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EDITOR’S INTRODUCTION

It is with great pleasure that I am able to introduce, on behalf of Shinawatra University, this Special Supplement, which represents the fruits of cooperation with universities across the Mekong Region through the focal point of the International College of the Mekong Region at Chiang Rai Rajabhat University, under the wise leadership of Associate Professor Dr. Makha Khittasangka. This cooperation has involved the promotion of research taking place within our region and in helping to provide a platform for faculty members to present their work to a wider audience. Every year, as part of the Inter-University Cooperation Program, an International Conference is held in an East Asian country; in 2012, the conference was hosted by Kyung-Hee University in Seoul and this year’s conference will be hosted by the Universiti Brunei Darussalam. The papers contained in this Special Supplement have been developed from papers presented at one of these conferences. They have been edited for publication but not peer reviewed.

One of the features of the research included here is the close connection with local communities and the focus on improving the quality of life of local people. For example, Vicharn Amarakul presents work concerning integrated water resources management and its role in solving conflicts in specific river basins. Radee Thanarak and Sirikran Yimprayut present their findings on the methodology of using folk media as a means of disseminating information about garbage and water treatment among the people of a local community. Meanwhile, Nongnout Kanthachai presents a study of development strategies for the OTOP scheme in Chiang Rai. Social networks and cross-border migration are the subjects of the paper by Nisakorn Klanarong, Sirirat Siriprajkol & Suparat Pinsuwan, who study the issues facing Thai workers in Thai restaurants in the border region of northern Malaysia. Makha Khittasangka provides detailed research about the nature of the sustainability of villages within the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy with particular reference to ethnic diversity. Ta
Tin Hong Hanh has contributed a paper concerning the interaction between workforce diversity and sustainable economic development in a Vietnamese university. Three other papers are more directly related to private sector management. Sasiwemon Sukhabot writes about the market segmentation of herbal products in Southern Thailand. Rosamarin Arunothaipipat, meanwhile, considers human resource management in small, independent hotels located along Cha-am beach. Finally, Manee Choo-lead & Wattana Keawpoolpakorn have studied the factors influencing the purchases of lubricants in three industrial sectors in three provinces of Thailand’s lower northern region.

This diverse set of papers indicates some of the range and value of research being conducted throughout Thailand and the Mekong Region as a whole. I very much hope that more publications and research project in the future will further illustrate this program of cooperation between universities and lead to deepening of the relationships involved.

John Walsh, Editor, SIU Journal of Management
FOREWORD TO THE RESEARCH ARTICLES

I am very pleased to convey my message as a foreword for this special issue of the SIU Journal of Management. I am very proud to be part of the SIU Journal of Management. In particular, the International College of Mekong Region, Chiang Rai Rajabhat University, has joined in sharing research articles among scholars and researchers from many universities in Thailand and elsewhere. In my belief, I agree that research by itself has no boundaries. People can learn and utilize the body of knowledge to benefit individuals, communities and society as a whole. The role of research in helping to find solutions for real life problems is very important. In particular, the Greater Mekong and Asia-Pacific Regions have a great need to apply the body of knowledge for improvement of policies, because the countries in those regions are facing economic decline and many people in remote regions who are living under the threshold of the poverty line. However, policy makers and other stakeholders often do not know which policies are most appropriate and how they can be best implemented in different contexts. Research is one way for policymakers and other stakeholders to enhance the process of policy formulation and implementation.

The research papers presented here have provided us with valuable solutions drawn from the case studies and technical papers which have derived from the experiences of development practitioners and academic scholars. The exchange of situational analyses and evidence indicate the principal issues in the GMS and Asia-Pacific in the areas of development and transition.

The initiatives undertaken by these researchers have described their experiences and these have contributed useful information to facilitate in the design and formulation of development programs and projects. Many research papers have provided methodologies and techniques as
well as useful tools in the analysis of policy issues. These initiatives will be a bridge in building partnerships between researchers, policymakers and communities. I trust that the supplementary papers will be of great benefit for a continuation of the research project with results which will be implemented as exemplary work in the regions.

Associate Professor Makha Khittasangka, Ph.D.

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RESEARCH PAPERS
Workforce Diversity for Sustainable Economic Development in the Mekong Sub-Region and the Asia-Pacific from a Learning Perspective

Ta Thi Hong Hanh

Abstract

Workforce diversity is an important means by which organizations can become more innovative and hence more competitive in the age of globalization. There are various means by which diversity can be fostered in the workplace but there are also barriers to its imposition. This paper employs a case study approach to investigate the nature of workplace diversity and its acceptance in Ho Chi Minh City Open University and uses the results to suggest a training program to improve the situation.

Keywords: cross-cultural management, diversity, foreign workers, Vietnam

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1. Introduction

Globalization can be described as the integration of national economies into the world economy by removing barriers such as tariffs, export fees or import quotas. It aims at increasing material wealth, opportunity for everyone but it also brings higher competition pressure. Globalization influences many aspects such as industry, finance, economy, politics, information, language, culture, society, ecology and religion, as well as increasing the workforce movement
which creates plural societies. 'Plural societies' means that people with different cultural backgrounds live together and then form culture groups. In the aspect of an individual organization, acknowledging and learning about diverse cultures leads to better cooperation and higher productivity. At the macro level, nations with workforce diversity in terms of nationality and which are successful in integration can increase mutual understanding and this in turn leads to sustainable development in a region such as the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS).

This article divides into two parts. The first reviews the literature of workforce diversity including diversity perspectives, cost and benefits, strategic management of workforce diversity and cross cultural training. The second discusses a case study relating employment of the foreign labour force in HCMC Open University. This case study focuses on the barriers of leadership, values of diversity and human factors.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Concept of Workforce Diversity

Workforce diversity is a term which identifies the distinguishing aspects of the labour force. Diversity includes the differences in people’s colour, gender, height, personality, religion, goals, values, race or ethnicity, or disability (Moran, Harris & Moran, 2007). The response to diversity in each organization depends on top management’s view, which may be one of resistance, discrimination and fairness, access and legitimacy, or a learning perspective (Dass & Parker, 1999; Lorbiecki, 2001). In the 1960s, the resistance perspective defined diversity as differences in colour, nationality or gender. This protects homogeneity in organizations by declining or avoiding diversity. People belong to minorities which are evaluated as being “not like us.” The Discrimination and fairness perspective appeared in the 1970s and it views diversity as a problem to be solved
in an organization. Based on affirmative policies, actions or the Equal Employment Opportunities legislation, organizations can obtain access and treat employees equally or fairly. Moreover, employees are promoted to acknowledge different colours, genders or nationalities as representing sameness. However, the way of managing diversity is defensive; it focuses on assimilating individuals into existing organizational forms. The access and legitimacy perspective recognizes and values differences. Organizations which follow this perspective tend to celebrate diversity and mask homogeneous values. This accommodative strategic response increases the level of heterogeneity and inclusion. Further, the learning perspective argues that workforce diversity has dual aspects of similarities and differences; it contributes to multiple objectives such as efficiency, innovation, employee development, customer satisfaction and social responsibility. It also creates possibilities for acculturation or multiculturalism. The response of diversity in this perspective is proactive strategic.

2.2. The Benefits and Costs of Diversity Management

Success in diversity management brings many benefits to organizations. It can control the costs of poor work by integrating workers and acquiring the best personnel (Cox & Blake, 1991). One study proved that culturally diverse groups had better interaction processes and higher job performance levels (Watson, Kumar, & Michealsen, 1993). Workforce diversity can be considered to be a way of distributing economic opportunities more effectively. It also increases organizational creativity and innovation thanks to diversity of perspectives, reduced emphasis on conformity to norms and more critical analysis of issues (Cox & Blake, 1991; Henry & Evans, 2007). Additionally, better diversity management leads to greater success in marketing to foreign and domestic ethnic minority communities, for example, multinational firms have insights and cultural sensitivity among different countries which improve their marketing efforts (Cox & Blake, 1991). In other words, workforce diversity in organizations
increases service quality because of better understanding of customers' needs (Henry & Evans, 2007). Diversity also improves the bottom line, provides a superior business performance, employee satisfaction and loyalty, as well as strengthened relationships with multicultural communities (McCuiston, Woldridge & Pierce, 2004).

2.3. Disadvantages of Workforce Diversity Management

Too much diversity in organizations can cause dysfunctions in problem-solving groups and increases in ambiguity, complexity and confusion can lead to organizations finding it hard to reach a consensus (White, 1991). Working in a diverse environment, some people may feel threatened and so it is necessary for training programs from which they can learn acceptance of different personalities, ideas and thoughts. The cost of this training can be considered a disadvantage (Henry & Evans, 2007). Another disadvantage of diversity occurs when there are conflicts resulting from cultural differences and communications. These conflicts negatively influence creativity and performance. Diverse organizations can also face the problems of high rates of turnover or absenteeism (White, 1991). Additional negative consequences of diversity can include miscommunications, longer decision times, lower member morale and lower team cohesiveness, which can reduce market share, profitability and achievement of organizational goals (Cox, 1993).

2.4. Strategic Management of Cultural Diversity

Previous research has attempted to address the definition of organizational culture. McShane & Von Glinow (2005) observe that “organizational culture is the basic pattern of shared assumptions, values, and beliefs considered to be the correct way of thinking about and acting on problems and opportunities facing the organization.” Culture can be thought of as having two components: explicit or implicit. Explicit components consist of stories, physical things, languages and rituals which shape typical patterns of behaviour, while
the implicit component refers to values, beliefs, norms and premises which underline and determine the observed patterns of behaviour (Ahmed, 1998). In organizations, “strong culture ensures that everyone is pointed in the same direction” (Robbins et al., 2004). Consequently, this may be a barrier to change, to diversity and to acquisition and mergers. However, the functions of organizational culture can be considered to include the socializing of new members, creating the boundaries of the organization and fostering good feelings among personnel, commitment to the organization and acceptable behaviour and social system of meanings (Martins & Terblanche, 2003). Generally, there has been a multitude of definitions of culture (Ahmed, 1998; Dobni, 2008; McShane & Von Glinow, 2005; Rivera-Vazquez, Ortiz-Fournier & Flores, 2009; Robbins et al., 2004) but most agree that culture is a pattern of arrangement of behaviour accepted by a group (society, corporation or team).

Culture in international issues can affect success and promote profitable relationships among nations. Moran et al. (2007) conclude that cross-cultural comprehension is helpful in coping with a diversity of market needs and improves strategies with minority and ethnic groups in domestic and foreign markets. Additionally, acculturation to different environments can enhance an overseas experience and productivity and facilitate re-entry into the home and organizational culture. Cultural capabilities can stimulate personal participation in international organizations and meetings. However, managers in multicultural firms may be under high pressure to adapt their organizations to the local characteristics of the market, the legislation and the socio-political and cultural systems. To integrate the whole national economy into global economies, each unit of this economy needs to be able to assimilate the globalization process.

