without analyzing the specific effect of each language on satisfaction.

➢ *Recommendations for Future Research*

Future studies could address these limitations by adopting the following approaches:

- Conduct longitudinal research to examine how multilingual competency and guest satisfaction evolve over time and in response to training.
- Explore language-specific effects, such as whether Mandarin-speaking guests report higher satisfaction when served in their native language versus English.
- Include qualitative components, such as interviews or focus groups, to gain deeper insights into guest expectations, communication experiences and emotional responses.
- Expand the study to include hotels in rural areas or other ASEAN countries, enabling regional comparisons and broader application of the findings.

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