Global economies can create bicultural or multicultural firms which are characterized by features such as (1) pluralism (reciprocal acculturation where all cultural groups respect, value and learn from one another); (2) full structural integration of all cultural groups so
that they are well represented at all levels of the organization; (3) full integration of minority culture group members in informal networks within the organization; (4) an absence of prejudice and discrimination; (5) equality among minority and majority group members with respect to the goals of the organization and with opportunity for alignment of organizational and personal career goals achievement and (6) a minimum of inter-group conflicts caused by differences in race, gender, nationality and other identity groups of organization members (Cox & Blake, 1991). Additionally, managing diversity can take place in two ways: cross-national and intra-national diversity. The former refers to managing the interface between expatriates and host country nationals, for instance, it can be between the American boss and Vietnamese employees in a Vietnam-based American company. The latter copes with the realities of an increasingly diverse workforce in the given nations. The focus of this article relates to cross-national diversity.

According to Dass & Parker (1999), three approaches to implementing diversity management are: (1) the episode approach; (2) the freestanding approach and (3) the system approach. The episode approach views diversity as a marginal issue and it suits organizations with low pressure of diversity. This approach applies various controls or rewards and it isolates diversity from core organizational activities. The freestanding approach focuses on programs or projects which are independent from each other and from organizational core activities because diversity in this approach is considered to be a symptom of political expedience rather than part of an organizational plan. The system approach views diversity as a strategic issue and it integrates the diversity initiatives with existing systems and organizational core activities. Line managers have responsibilities for maintaining and managing diversity through rewards and sanctions.

In the aspect of culturally diverse organizations, the strategy as system approach which maintains a balance between meeting the objectives of the organization and retaining the individual cultures of employees
is difficult to secure (White, 1991). However, it is necessary in multicultural firms. This strategy requires more diverse structures and processes as well as mutual learning and adjustments. Specifically, diverse organizations need to use different methods including organizational development, transition management, transformational leadership, team entrepreneurship, action research, reengineering, total quality management and team learning. To be successful in transforming organizations into multicultural ones, organizations need to change in leadership, training, analysis and reformation of culture, human resource management systems as well as follow up.

Brown (1998) states that top managers' commitment to culture change is vital because they set up the vision and they also have the responsibility for allocating tasks and duties, structuring the organization and distributing material and financial resources. Besides that, the role of human resource management is also crucial, since human resource professionals manage key components of culture, including symbols, rites and rituals, norms of behaviours, beliefs and values and assumptions. In other words, to shape beliefs, values or behaviours, training programs are required for socialization, the rewards systems and the performance appraisal processes which are within the remit of the human resource department. Additionally, the recruitment and selection procedures control employment in order to generate a pool of people who are familiar with the organization and its culture. Cox & Blake (1991) also suggest following up in terms of additional training, repetition of the systems audit and use of focus groups for ongoing discussion about diversity issues. This activity is considered to be a form of reinforcement of change.

2.5. Training Programs to Manage Cross-National Diversity

According to Berry (1997), acculturation refers to general processes and outcomes (both cultural and psychological) of inter-cultural contact. This process represents four patterns of interaction between people of bi- or multi-cultures. The first is called “integration or
pluralism,” which enhances the positive aspects of creating a new whole from learning various cultures. The “Separation” pattern is the most dysfunctional interaction between and among members of national cultures or subcultures because the groups cannot work with each other. In contrast, “Assimilation” focuses on non-dominant groups which accept change and seeks interaction with other cultures. Finally, “deculturation” indicates that each group retains its own norms or behaviours and does not attempt to integrate or synthesize other value systems or operational modes.

The training program for cross-national diversity aims at changing participants' awareness about differences of values, attitudes, behaviours or communication across cultures as well as developing communication competency. Tung (1993) suggests a consciousness-raising program based on the term of “mindfulness,” because it makes people open to new information or willing to accept differentiation of perception. This program enhances the ability of attitudinal flexibility in order to be aware of and adapt to alien modes of behaviour and value systems across different cultures. Specifically, training programs may be divided into three steps: (1) self-discovering participants' attitudes toward diversity; (2) learning how these attitudes have impacts on behaviours or decision making and (3) applying metamorphosis in order to manage diversity. For communications competency, Tung (1993) developed a five stage model in which the cross-cultural communication moves from unconscious incompetence, conscious incompetence, conscious competence, unconscious competence to unconscious super incompetence. The purpose of the training program is to make participants stand on stages 3, 4 or 5. This means that trainees can comprehend the differences, then they behave and talk about culture norms and values spontaneously. The process of training also passes through three stages: (1) acknowledging differences; (2) understanding these differences and (3) valuing the diversity.
3. Case Study

3.1. Problem

In Vietnam, the concept of workforce diversity management in terms of national origin has drawn the attention of business organizations, especially after the country became a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2007. After joining, Vietnam has applied liberalization of economic and adjustment policies which lead to a free market regime. According to the Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), there were 56,929 foreign workers in 2010 (MOLISA, 2010), almost of them are highly-educated and high-skilled (see Table 1). So, Vietnamese employees can improve technical knowledge or learn professional behaviours and attitudes in the workplace. However, workforce diversity also may cause conflicts relating to social identity, social dominance and social stigma (Padilla & Perez, 2003). Moreover, managing people from different countries poses many challenges in terms of performance appraisal, remuneration or motivation in Vietnam.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate and post-graduate education</td>
<td>48.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High skilled or expert workers</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artist or traditional handicraft makers</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Qualification of Foreign Workers; source: MOLISA, 2010

In the case of Ho Chi Minh City Open University, Vietnam (HCMC Open University), which was established in 1990, its objectives are to socialize education, to diversify education and training modes such as distance learning, residential learning and training satellites. It includes 9 functional departments, 14 faculties and 5 centres for
training and education services. It also opens satellites in provinces such as Binh Duong and Khanh Hoa. For training and education programs, HCMC Open University offers residential courses for masters' degrees, bachelor degrees and junior college degrees. Learners may choose among many fields to study, such as Biology and Technology, Industry, Asian Studies, Accounting, Economics, Business Administration, Financing and Banking, English, Information Technology, Sociology and Construction. Additionally, it also expands distance learning for bachelor and junior degrees through cooperating with provincial education establishments. Besides, HCMC Open University increasingly focuses on scientific research in order to improve education quality and to build brand name. It obtained agreements with foreign universities such as Libre de Bruxelles University for MBA Program or Swinburne University for sandwich bachelor programs, it also collaborates with other Asia Pacific Universities in order to promote learning, integrate for education exchange and resource sharing. These co-operations create diverse lectures and researchers and also challenge leaders to manage workforce diversity. The article presents the study of barriers of diversity in HCMC Open University.

3.2. Objective

The purpose of this study is to discover the barriers to workforce diversity management in HCMC Open University. Workforce diversity is defined as differences in national origins. This study examines the following study question: What barriers hinder the implementation of diversity in HCMC Open University?

3.3. Methodology

This is an exploratory study; methods of data collection are semi-structured face-to-face interviews and document analysis. Five interviewees were faculty heads who have responsibilities for diversity management in HCMC Open University. Data from
interviews were recorded in the form of rich verbal description. This means that this study uses qualitative approach to answer the study questions. For document analysis, the author has reviewed the diversity literature from newspaper articles, online resources, research reports and diversity-related books. The data obtained from these documents provided insightful and enriched information to confirm and verify the statements suggested by study participants during the face-to-face interviewing.

4. Result and Discussion

The study participants cite various difficulties in managing diversity, which are categorized into values of diversity, leadership and human factors.

4.1. Values of Diversity

Participants identify the three most frequently obstacles in this category, which are deculturation: the attempt not to integrate other value systems but still keep interactions with other groups at work (80%), low integration of minority group members in the informal network of organizations (100%) and prejudice and discrimination (50%). The most frequently mentioned barrier for diversity is that the minority group cannot access informal networks. The following phrases are evidence of this barrier: Vietnamese lecturers are reluctant to contact with foreigners; they are not in the habit of discussion; they face difficulties in speaking or listening to English.

Eighty percent of study participants commented on Vietnamese’s reaction of acculturation through the pattern of deculturation. One interviewee described this barrier in the following way: among faculty, Vietnamese lecturers like to assemble into one group, where they talk in Vietnamese and have lunch together. They minimize their interaction with foreigners except for work. They seem to be open but they still retain their own distinct set of norms and behaviours.
Prejudice and discrimination is mentioned as another barrier for diversity. Fifty percent of the study participants observed that some foreigners work in Vietnam with the thought of enlightenment. This makes Vietnamese lecturers less open to learn or cooperate. Some of them display the attitude of avoidance.

4.2. Leadership

Study participants' determined three limitations to leadership for diversity: unclear strategic planning for diversity (60%), lack of cross-cultural leaders (80%) and incompetence in terms of financial support (100%). Although workforce diversity brings many benefits relating to knowledge-sharing, improvement in teaching methods and learning from research, top management in HCMC Open University is still unable to hire more foreign professors or researchers because of financial issues. All study participants acknowledged this barrier. Eighty percent noted that leaders need to be trained in the skills of cross-cultural management. In some cases, leaders cannot assimilate the minority group into a diverse community. Three study participants considered the employment of foreigners in HCMC Open University as an advertisement activity which transfers the message of HCMC Open University’s integration in globalization or internationalization. Sixty percent study participants required clearer strategic plan for successful diversity.

4.3. Human Factors

The interviewees cited four barriers that lead to hindering diversity such as negative acknowledgement of the benefits of diversity (60%), communication issues (100%), lack of acculturation training (100%) and conflicts in payment (60%). All study participants agreed that there is not any acculturation training in HCMC Open University. It seems that people learn by themselves to cope with diversity. They find difficulties in understanding differences and considering “mindfulness.” One hundred percent of interviewees indicated that the
most frequently mentioned barrier related to communication. English is popular in multinational organizations in Vietnam, but many HCMC Open University lecturers cannot speak it fluently. One study participant stated as follows:

"Lecturers feel shy and less confident when speaking English, which causes a limitation of discussion with foreign partners. They just focus on communicating in formal networks while informal networks which can contribute to transferring implicit knowledge are ignored. Additionally, misunderstandings due to the language barrier lead to contact avoidance among different groups, so organizations cannot obtain the objectives of knowledge-sharing or cooperation."

Sixty percent of study participants observed that foreign workers received higher payment, so there are conflicts in terms of work performance. The Vietnamese lecturers tend to make less effort in working because they are paid less. Besides, people have high expectations of foreign colleagues as a means of achieving equality. However, diversity requires time to determine impact and it is very difficult to measure profitability from the diversity investment. Finally, sixty percent of study participants identified negative impacts of diversity benefits. The following phrases are evidence of this barrier: not seeing its value, diversity being unnecessary and inefficiency in hiring foreigners.

5. Discussion

This case study has identified barriers to diversity in terms of national origins in HCMC Open University. The findings of the study indicate that diversity in the University is not easily implemented because of difficulties relating to culture, leadership and human factors. The board of directors, human resource development professionals, heads of faculty or anyone else who supports diversity in HCMC Open
University should be aware of these barriers in order to prevent the failure of diversity progress.

In the author's perspective, when developing workforce diversity in terms of national origin, the most important thing that HCMC Open University should do is to design acculturation training. This training passes into three following steps: (1) learning about differences in values, norms, attitudes or behaviours; (2) role playing for deeply sharing these differences and (3) integration in the form of assimilation or pluralism while keeping the core values represented by organizational culture.

6. References


Vicharn Amarakul

Abstract

This paper uses a quantitative method involving structural equation modeling to investigate the antecedents and outcomes of integrated water resource management (IWRM) in the resolution of community resource conflicts in the Mekong and Kok river basins in the north of Thailand. The importance of IWRM and good community characteristics in reducing such conflicts is emphasized. The findings are discussed and conclusion drawn.

Keywords: community conflicts, integrated water resource management, resource management, structural equation modeling, Thailand

Author: Vicharn Amarakul is a Faculty Member of the School of Liberal Arts, University of Phayao, Thailand.

1. Introduction

Water resources are essential to the survival of people, animals and plants. His Majesty the King Bhumibol Adulyadej stated in one of his speeches that water is a principal part of life, because it is needed for drinking, general use and crop growing. There can be no life without water. If there is water present in a place, then people can live there. If there is no water, then people cannot live in that place even if they have electricity (PanyaThai, Finance System of Thailand, 2010A).
Water management is a very important issue and it should involve not just the government but also communities, who may take part in managing community-level water resources. Consequently, water users in communities should be ready to adopt other roles as administrators and managers, who can develop and conserve water resources within their own areas and contribute to creating an immune system in a situation of limited resources (Office of the National Water Resources Board, 2009). Since the management of water resources is different in every area involved, there is a need for local water management systems to vary depending on the social and economic situation of the people concerned (Anukul-ampai, 2003). This can be seen of the Mekong and Mae Kok river basins, which connect Thailand with the People’s Republic of China, Lao People’s Democratic Republic and the Union of Myanmar. The confluence of different sets of people has made it possible for there to be conflict in the use of water resources. In such cases, it can be impossible for external observers to determine who may be right or wrong because of the relativity of all factors involved and the fact that people are involved (Azar & Burton, 1986; Deutsch & Coleman, 2000). Consequently, this study aims to provide some guidance in such cases by studying the antecedent factors and outcomes of the integrated management of water resources in the research area. It is hoped that this will contribute to sustainability of water resources by reducing the incidences of conflict.

Alexander, Prince of Orange (2002) concluded that without water, there would be no future. If Thailand does not have sufficient water resources to meet the needs of its people, conflicts will result. Consequently, the study of antecedent factors and outcomes of the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) approach regarding reduction of community conflict in the Mekong and Kok basins is of great importance. The results of the study might be used as a guide for decisions concerning the sustainable management of water resources.
2. The Purpose of the Research

The purposes of undertaking this research are as follows:

- to study IWRM as a means of reducing community conflicts in the Mekong and Kok basins;

- to study the factors involved in promoting effective water management, including community characteristics and the factors leading to the introduction of an IWRM system.

3. Objectives

The research was located in the area of the Mekong and Kok basins, which covers the area of Chiang Rai province and parts of Chiang Mai and Phayao provinces.

The following hypotheses were formulated to help structure the research.

H1: The extension process of water management (EPWM) has influence on IWRM.

H2: The great community (GCOM) has influence on IWRM.

H3: GCOM has influence on the conflict resolution of communities (CRCO).

H4: IWRM community has influence on good environment (ENVI).

H5: IWRM has influence on CRCO.

It was expected that the following benefits will be received as a result of the research:
- research outcomes will support watershed management processes in the context of changes to community characteristics and environmental management in the study site.

- research outcomes contribute to decision-making to improve public policy about decentralization at the level of local and community participation in water management.

4. Literature Review

IWRM is a system for the promotion of the development of water resources, as well as soil and other resources that are involved in the effort to achieve maximum economic benefit and well-being of society, including equity issues and it does affect the sustainability of ecosystems that will result in better management of water resources in various dimensions (IWRM, 1992; Global Water Partnership-Technical Advisory Committee: GWP-TAC, 2000; Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 2004; Jankeaw, 2008).

At the International Conference on Water and the Environment at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 2009, scientists concluded that freshwater resources are limited and subject to pollution, that water as a product has economic value and that it is essential to life, that water development and management as a whole are necessary and that women play an important role in the management and maintenance of the water supply (International Conference on Water and the Environment, 1992). Efficient water management processes must take a holistic and transnational approach (Roy, Oborne & Venema, 2009). There is a network of water management that begins at local areas. The participation of all sectors includes the village and district level administrative regions (Hooper, 2005). Successful management should involve people in every area and include them in different activities.
The prevention of flooding includes environmental conservation as outlined in the development project of HM the King Bhumibol, which involves the canal bank from Bangkok to Chachoengsao at a distance of 72 km and introduced on September 20th, 1994. This day is celebrated as the National Conservation Day of Canals (PanyaThai, Finance System of Thailand, 2010B).

It is necessary to protect water resources through conservation and other means. The public has been educated about the importance of water and its preservation and new ceremonies have been introduced, such as the respect paid to the river by the Whouluke Community, in Wiang Kaen Amphur in Chiang Rai province (Pulaiyaw, 2007).

Water resources at the community level include community dams and state dams; the former are means of ground water storage for consumer use and for agriculture, while the latter are used to generate hydroelectricity and prevent floods, while also preventing the invasion of salt water into freshwater resources. These issues help provide people with a better quality of (Wongkongkewn, 2000; Chai Pattana Foundation, 2001).

In Tanzania, in the catchment area of the Great Ruaha River in the Rufiji Basin, it has been found that water users in the local area rely on the rules and legitimacy bestowed by their communities rather than to follow the advice of state officials or private sector water suppliers (Sokile & Koppen, 2004). Consequently, successful IWRM depends on the ability of the communities involved to organize their social processes. This involves the use of networks, norms and trust. It is particularly important that citizens are given access to water on fair and transparent grounds rather than through membership of patronage networks. Leaders must have integrity and should take into account issues of equity and equality (Coleman, 1988; Patnum, 1993).

Successful IWRM systems contribute to the quality of life of people and good environmental conditions and also intrinsically involve
those people relying on the water resources and working in careers such as forestry. There is a direct link between good quality natural resources, the environment and the quality of life for most people (Boesen, Maganga & Odgaard, 1999).

Forestry is another form of economic capital and its proper management provides control for the allocation of natural resources. Results of sharp declines of forests in the Mekong region have affected the summer monsoons of East Asia. Using models and measurements from the past, scientists have found that increases in wind speed and temperature, while the proportion of water vapour in the air has decreased (Lutfi, Yuqing & Bin, 2004). Forestry contributes to the existence of moisture and clouds. The effects of watershed deforestation have caused more shallow water sources and greater sedimentation in rivers due to the erosion of top soil.

The conceptual framework is in this study as follows.

![Theoretical Framework](image)

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework; source: Original Research

### 5. Methodology

The researcher used a quantitative research approach involving the collection of survey data to analyze the structural equation model (SEM) of the community district level by gathering data from relevant
agencies, committees and those associated with water resources management. Respondents were interviewed with the use of the Geographic Information System which collects information about the environment in the sub-districts of the Mekong and Kok basins.

Randomized samples were selected for quantitative research. A total of 202 respondents provided information, based on the use of the Yamane formula and the total of 135 selected districts.

Tools used in the research were developed by issuing queries to the idea management process of IWRM (IWRM, 2002), which promotes factors relating to water management and good community and, specifically, the issue of IWRM and the reduction of community conflict in the period of 2005–2007. The questions were measured using 5-point Likert scales, from a low of 1 to a high of 5. All data were checked for accuracy and reliability.

The empirical variable parameter factors were the extension process of water management and good community characteristics, which are considered good analysis of the equation for a formative model. The correlation coefficient (r) of the independent variables examining the acute co-linear oriented multi data found that the correlations ranged from 0.118 to 0.739. Since these do not exceed 0.800, it is concluded that there are no problems associated with line oriented multiples (Judge, Griffiths, Hill & Lee, 1980).

Empirical factors and variables of IWRM reduce the water conflicts of the community and promotes good environment, so the characteristics equation measuring a reflected model has accuracy of measurement on each side based on the corrected item total correlation (r), which is greater than 0.50 and the reliability of the Cronbach alpha score is higher than 0.60.

The indicators measuring the latent variables (see Table 1) showed that the loading is greater than 0.706, which is a statistically
significant result, while the accurate analysis classification (discriminant validity: CR) refers to the precision of measurement of each latent variable that can be distinguished only from itself. It was not mixed with other measurements of the unknown. Good environmental factors include the level of availability of water in the year of 2007 and of forests in the five-year timeframe (2002-2007). GIS was used to calculate, store and analyze the data. The area (thousands of rai per unit) is the district level. This illustrates clearly the relationships within the data. (Nelleman, Vistnes & Ahlenins, 2003).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>CR</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>AVE</th>
<th>Cross Construct Correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>IWRM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IWRM</td>
<td>0.858</td>
<td>0.607</td>
<td>0.668</td>
<td>0.817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENVI</td>
<td>0.742</td>
<td>0.131</td>
<td>0.591</td>
<td>0.362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRCO</td>
<td>0.988</td>
<td>0.772</td>
<td>0.977</td>
<td>0.733</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1: Classification Accuracy Analysis; source: Original Research**

Remark: Numbers along the main diagonal of the cross construct correlations calculated by $\sqrt{AVE}$.

The interviewer’s questionnaire related to the management of water resources in the community, across 135 sample districts in Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai and Phayao provinces. The sub-samples were 14, 39 and 82 respectively. In the first section of Mekong and Kok basins, there were 15 respondents for each sub-total for a total of 2,025 people. Analysis and presentation of data was conducted using statistical methods to analyze and describe the properties of the sample (e.g. the measure of central tendency, means, standard deviations, as well as the determination of the data distribution). Additional analysis included skewness and kurtosis and its
relationship with the structural equation modelling. Questions about causal relationships can be answered with structural equation modelling by using partial least squares analysis: PLS-Graph (Chin, 2001), which uses various multiple regression analyses. Component analysis and analysis of causal effects also create a formative model and reflective model (Bollen & Lennox, 1991; Edwards & Bagozzi, 2000), which are used to analyze and present information in respect of the influence of factors and results of the management of integrated water resources to reduce conflict in community watersheds in the research site.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latent Variables</th>
<th>Manifest (Empirical) Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exogenous Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1. EPWM | 1. Get involved in water resources meetings (meeting)  
2. Participate in water resources and other resource conservation (active) |
| 2. GCOM | 1. Help community strengthening (strength)  
2. Be involved with leadership (leader) |
| **Endogenous Variables** |                                |
| 1. IWRM | 1. Understand IWRM processes (know)  
2. Use water with higher efficiency in the community (effi)  
3. Share water with fairness in the community (shar) |
| 2. CRCO | 1. All relevant parties help end water conflict (negotiate: nego1)  
2. All parties involved in negotiating to reduce conflicts to everyone’s satisfaction (nego2) |
| 3. ENVI | 1. Water resources area. (Water)  
2. Forest improvement. (forest) |

*Table 2: Manifest and Latent Variables Used in the Study: source: Original Research*
6. Findings

Most of the respondents were men (74.3%), while 23.6% of the respondents had ranks such as village head, head of district or village assistant. A further 22.9% of respondents were water resource committee members at the village or district levels, while 23.6% were tambon administration members, municipality members and general villagers. Respondents were mainly related to the use of water in the capacity of farmers (58.7%), followed by use as a private citizen (33.4%) and then as tourism or service trade provider or as part of industry. People who have been promoting water management and have participated in consultations in the past three years recorded a mean of 2.85, with a mean of 2.82 for those who have participated more than once. Other factors included good community strength (3.02) and good community leaders (3.10), while home water use efficiency (2.81) and water sharing in the community (2.67) were also recorded. All parties would be involved in conflict reduction at the community level (3.02), while if any conflicts about water use arises, then the community should negotiate among itself to find a solution (2.64). Finally, for the area of water resources, it was found that each district had a mean of 1,480 rai, while the amount of forest area between 2002-7 increased to an average of 1,070 rai. Analysis by the PLS-Graph incorporated the measurements simultaneously in both formative and reflective dimensions. The influences of latent variables are shown both directly and indirectly (see Figure 2).
Figure 2: *The Structural Equation Model*; *source: Original Research*

Table 3: *Antecedent causal factors and outcomes*; *source: Original Research* ($p \leq 0.05$, $^* p \leq 0.01**$).
Figure 2 and Tables 3 and 4 show the promotion processes of water management and community characteristics. The amount of variance explained for IWRM in the community is 60.9% by two factors. The direct influence on the management of IWRM in the community is equal to 0.286 and 0.639 at a significance level of 0.01. IWRM can be explained by the variance of environmental factors for improvement at the community or district level to the extent of 13.3% directly (0.362). Indirect effects for processes of water management and community characteristics were 0.104 and 0.231 respectively. The significance level of GCOM is 0.01 and IWRM co-variance to reduce conflicts in community water use was 77.2%. The influencing factors of community characteristics totaled 0.847 (direct influence was 0.712 and indirect influence was 0.135) and this was the most influential factor. IWRM directly reduces conflicts was 0.212 and promotion management processes was 0.061. The hypothesis testing is shown in Table 5 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>Independent variables</th>
<th>Influence</th>
<th>Direct</th>
<th>Indirect</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>IWRM</td>
<td>0.609</td>
<td>EPWM</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.286*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>GCOM</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.639*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>ENVI</td>
<td>0.131</td>
<td>IWRM</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.362*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EPWM</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.104</td>
<td>0.104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>GCOM</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.231</td>
<td>0.231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>CRCO</td>
<td>0.772</td>
<td>GCOM</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.712*</td>
<td>0.135*</td>
<td>0.847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>IWRM</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.212*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EPWM</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.061</td>
<td>0.061</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4: The Relationship of Direct and Indirect Influences; source: Original Research (*p ≤ 0.01)**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>coef.</th>
<th>t-stat</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H₁: EPWM → IWRM</td>
<td>0.286</td>
<td>5.120*</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₂: GCOM → IWRM</td>
<td>0.639</td>
<td>14.357*</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₃: GCOM → CRCO</td>
<td>0.712</td>
<td>14.331*</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₄: IWRM → ENVI</td>
<td>0.362</td>
<td>4.556*</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₅: IWRM → CRCO</td>
<td>0.212</td>
<td>3.547*</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Hypothesis Testing; source: Original Research (p≤0.01 = *)

7. Conclusion

This research aims to study the impact of IWRM on the community and its GCOM, which is the influencing factors to reduce conflicts along the Mekong and Kok basins. Promoting water management processes would improve IWRM and reduce environmental conflicts.

The study indicated that GCOM explained the variance on IWRM to the extent of 60.9%. It is clear that GCOM influences IWRM rather than promoting the water management factors itself. The results are consistent with findings from urban South Africa, in the form of the Lesotho Management of Water Resources in the Hang Spa basin, as well as findings from Malaysia (Weng & Mokhtar, 2010) and the findings of the Global Water Partnership-Technical Advisory Committee (2000), which found that evidence of strong community factors. The community shares ideas with each other to create strong pressure on local development patterns, particularly with respect to community development of leaders. Strong relationships could benefit the local community and promote good IWRM (Boles & Davenport, 1975).

IWRM showed good environmental variance (13.1%), which indicates a positive influence on nature in terms of space, water resources and forests. This result is statistically significant and consistent with the concept of harmony between people and nature, thereby leading to positive results for ecosystems and their development. This leads to
sustainable development and the structural equation model indicates positive outcomes for this approach.

Community characteristics and better IWRM strongly explains variance in the prevalence of water conflicts (77.2%) and good community characteristics are more important in this regard that IWRM. It may be concluded that communities with knowledge and understanding of IWRM will be able to obtain greater efficiency of water use and will be able to share water so as to reduce community-level conflicts. Inter-community negotiations seem to be positive approaches to solving such problems.

This research has shown that IWRM can reduce resource conflicts in communities and also improve environmental management. The essential antecedents of IWRM are good community relations and leadership. Further research should be conducted to expand the scope of the project in terms of space and time with in-depth, personal interviews being conducted to supplement and complement the existing database of results. This would help to make the findings more generalizable.

9. References


Social Networks and Migration of People from the Southern Border Provinces of Thailand to Work in Food Shops (Tom Yam Shops) in Malaysia

Nisakorn Klanarong, Sirirat Sinprajakpol & Suparat Pinsuwan

Abstract

Many people cross from the southern border provinces of Thailand into Malaysia to work in a variety of activities and mostly on an unofficial basis. This makes their working status illegal and they may suffer stress and anxiety as a result. This paper uses qualitative research to investigate the stories of individuals crossing the border to work in the restaurant sector. This research is used to formulate some recommendations for the government agencies on both sides of the border.

Keywords: border crossing, labour migration, Malaysia, Thailand

Authors: Nisakorn Klanarong, Sirirat Sinprajakpol & Suparat Pinsuwan are faculty members at Thaksin University, Thailand.

1. Introduction

Data from the Department of Employment Services, Ministry of Labour, shows that workers from the southern region of Thailand who go to work overseas are very few in number. Table 1 shows that in 2005, there were only 2,160 persons (1.5% of total migrant workers). This increased to 2,633 persons (1.6% of total migrant workers) and 2,990 persons (1.8% of total migrant workers) in the years 2006 and 2007 respectively. In 2007, the number of workers from Northeastern, Northern and Central regions who went to work overseas were
101,422 (62.6% of total migrant workers), 21,947 (13.6% of total migrant workers) and 21,947 (13.6% of total migrant workers) respectively. The numbers of workers from the southern border provinces of Thailand (Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat and Satun) are negligible when compared to numbers of migrant workers from other regions of the country. In fact, many people in this area go to work abroad, particularly to Malaysia, but the statistics of those people have not been reported to the Department of Employment Services. This is because most of the migrant workers choose to work in Malaysia, making their own arrangements, rather than using the services of private recruitment agencies taken from the Department of Employment Services or employers (Klanarong, 2003). Moreover, most people in this area use a border pass to enter and work in Malaysia. A border pass is a document issued by government officials for people who live along the Thai-Malaysia border as a convenient means of travelling between the two countries. The official purpose of those leaving the kingdom and who hold a border pass is to visit a relative or to visit the states of Malaysia that border upon Thailand. Those people do not qualify as “migrant workers” according to the Ministry of Labour.

People in the southern border provinces can go to work in Malaysia because of the help of their social networks. Prasompong and Songmuang (1990) indicated that social networks played an important role in the migration of people living in the southern border provinces going to work in Malaysia. They concluded that people from Tan Yong Po District, Satun Province migrated to work in Malaysia when they knew there were jobs available for them through their social networks as follows:

1. People in Tan Yong Po who had earlier migrated to Malaysia and came back to the village to persuade them to go along;
2. Malaysian employers who came to the village and had relatives in Satun or knew the families of migrant workers in the village very well;
3. Representatives of employers (in Thai called “tua tan nai jang”) who were requested by the Malaysian employers to recruit workers for them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regions/Provinces</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>19,139 (13.7%)</td>
<td>21,215 (13.2%)</td>
<td>21,947 (13.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeastern</td>
<td>89,049 (63.8%)</td>
<td>100,674 (62.6%)</td>
<td>101,422 (62.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>29,320 (21.0%)</td>
<td>36,324 (22.6%)</td>
<td>35,558 (22.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>2,160 (1.5%)</td>
<td>2,633 (1.6%)</td>
<td>2,990 (1.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pattani</td>
<td>100 (0.1%)</td>
<td>101 (0.06%)</td>
<td>104 (0.06%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Yala</td>
<td>74 (0.1%)</td>
<td>71 (0.04%)</td>
<td>90 (0.05%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Narathiwat</td>
<td>66 (&lt;0.1%)</td>
<td>64 (0.03%)</td>
<td>62 (0.03%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Satun</td>
<td>33 (&lt;0.1%)</td>
<td>39 (0.02%)</td>
<td>71 (0.04%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>139,667</td>
<td>160,846</td>
<td>161,917</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1*: Numbers of Thai Workers Going to Work Overseas by Region and Selected Provinces; *source*: Klanarong, 2008.

Chaiyarn (2002) also found migrant workers from Satun Province going to work in Langkawi Island, Malaysia by self-arrangement and they did not face problems due to their extended families helping them get jobs.

Traditionally, the theories for describing, explaining or predicting international labor migration put much focus on economic factors which were believed to be the cause of migration, while less attention is given to social and cultural factors. This is because the concepts of study on migration mainly consider push and pull factors which have great impacts on migration. However, migration is a complicated process and the decision-making process concerning whether to migrate is also complicated. Consequently, merely considering the push factors of origin communities and the pull factors of destination communities cannot fully explain patterns of migration. The studies of
migration in many regions of the world pay more attention to the Social Capital Theory: Migrant Networks (Boyd, 1989; Mantra, 1998; Chanthawanich et al., 1999; Klanarong, 2003; Rainer & Siedler, 2009; Anjos & Campos, 2010 and Curan & Saguy, 2011). As a result, this study aimed to explain how social networks at origins and in extended forms affected the migration of people from the southern border provinces of Thailand to work in food shops in Malaysia.

2. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study may be described as follows:

1. To study the origin and extent of social networks in the migration behaviour of workers from the southern border provinces of Thailand going to Malaysia.
2. To explore the roles of social networks of people in the southern border provinces of Thailand who migrate to work in food shops in Malaysia.

3. Methodology

This study uses empirical qualitative research. Data was collected at destination areas in four northern states of Malaysia, namely Kedah, Perlis, Perak and Kelantan. The samples of population used in this study are people, both men and women, who live in the southern border provinces of Thailand and migrate to work in food shops in Malaysia. Migrant workers were interviewed by using narrative interviews. This method gives an opportunity for the interviewees to relate their stories at ease. Furthermore, this method has been adapted from the research which Chantavanich et al. (1999) used in their study regarding Thai women who had migrated to Germany.
3.1. Study Areas

Areas of study were purposely selected for sampling. The criterion for selecting the area study focuses on the communities of the people from the southern border provinces of Thailand and on those who migrated to work in food shops (Tom Yam shops). Information is collected from migrant workers in the same specific areas; most of the workers work illegally. The areas selected in the study are 12 towns as shown in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Towns</th>
<th>States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rantau Panjang</td>
<td>Kelantan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pasir Mas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kota Bahru</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Taiping</td>
<td>Perak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Gerik</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sungai Petani</td>
<td>Kedah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Pendang</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Alor Star</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Kulim</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Kuah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Arau</td>
<td>Perlis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Kangar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Towns and States of Study; source: Original Research

4. Literature Review: Social Networks and International Labour Migration

Social networks are “sets of interpersonal ties that link migrants, former migrants and non-migrants in the origin and destination areas through the bonds of kinship, friendship and shared community origin” (Massey, 1988:396). The levels of connection are higher or lower depending on the familiarity of people and the level of communication (Fuller et al., 1983). Meanwhile, Pramaha Suthis Apakaro (2004) defines social network as relationships of humans
within society at the different levels of individuality, individuals and groups; groups with groups; and groups with organizations. This explains behaviours and relations in different areas, such as activities, communications, cooperation, dependence and learning exchange. These relationships have a variety of structures and patterns through social human networks.

The social relationships that a person has for another person can be considered as one aspect of a social network. The social network can be compared to points that link many different lines. Points are persons or communities and lines are social relationships. Consequently, each person can be compared to the central node in a network that links with other points or people. Those people might have relationships with others whom the centre point never knew. In other words, Na Chiangmai (1983) states that everyone in the world knows and has relationships through a person who he/she knows.

For international migrant workers, it is unnecessary for migrant workers to be cut off from their communities of origin when they move to work abroad. They can still keep in touch with their home communities either directly or indirectly by visiting, sending letters, goods, presents or remitting money. This is the root of social networking in their villages. At the same time, their social networking extends to the destination communities and, therefore, the networks linking the origin and destination communities become key elements in sustaining and enhancing population flows between them (Hugo, 1998b; Mantra, 1998; Klanarong, 2003). As Hugo states, “The existence of social networks is a powerful factor influencing whether or not a person will move and also explains why some communities have high levels of emigration while others with seemingly similar economic contexts have very few migrants” (Hugo, 1998a:88).

There are studies from different regions of the world that show the originality of the social network of migrants. The expansion of the social network stems from mutual assistance.
The development of relationships creates a chain of migration. The origin communities move towards the destination communities due to the sharing of work. Migration from the communities takes place continually because of the benefits gained from the social network both in origin communities and in the destination communities.

Mantra (1998) studied the social network of Indonesians who went to work in Malaysia from three areas, namely East Flores, West Lombok and Bawean Island. Mantra found that the social network of migrants from East Flores and West Lombok originated in the post-World War II period when Japanese soldiers moved some Indonesians from East Flores to Sabah before they went back to Japan. Japanese soldiers left these Indonesians in Sabah. After that, the process of migration has continued from East Flores to Sabah and does until now, when it has become common to see migrants from the same area settling in Sabah.

The origin of the social network of people from Bawean Island was Muslims from the island who wanted to go to Mecca for their pilgrimage (Haj). They most commonly used the route via Singapore-Malaysia-Mecca. Before their trip to Mecca, they often worked in Singapore or Malaysia to save money for their travelling expenses and for the religious ritual. After they came back from Mecca, some of them settled down in Singapore and Malaysia. The migrants from Bawean who live in Singapore and Malaysia still keep in touch with their relatives in Bawean. The connection creates a chain of migration which basically expands the flow of migrants from Bawean to Singapore and Malaysia. The existence of a system of social networking between the Indonesian workforce in Malaysia and local people in the origin communities facilitates the flow of migrant workers from Indonesia to Malaysia. In addition, the development of modern transportation and communications between two countries shortens the distance between them.

The origin and expansion of the social network of migrants from the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (Lao PDR or Laos) to Thailand are
similar to those of migrants from Indonesia to Malaysia. Chairaj (2009) found that people from one village in Savannakhet Province immigrated to Thailand because of political change. Some immigrants moved on to third countries, while others remained and now live in Thailand in high numbers.

After Laos opened to the world, many of those who were left in Thailand went home and persuaded their relatives from the village to migrate to work in Thailand. When the people in the community saw how those working in Thailand enjoyed better living conditions and income, many became interested in migrating (Chairaj, 2009:157).

Chen et al. (2001) studied the role of the social network for migrants from rural areas going to work in cities in China. A total of 5.9 million people moving from 3,956 villages to 250 cities were studied. He concluded that the same migrant workers returned to their home villages during holidays. Information about the destination community spread rapidly to people in other villages. Migrants who went to work in cities tore down the obstacles of migration because knowing people in the destination community reduced the risk of migration. It was found that 75.1% of migrants from the same village would cluster in the same destination community in order to have the same jobs.

Chantavanich et al. (1999) studied the migration of Thai women to Germany and found that every Thai woman who migrated to Germany had a social network to facilitate their actions. There are five types of female social networks:

1. Siblings or close friends
2. Boyfriend or German husband
3. Knowing people, distant relatives or “in-name” relatives
4. Authority or match-maker company
5. National and international agencies
Those poor women came from working class families generally low in education. In their situation, these women could not go to Germany by themselves and they had to have help in various forms and from different networks.

Several studies of migration from the southern border provinces of Thailand going to work in Malaysia found that the social networks of migrant workers both in the origin community and destination community play major roles and result in the decision to work in Malaysia (Taweesit, 1986; Prasompong & Songmuang, 1990; Chaiyarn, 2002; Klanarong, 2003 and Tsuneda, 2006). Wittayapreechakul (1990) studied the role of social networks in labour movement to Malaysia with a case study of Cha Rang Village, Yaring District, Pattani Province. She found that a social network did play a role in labour movement to Malaysia. The network’s function was to serve as a source of information about working and living conditions at the possible destinations. This information included the jobs available, the distance to work, method of travel, travel costs and other costs, the nature of the work, wages, hiring procedures, benefits as well as sources of jobs or the community at the destination places. Social networks also serve to assist in finding work, obtaining lodging, in terms of finances and in household upkeeping. The assistance afforded in these areas facilitates and reduces uncertainty in labour migration.

Klanarong (2003) found that international labour migration of females from the southern border provinces working in Malaysia used the long existing social network which made it convenient to go to work. The influence of social networks can be found in the clustering of work types and destination areas in Malaysia of migrants from each village. Moreover, the social network creates a sustainable and continual form of international labour migration.

According to Tsuneda (2006), the origin of social networks of migrants from the southern border provinces going to work in
Malaysia was usually found in women from the southern border provinces who went to work in Malaysia and subsequently married Malaysian men. They could have comfortable lives in Malaysia, educate their children and financially support their parents. Women who married Malaysian men became part of an important network in border areas. They opened the gate for their friends and relatives from Thailand to come to live, work and study in Malaysia. The community where the Malay dialect is used in the southern border provinces becomes an informal personal network to find jobs in Malaysia without relying on intermediaries. The migrants in Malaysia see the importance of social and economic expansion for other people in the origin community in Thailand.

5. Findings

5.1. Origin and Expansion of Social Networks to Work in Food Shops (Tom Yam Shops) in Malaysia

The origin and expansion of social networks of migrants from southern border provinces working in the food shops in Malaysia stem from ties that link people in the origin and destination areas through the bonds of kinship, friendship and shared community origin. There are ties working through Malay Muslim ethnicity and the cultural similarity of the migrants and people in Malaysia, especially in terms of language and religion. Moreover, the intermarriage of migrants with Malaysians enlarged and complicated the social networking of migrants.

The social network of food shops owners develops mainly from the relationship of kinship. The owners’ relatives married Malaysians and changed their nationalities to become Malaysians, while most female food shop owners who married Malaysians men still kept their nationalities. These female food shop owners kept their foreign migrant status but used their husbands’ nationalities to run the food shop business. These food shop owners became major parts of social
networks of their workforce in the shops. These employees could be relatives, in-laws, friends or neighbours.

5.2. Roles of Social Networks in Migrating to Work in Food Shops (Tom Yam Shops) in Malaysia

Migration from the origin community to the same destination town and working in the same field, including having the same employer, affects the pattern of migration which leads to connections between the origin and destination communities. Such features result from the roles of social networks as sources of information and basic assistance.

The food shop owners caused a social network to impact on the workforce migration from the origin community by giving sources of job information about the availability of jobs and positions.

The act of migration stage starts when migrant workers work under the support of their origin community and travel to the destination community. They use the official document at immigration control to cross the border. Thai owners generally use their personal vehicles to travel back and forth between Thailand and Malaysia. At the destination community, when migrants enter Malaysia, the owners provide accommodation, meals and health care. If migrants are sick, they will be sent to clinics and the owners will take care of expenses. Such assistance from owners, especially in terms of providing jobs to relatives, in-laws, friends or neighbours, expands the social network of workforce migration from the southern border provinces.

5.3. Excerpt from the Interviews in the Andaman Food Shops in Perlis

This owner called himself “Bae,” which means brother in Malay. He is from Muang District, Pattani Province. He told the research team that he used to work in Bangkok before he came to run the food shop
in Malaysia. His reason for changing was that the people from the village were able to settle down while he himself could not. He went to work as an employee in Kuala Lumpur and got married. His wife allowed us to call her “Ka,” which means sister in Malay. Ka Na (her short name) also worked as an employee at the same food shop. She is from Nathawee District, Songkhla Province. She has been working at food shops in Pedang Besar, Malaysia, since she was 13 and kept changing jobs until she met Bae in Kuala Lumpur.

After their marriage, Bae and his wife still worked at the same food shop. It was four years ago that they started their food shop called “Andaman.” The shop belongs to a Malaysian who is the boss of Bae’s aunt. Later, his aunt married a Malaysian and they ran their own food shop called “Andaman II.” Bae’s aunt worked as an employee for several years and got acquainted with her boss, so she asked her boss to lease the place for Bae and his wife to run on their own. Bae signed a permission certificate to open the shop and took over the shop from the Malaysian paying a monthly rent of 1,500 ringgit. The rent contact was made for three years.

There were five employees in Andaman food shop: two of them were cooks (male and female). Ka Na, Bae’s wife, sometimes worked as a cook herself. The others (one man and two women) were waiters. They took orders from customers, made drinks and collected the bills. Bae rented a house behind the food shop and used it for his employees’ accommodation for their convenience, so they would not have to travel to and from work. The male and female staff quarters were separate.

Employees in Bae’s food shop were Bae’s relatives from Songkhla Province. In this case, the social network featured uniting working together and being related. One of the employees, called Nafesah, was 18 years old. She came to work for Ka Na, her aunt. Nafesah had three brothers and sisters and she was the oldest in her family. She finished her higher secondary level of education from an Islamic Private
School. She wanted to further her studies but she had to start work due to her family’s poverty.

Sarenah was another employee. Nafesah and Sarenah came from the same school and were friends. Sarenah came to work after Nafesah. She told us she finished her Matayom 3 (equivalent to Grade 9) and she did not further her studies. She came to work in the shop because her friends and relatives from Chana District in Songkhla Province persuaded her to do so. Actually, Sarenah’s relative knew Ka Na’s grandmother. About 100 people from the village had come to Malaysia. Sarenah was then 17 years old and had worked for seven months. She made drinks, presented the bills and washed dishes. Her wages were 200 Baht per day.

Travel back and forth between Thailand and Malaysia was done by Bae’s and Ka Na’s car. Bae took his employees to the immigration office every month to obtain the stamp for their visas. The border pass is valid for three months and the employees had to go to the immigration office after staying in Malaysia for one month.

6. Conclusion

The social and cultural conditions of migrants from the southern border provinces and those of people in Malaysia are broadly similar, especially the practice of Islam and the Malay language. In addition, there are relationships by marriage with Malaysians. This creates a social network of migrants in the destination community and plays major roles in the migration from the southern border provinces to work in Malaysia, especially migrants who work in food shops. Their social networks play important roles in giving information, especially about jobs available in Malaysia, as well as assistance in getting jobs. However, migrants hired to work in food shops also have disadvantages such as the lack of freedom, the feeling of insecurity at work in Malaysia because of their illegal status, fear and worry about their situation. Although migrants from the southern border provinces
went to work in food shops with help from social networks in terms of getting jobs and necessary forms of welfare while working in Malaysia, most migrants used the border pass to return to the country and worked without a valid work permit, which is illegal in Malaysia. These migrants had to live and work with fear. They suspected that they would be arrested by Malaysian officials. They became stressed and such symptoms affected the labourers’ mental health (Klanarong et al., 2011). During the field trip, the research team found that the owner in Arau, Perlis had just been arrested and was fined more than 200,000 Baht. The owner and her employees from Pattani Province continuously looked around nervously during the interview. The reason why some Thai workers do not request a work permit is that the fee was too expensive when compared with their wages. Employment in food shops is categorized under the service sector. Expenses for taxes, foreign labour health care, work permits and social security insurance are all increased. These costs should be negotiated between the Thai and Malaysian governments in asking for fee reductions to issue work permits, especially for waiters and waitresses in the food shops.

Suggestions for Thai government and the official sector in southern border provinces:

1. Government organizations should have criteria regarding illegal labour migration without work permits especially labourers who will be employed in the food shops. The concerned organizations should make the employment legal to reduce stress, fear, illegal residency and arrests.

2. Government organizations in the areas of the southern border provinces should provide jobs and working opportunities for residents. The jobs should be associated with social and cultural conditions of the residents so that the residents will not rely merely on their migration to work in Malaysia and income for the population can be secured.
3. The Thai government should negotiate a compromise with the Malaysian government regarding migrants working in food shops, especially waiting staff. For instance, the fee for work permits or for employment in food shops in Kelantan, Perak, Perlis and Kedah, the same as the employment of working in rice fields.

7. Bibliography


Market Segmentation of Thai Herbal Products: The Southern Thailand Market

Sasiwemon Sukhabot

Abstract

Herbal products, including cosmetics, medicinal products and food items, are an important potential export industry for Thailand, although there have been problems with product quality and meeting international standards. Consequently, it is important to develop the domestic market for these products and the marketing of the industry can be improved by better application of marketing segmentation techniques. This paper reports on a quantitative study of 200 respondents in the South of Thailand with a view to identifying specific market segments in that area. The results are used to form recommendations for practitioners.

Keywords: herbal products, market segmentation, Southern Thailand

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1. Introduction

Thai herbal products are among the most prominent and beneficial products made available by the One Tambon One Product (OTOP) agricultural product scheme of Thailand. They are now promoted as potentially economically important plant products. Thailand has a lot of valuable herbs and Thai people have the know-how to manufacture value-added herbal products and they want to internationalize these products. Thai herbal product manufacturers can convert herbs into several types of herbal products, such as 1) cosmetics as in body
lotions, soaps and skin creams; 2) health supplements; 3) medicines and 4) food products. These herbal products are among many that OTOP can potentially promote and upgrade for international markets.

The world trends for consumption of herbs and herbal products show gradually increases during the past two decades. The United Nations Statistical Office and International Trade Center have reported that the world market value of herbal products increased by 222.9% between 1980 and 1986. In Thailand, more and more herbs and herbal extracts are being used in everyday life. Herbs are used as raw materials in industrial products such as cosmetics, foods and health supplements and medicine (Minister of Commerce, 1989).

Production and consumption of herbs is becoming more and more internationalized. Market structures for herbs and herbal products are different worldwide. The supply of herbal extracts for medicinal products, most of which must be imported from developing countries, has decreased gradually. The quality and quantity of herbal products are, therefore, less reliable and include some counterfeit substances. This is due to the scarcity of herbs in the developing world. Moreover, it takes a longer time and a huge amount of expenditure to produce new herbal products that are safe. Synthesized medicines are more convenient to produce, are of better quality and are safer for customers than are herbal products. The production of herbs for making medicines has, therefore, been reduced. More herbal products are made in the form of food and health supplements and cosmetics. The production of herbal products for these purposes needs less complex procedures and has fewer limitations than when they are used to produce medicines. As a result, the demand for herbs in general is increasing. Countries that import herbs include the USA, Canada, Japan, Switzerland, Hong Kong, the People's Republic of China, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxemburg, the United Kingdom, Ireland and Denmark; while the exporting countries are the USA, France, Ireland, the United Kingdom, Japan, Mexico, Brazil, Spain, Poland, Italy, Argentina, India, the Philippines, Costa Rica,
Problems in cultivating Thai herbs in Thailand include insufficiency of knowledge and technology, a lack of good seeds and, therefore, a lack of raw materials for herbal products. In addition, product quality does not always meet international standards and market requirements. Also, not many people are interested in using herbal medicines, since they do not realize how good the quality of the herbs is. Some people use herbal medicine as an alternative treatment only as a last resort for curing fatal diseases. Marketing problems for herbal medicines include low quality because of counterfeit substances, wrong means of storage and limited marketing in both national and international markets. At the 21st Natural Product Expo West on 8-11th March, 2001 in Anaheim, California, there were comments that Thailand should make the most use of its herbs and make them world market products. The production of herbal products should comply with a country's laws, according to the Food Supplements and Cosmetics Act and the products must be up to standard in terms of quality and safety and effectiveness, otherwise this will result in bad reputation for both the products and the country (Wongyai, 2001).

The present study is, therefore, aimed at illustrating the quality of Thai herbs and their potentiality as industrial products, as well as to illustrate a clearer view of their market segmentation and to survey consumer behaviour in the market. The area of study is limited to the market segmentation of Thai herbs in the south of Thailand.

2. Research Objectives

The purpose of this paper is to identify distinct market segments of Thai herbal products in the southern part of Thailand. The study aims to:
1. Identify market segments of Thai herbals products in the southern part of Thailand using distinct criteria for market segmentation. This information will benefit OTOP operators and other entrepreneurs in herbal products;

2. Explore customer behaviour in each market segment so that the businesses can target their particular market and start the business professionally;

3. Provide those responsible for manufacturing, preserving and marketing Thai herbal products with a clearer picture of herbal markets to help them in their decision making in market plans.

3. Related Literature and Research Framework

Market segmentation was first defined by Wendell Smith (1956) as viewing a heterogeneous markets, in response to differing preferences, attributable to the desire of consumers for more precise satisfaction of their varying wants (cited in Foscht et al., 2010). Marketing researchers recognize differences between groups of consumers to be opportunities in the market. Market segmentation involves the identification of segmentation variables followed by segmentation of the market. This leads to market targeting, i.e. an evaluation of the attractiveness of the obtained segments and a selection of the target segment(s) (Raaij & Verhallen, 1994).

Bases for segmenting consumer market include two major constructs of consumer characteristics and consumer response or behaviour. Consumer characteristics can vary from their geographic, demographic and psychographic influences. Consumer response or behaviour depends on the occasions, benefits, usage rates and attitudes of the consumers (Kotler, 2003).

Although the term “Market Segmentation” is well known among marketers, some forget or ignore the importance of segmentation in
marketing planning. Professor John Howard, an expert in marketing at the University of Columbia, explained that consumer needs analysis and market segmentation are the two most important stages in the whole process of market planning. John Berrigan, a marketing expert regards market segmentation as the “Holy Grail” of marketing strategies. Kenneth Roman, the former president of the administering committee of Ogilvie and Mather Worldwide explained that in the super large scale of the world market with very large consumer choices and needs, it is difficult to satisfy such a variety at the same level of services or products. Market segmentation is, therefore, an important factor to manage the limited resources to suit the target consumer group (Torsuwan, 2005).

Market segmentation is conducted by analyzing the needs or responses of a particular group of consumers. Almost all authorities in marketing proposed four factors of marketing segmentation, including demographic, geographic, psychographic and behavioral factors. Successful market segmentation entails more than one of these four factors. In practice, however, some business sectors base their market segmentation on only the demographic factor and this leads to unsuccessful marketing of the products, as consumers are not similar in their consumer behaviour.

Nokia is one of the international enterprises that bases its marketing plans on market segmentation. Resulting from its large scale research, Nokia divided marketing segments by the factors relating to consumers’ usage, life style and individual preferences. Nokia divided its market into six segments, including 1) the basic users who use their mobile phones for making and answering calls only and so they want a strong, long-lasting mobile phone. 2) Personal expression users are those who want elaborate and unique features on their mobile phone. 3) Classic users are those who like the classic (not very fashionable in design) type of mobile phone. 4) Fashion users refer to those who favour a small, attractive phone. 5) Premium users are those who are attracted to new technology and an expensive design and 6)
Communicator users are those who prefer both communication and wireless networking features. According to this marketing segmentation, Nokia manages its marketing plan and designs of products in a series for each market segment. Starting from the 8500 series, it developed into the 8800 series for the premier group and the 9300 series was developed for the communicator group, and the latest series is the 7360 “Lamour Collection” designed for the fashion group. As can be seen, each Nokia version differs not only in the product itself, its packaging, and its marketing communication but the design of each version is for a particular target group. Nokia can use product segmentation to divide the target groups using different criteria (it does not based only on demographic features) so it can create a marketing plan for each of them effectively.

GM (General Motors) is another example of an enterprise that is successful in the market. During the 1920s, GM suffered terrible losses but when Alfred Sloan (who later earned the reputation of being the most competent business administrator) took over the administration. He saw that GM produced seven designs of cars which did not very much differ from each other, causing overlaps in marketing. He reduced the number to five and made the five designs of GM cars definitely different from each other in terms of both products and prices to satisfy different customer groups. Following this product segmentation, GM achieved 56% of U.S. market share by the end of the 1950s. Later, after GM brought in a new administrative team who did not follow Sloan’s product segmentation, they produced five designs of GM cars which were not very much different from each other in order to reduce costs. This resulted in the company losing a huge market share to Japanese cars and luxury cars from Germany. Some designs of GM cars have gone off the market and the rest were ranked as only the fourth and fifth best in the world car market. Although market share cannot be claimed to be the only factor for business success, it cannot be denied that it is the starting point for success for Nokia as the world's number one in the mobile phone market.
Marketers should, therefore, not ignore product segmentation but also not depend only on the demographic data of the customers and instead they should consider market share or market segmentation by different criteria and the results can be used in product development plans. The information on customer lifestyle, purchasing behaviour and the media they receive should be included in making effective market plans for successful sales like Nokia and learned from GM which suffered a big loss (during that period of time) from ignorance of this significant step to success (Torsuwan, 2005).

The present study employed demographic, psychographic, and behavioural basis as the criteria for the market segments of Thai herbal products.

4. Research Methodology

This study is exploratory research and is aimed at exploring the segmentation of Thai herbal products in the southern part of Thailand. The sample taken was of 200 consumers of Thai herbal products randomly selected from those living in Songkhla province. The sample size was based on the ad hoc method, which indicated that for a regional or special group, the sample size can be 200-500 (Sudman, 1976, cited in Aaker et al., 2011).

The research instrument for collecting data was a questionnaire, piloted with 20 herbal product consumers in Bangkok and neighbouring provinces. Hierarchical Cluster Analysis was used to analyze the market segmentation of the herbal products in the south of Thailand and descriptive statistics were used to show market sizes.

5. Findings

The characteristics of the research samples are presented in the three categories.
The demographic characteristics of the research samples are presented as follows. Most of the research subjects were female (58.0%), aged 19-25 (28.5%), 41-50 (19.0%) 31-40 years (16.0%) and 26-30 years (14.5%). Most of the subjects had 3-5 people in their families (66.0%). Most were single (57.0%). Those who were married had children older than six years (18.5%). Most were in the other work category group including school students, university students, traders, plantation owners, housewives, civil servants, retired civil servants (38.0%), followed by business owners (20.5%), civil servants (15.5%) and private sector employees (12.5%). Regarding education, most were secondary school and college graduates (44.5%) or university graduates (39.5%). Most of them were Buddhists (90.0%). Most had a monthly earning of 5,001-10,000 baht (30.0%) or 10,001-20,000 baht (21.0%).

The psychographic characteristics of the sample are presented as follows. Most of the subjects considered themselves as middle class with a successful career (50.5%), civil servants (23.0%) or semi-skilled labourers (18.5%). Most of the respondents treasured work success (32.0%), personal privacy (19.5%), progress (19.0%), proficiency and convenience (17.0%). Most led their lives based on the rule of law and reasoning (35.5%), required a high level of success (29.0%) and were hard working and showed perseverance (11.5%). The personal image of consumers found among respondents were that they considered themselves to be successful in their endeavours (33.0%), making decisions by themselves (27.0%) and being hard working (17.0%). In terms of consumer personality, they bought things when they needed them (73.5%).

The behavioural characteristics of the sample are presented as follows. Most of the subjects reported that they sometimes bought Thai herbal products (77.0%). They bought cosmetic products such as lotions, soap or moisturizers (48.5%), medicine (28.0%) and health supplements (16.0%). In terms of how often the respondents bought herbal products, it was found that they did so regularly (37.0%), most
often buying products when going to product fairs (36.0%). Most reported that they were satisfied with the quality of Thai herbal products (58.0%) and they were proud of Thai herbal products (29.0%). The quantity of herbal products purchased when compared with friends’ purchase was at a low level (50.0%) and as much as friends purchased (35.0%). They were attracted by product trademarks at only a moderate level (45.5%) or a low level (22.0%). Most had some knowledge about the herbal products they purchased at a moderate level (65.0%). The level of product satisfaction was at a moderate level (47%) or else at a high level (41.5%).

Concerning market segments and market shares using the hierarchical cluster analysis technique, this was conducted and resulted in nine clusters of customers, as follows:

**Consumer group 1** consisted of female customers who were below the age of 19 up to 50 years of age. They were middle class with job success, operating personnel and civil servants. This group purchased Thai herbal products at an average level, specifically cosmetics, medicines and health supplements. This consumer group represented 73.8% of the Thai herbal products’ market in the southern part of Thailand.

**Consumer group 2** consisted of male customers who were 26-50 years old. They were skilled workers, operating personnel and civil servants. This group purchased Thai herbal products such as medicine, cosmetics and food at a low level. This consumer group represented 10.1 % of the Thai herbal products market in the southern part of Thailand.

**Consumer group 3** consisted of single female customers who were aged 19-40. They were in the middle class with job success. This group frequently purchased Thai herbal products, specifically cosmetics, at a high level when compared with their friends. This
consumer group represented 5.1% of the Thai herbal products market in the southern part of Thailand.

**Consumer group 4** consisted of customers who were aged over 51. They were middle class with job success and were skilled workers. This group purchased Thai herbal medicines at a moderate level. This consumer group represented 4.0% of the Thai herbal products market in the southern part of Thailand.

**Consumer group 5** consisted of female customers who were aged 41-50. They were middle class with job success. This group frequently purchased Thai herbal products at a high level and they had some knowledge about herbal products. This consumer group represented 2.5% of the Thai herbal products market in the southern part of Thailand.

**Consumer group 6** consisted of male customers aged 41-50. They were middle class with job success. This group frequently purchased Thai herbal cosmetics and medicine at a high level. They were satisfied with the products and interested in the trademarks of the herbal products. This consumer group represented 2.5% of the Thai herbal products market in the southern part of Thailand.

**Consumer group 7** consisted of Muslim males aged 19-25 years. They were middle class with job success, administrative personnel and civil servants. This group had never before purchased Thai herbal products. This consumer group represented 1.0% of the Thai herbal products market in the southern part of Thailand.

**Consumer group 8** consisted of males, aged 31-40 years. They were middle class with job success, operating personnel and civil servants. This group had never used Thai herbal products but they bought herbal medicines as gifts for others. This consumer group represented 0.5% of the Thai herbal products market in the southern part of Thailand.
Consumer group 9 consisted of male civil servants, aged 41-50 years. This group used Thai herbal cosmetics at a low level. This consumer group represented 0.5% of the Thai herbal products market in the southern part of Thailand.

6. Recommendations

Results from the market segmentation of Thai herbal products in the southern part of Thailand revealed that there were four market segments that should be targeted as leading market segments. The market for consumer group 1 was the biggest and the market value was at a moderate level, while the market value of consumer group 3 was at a good level, followed by consumer groups 5 and 6. Consumer group 1 could be a mass market, while consumer groups 3, 5 and 6 should be segment or niche markets. Businesses that have more advanced management and resources can handle all the four markets, while businesses or manufacturers with low management and resources, like OTOP, should select from groups of 3, 5 and 6. Interestingly, group 7 was found to be the only customer group that never used Thai herbal products, and group 8 included those who never used herbal cosmetics, medicine or health supplements which were the most famous products in the southern part of Thailand, although they bought herbal medicine as presents for others.

To obtain complete information in planning marketing strategies for Thai herbal products, further detailed studies into consumer behaviour in different market segments should be conducted, particularly in those market segments that were found to have the highest potential in marketing values. It was also recommended that there should be more studies into product placement for Thai herbal products.

7. Bibliography


Guidelines for Knowledge Dissemination about Garbage Elimination and Water Treatment through Folk Media under the Laem Pakbia Royal Project at Lablae District, Uttaradit Province

Radee Thanarak & Sirikran Yimprayat

Abstract

The study focuses on the means of successfully using folk wisdom and local cultural production as a means of disseminating information about garbage awareness and elimination. The steps taken to create and enact such a programme are described and the means of formulating guidelines that might be replicated elsewhere are provided.

Keywords: communication, cultural production, folk media, Uttaradit, waste treatment

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1. Introduction

Passing on technology based on research and environmental development from HM the King’s project in Uttaradit province was a motive for creating the Royal Project at Leam Pakbia, Ban Leam District, Petchaburi Province. For seven years, it has conducted a project aiming at the study and research of science on garbage
elimination and community water treatment using glass filtration and water plants as part of an overall system. This involves making models of garbage disposal systems so as to promote garbage separation and community water treatment by using lessons drawn from HM the King’s project to foster executive level environmental management at the local and community levels.

An important task in doing this has been dissemination of the body of knowledge gained from the project by using public relations techniques in different media such as through integrated communications relevant both to the content and to the target group. In 2009, for example, media and public relations activities that were conducted included: 1) dissemination of news and knowledge through local radio broadcasts, brochures, road shows and websites; 2) local road shows and plays on ‘the easy way to eliminate garbage by our own hands’ to educate the public through performance (Thanarak, 2009).

![Figure 1: Dramatic Production Illustrating “The Easy Way to Eliminate Garbage by Our Own Hands;” source: Authors](image)

These public relations activities have reached the community level to a certain extent. Experts in communications for development have
tried to use local media as a means of knowledge dissemination. These activities have aimed to incorporate all kinds of local life and culture to help villagers understand the purpose of the shows. Rattikarnchalakron (1994:13) conducted a study to identify all the different types of equipment used which have played important roles in various aspects of development, such as the political, economic, social, artistic, cultural and environmental and used them in seminars and training sessions concerning virtue, morale, values and interpersonal behaviour.

In the context of using folk media to convey information at the community level, the researchers were interested in the guidelines concerning knowledge dissemination in the area of garbage elimination and water treatment from HM the King’s project at Laem-Pak-Bia through the use of folk media. This study took place in Lablae District in Uttaradit and was a pilot project aimed at giving students a chance to participate through integrating their course of study with the new information and folk media aimed at surveying and collecting folk media productions in Lablae District, as well as seeking knowledge concerning garbage elimination and water treatment.

2. Research Methodology and Procedure

This study involved participation action research (PAR) which mixed both quantitative and qualitative research methods and the following means of data collection.

The first step involved surveying and collecting data about folk media forms in Lablae District, Uttaradit.

The researchers and assistants travelled to Lablae and its sub-districts to interview various people and record basic information about the folk media found. Interviews were constructed to be informal in nature, although interviewing guidelines were prepared.
Data collected yielded five folk media categories which were determined by listening, seeing, listening and seeing, tasting and discernment.

The second step of the process was to use the information gathered about the folk media to create a model that will effectively transmit information about garbage elimination and water treatment. The first part of this process involved taking the collected data and employing specific random sampling to select those folk media that have actively involved descendants. As a result, the original folk media were divided into three groups:

- the long drum group located at group 2, Toong-yang sub-district of Lablae district in Uttaradit.

- the ‘e-saew- singer groups at Pailom sub-district of Lablae district in Uttaradit.

- local dancing with natural dyes in Chaichoompon sub-district, Lablae district in Uttaradit.

After this was completed, a focus group was held between the research team and possessors of local wisdom from the three groups identified above and also students. The subject for discussion was the body of knowledge contained in the handbook of technology created by HM the King’s project and aimed at the northern region. It was hoped to create a consensus of opinion about knowledge which could be applied to all relevant local groups.

The research team worked with people in the three local wisdom groups to find ways of merging original folk media forms with the content aimed at garbage elimination.

The third phase of the research involved setting up the stage for performance of original media display using lower secondary level student groups to test the developed model and satisfaction with this
performance was assessed by questionnaire. The performance receiving the highest marks was selected for more intensive further development so that it would more truly embody the local wisdom.

The fourth step involved another focus group with all relevant stakeholders – researchers, students, local community wisdom experts and garbage and water experts with a view to understanding the means by which an effective model of information dissemination could be created.

Qualitative data analysis was conducted by using content analysis involving basic data on folk media production in Lablae district and also data analysis involving triangulation of existing data drawn from in-depth interviews and focus groups. Quantitative data analysis involved the production of descriptive statistics to interrogate the data collected.

3. Findings

The research results are divided into two parts, as follows.

3.1. The Results of the Folk Media Survey at Lablae District, Uttaradit

The study revealed that the folk media of nine sub districts in Lab-Lae, Uttaradit, comprised 69 types, both original and applied from other areas, which have been divided into five categories:

1. Listening: Dan-Mae-Kam-Man legendary songs, Chang-Moop history, Bung-Mai legends, Ban-Cham-Pak-Nam legends, Ban-Ton-Kam legends, Lab-Lae district history, Lab-Lae legends, folkloric songs, Thai orchestra, brass band;
2. Seeing: cloth weaving, handicrafts, chicken coops, bamboo baskets, bamboo fish containers, bamboo fishing traps, tong-kong brooms, fish net sewing, cooking kilns, ram pan mats, cobweb flags;

3. Visualizing: cloth weaving, snake poison remedy magic, Buddhist dhamma preaching, local wisdom (herbal goods production), natural colour dyeing, spirit mediums, local plays, pot-hitting blindfold, pebble picking, item-hiding, saba playing, ree-ree-kao-sarn playing, running, coconut shell walking, eating competition, replica Buddha image cremation, Buddhist monks chanting of parents’ kindness, magic-making doctor, front-house effigy, fruit chanting, under the teak church crawling, long-drum dancing, e-saew songs, villager merit waking and natural dyeing local song singing;

4. Tasting or smelling: dry-salt rice flour, vegetable-wrapped rice flour, crisp rice cakes, typical Thai omelettes, Thai caramel with sesame, palm fruit cake, rice noodles, dried rice noodles, sticky rice in bamboo, rice flour in sugar with cream, pickled vegetables, fried chopped coconut mixed with caramel, onions, scallions and preserved durian;


3.2. Guidelines on Knowledge Dissemination on Garbage Elimination and Water Treatment Relevant to HM the King’s Project at Laem Pakbia through Folk Media

These research findings are divided into five different phases, as follows.

In the first phase, the research team selected visualization as the means of further development of folk media items because this
approach enabled both sound and action to be used to embody the lessons about water and garbage treatment desired. Three specific areas for further development were identified: applied folk songs of the pleng e-saew style conducted by teacher Soontorn Tangmangme at Pailom sub-district, the folk dance on natural dyeing performance led by teacher Somchai Bongsrichai and Aunt Srinuan Muagthong at Chaichompon sub-district and, finally, the Nokkamin long-drum performance of teacher Sornglin Poompon at Toongyang sub-district.

After this, the researcher and assistants, including students majoring in public relations and media production, were divided into groups so as to learn from each of the performances. A consensus of opinions was achieved. This led to the creation of guidelines for content conveyance in the specified area and this was divided into three steps. The first step involved fostering a mutual learning process among relevant stakeholders. The second step involved the integration of the main content with the folk media performances. This was achieved through finding suitable terms for garbage identification and elimination by using a natural form of methodology. The third step was to learn through mutual performance. The students were tutored by the teachers in the three different techniques and received three weeks’ training. After this, the students had become fluent in the different performances required.

3.3. Research Findings of the Second Phase

The stage was set for the folk media performances and the satisfaction with these was measured by the means of questionnaires. The results of this are as follows. The audience comprised 99 people, of whom 79 (79.8%) were women and 20 (20.2%) men. The questionnaire was used to check spectators’ satisfaction and the survey revealed that all items about garbage elimination were graded high by the audience with understanding at an average level of 4.45 (maximum of 5.00). Learning about wet/dry/dangerous garbage received the highest score of 4.53. In the case of application, satisfaction levels averaged 4.44.
The highest score (4.47) was recorded for everyday garbage separation. For the performance itself, an average score of 4.43 was recorded, while the pleang e-saew Natural Method of Garbage Elimination received 4.41 and the performance of Long Drum Garbage Recycling received the same score. The Folk Dance for Natural Garbage Elimination received 4.35. Overall, management of the folk performances received a score of 4.30 and the atmosphere of performances received 4.38.

In terms of domain analysis, knowledge and understanding about garbage elimination received 4.45, the application of knowledge received 4.44, learning the content of the performance received 4.43 and the lowest score, 4.30, was received for overall management of the performance.

Among the spectators, 33 (33.3%) were interested in becoming a young leader in disseminating knowledge on garbage elimination water treatment, while the remaining 66 spectators (66.7%) were not interested. This led to the selection of one performance mode for further intensive development. The researchers and students made the cooperative decision to select the pleang e-saew Natural Garbage Elimination performance for further development. This was because more content was embedded in the performance and it was easier for the audience to remember. The words lent themselves well to various kinds of physical movement and the performance itself was considered to offer more opportunities for fun. The researchers and local experts studied the issue further together and the garbage elimination information was reduced to single content pieces which were individually itemized for ranking in order. The relevant content words were converted to rhyming terms to make them easier to remember – ‘e-saew, tengam, ramkiew and choi.’ Once this had been established, the rehearsals took place and were video-recorded so that the performance could be played back for all stakeholders to watch and consider.
The final phase involved the formulation of recommendations and guidelines for future practice based on the research conducted.

In terms of the capability of using original folk media to convey information, the focus groups and other research activities indicated that there were both weak and strong points. The strong points were that it integrated folk media and information that was difficult to understand in a way that made it easier to comprehend and that the approach could be applied easily and quickly. Among the weak points were that the performance was too long so the audience lost interest, the model was not concise and was not always clear in covering the main points, while it was evident that the actors were not professional.

The following factors were considered very important for communication and to persuade the audience to listen and change their behaviour were: first, the actors, second, the mode of performance, third, the style of performance, fourth, the means of conveying the message and finally the duration of the performance.

There were some problems and obstacles in using folk media as tools to convey knowledge. The content should not be too difficult and rewriting and planning had to be carefully considered. Secondly, the target group should be carefully analysed while designing the content of the media.

3.4. Guidelines for Formulating a Body of Knowledge for Dissemination via Folk Media

The research provided some guidelines for the formulation of a body of knowledge for dissemination via folk media. First, the purpose of the presentation should be carefully considered when planning the performance. The performance might be to promote knowledge, for motivation or encouraging a certain attitude. This is important because different types of folk media are more suitable for different purposes. For example, if a folk song approach is used, then this would be
successful up to a certain point but there is a limit to what the acting might achieve. However, that approach might be successful in creating a positive attitude towards the natural approach to garbage elimination which might then change behaviour.

Second, it is necessary to analyse all important stakeholders involved in the process. This includes community leaders, groups of people who cause garbage, garbage elimination groups and agricultural groups involved with using chemical fertilizers and waste water. These groups should be analysed in-depth with respect to demographic factors such as gender, age, education, economic status, taste and values. Attention should be given to ranking the groups in order of importance.

The content employed should be targeted to the specific location, since folk customs vary from place to place.

For each project, content should be prepared separately and completely. For example, content should be ranked in importance based on the individual audience. This might have the causes of garbage first, the classification of garbage second and the methodology for eliminating garbage third. When using the concrete box, this should be covered in comprehensive detail and the performance should add an emotional element to the explanation. The performance should have more additional aids to help people to understand and to be persuaded. The second phase then covers the more advanced form of technology that includes applied concrete, ready-made concrete box and plastic basket and earth covering technology.

Additional activities should be developed to take place around the performance and to complement it. These might include other types of performance, competitions and demonstrations that enhance the ability of people to understand complex issues. In particular, it is necessary to devote more efforts to improving the dialogue, both the
lyrics of the song and spoken dialogue, to provide better explanations of the issues it is wanted to convey.

The location of the performance should also be considered and one suitable place would be a community centre, when one is available. After the event has taken place, there should be some measurement of the impact of the performance, in terms of enjoyment of the performance, amount of information conveyed, persuasive capability and the impact on behaviour in the future. This measurement should be integrated into a longer-term campaign in which the information is repeated and incorporated into other media.

These guidelines can be used to create an S-M-C-R model to represent the model required (see Figure 1 below).

4. Discussion

Folk media production varies from locality to locality. Lablae district has nine sub-districts and some of these have their own distinct forms: for example, Chaichoompon sub-district has an original folk dance style with cloth dyeing which has been handed down through the generations, although few people know about it these days. Consequently, even putting knowledge about garbage elimination into the song did not help people to enjoy the performance. By contrast, the nok-ka-min long drum performance from Tungyang village and the adapted folk songs which combined boat songs, ad libbed songs and rice harvesting songs from the central Thailand region were enthusiastically received and popular among villages in Pailom sub-district. Adding some garbage elimination content into this song and that was very successful.
Figure 1: S-M-C-R Model of Information Dissemination; source: Original Research
This follows the ideas of Jenpob Jobkrabucenwan (1981:45-6) who argued for using folk media seriously since the time that Marshall Pibun Piboonsongkra was Prime Minister. He used the Thai Likay folk opera as a means to fight against communism. There were as many as 400 Likay actors at that time and the style was very popular among local Thai people and it had been used to inform people about government messages concerning communism with some success. This strategy remains in use until the present day. The state has employed fiddle songs in the North, luk tung folk singers in the Northeast, Likay in the central region and improved song and Menorah shadow and puppet drama in the South of Thailand.

The researchers believe that folk media are suitable means of promoting information about garbage elimination. Integrating knowledge into folk media was successfully achieved and local people were receptive to the approach. This confirms the study of Kaewtip et al. (2006), which showed that folk media could be used to disseminate knowledge and help in environmental development. That study used the Tob-pap dance and the Sabad-chai drumming patterns to encourage people to take exercise for health purposes. Other forms of folk media were employed to merge culture and physical exercise. This had the additional advantage of improving cooperation and mutual communication among people at the community level. This is an approach that has been used elsewhere, for example in Ghana, where it has been used in the fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS. That effort involved dancing, singing, drumming and story-telling. It worked well and led to changes in behaviour (Panford, 2001). In China, Mao Zedong used folk media such as singing to motivate people to accept and embrace the revolution (Howard, 1987:7). Consequently, it may be concluded that folk media can be accepted as a suitable means of conveying information and bringing about change.

In the current project, all steps of integrated communication had to be used. The research used participatory methodology, since it started with the cooperative exploration of existing local folk media. It was
based on open discussions of all aspects of the development process by scholars, local people, experts, researchers and students. The most effective means of doing this was outlined by Kaewtip, 2000:53-8). First, set the level of communication goals, generally in three levels: the message receiver or user in the form of sender or producer within policy and setting; the method of two-way communication allowing more freedom of response and participation than would otherwise be the case; the origin of the message. In this community setting, did the people get the chance to be a message sender? Comparing villagers with professional media and state personnel, what was the ratio of incidence of message sending? Did the content of a message reflect the reality of the community? It may be assumed that traditional communication modes will be more convenient for villagers than newer modes with which they are not familiar. Irrespective of how the community participated, feedback remains very important for participatory communications. Guidelines for the primary communicative process should include both the senders of messages and their recipients. Educational sector institutions such as Uttaradit Rajabhat University and target school groups, together with the state sector, activists and others should all join the campaign in order to maximize the likelihood of success of the actual dissemination.

The research process indicated the way that the guidelines should be produced. This process coincides with Berrigan (1972), who observed that community media had to be available to the public at all times and that people could take various roles in media communications at different times. Thai scholars have furthered these insights and this has been additionally built upon in this study. From what has been said. Kaewtip (2000:62-4) suggested that ensuring the successful use of community media relied on: 1) political back up; 2) the right idea of ‘development’ should provide chances of continuation of converse exchange; 3) flexibility was a must; 4) local people should support the programme; 5) staff had to be well-trained for the task; 6) emancipator system should have high capability; 7) appropriate technology should be available and 8) communications should continue.
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Human Resource Management of Small-sized Independent Hotels: A Case Study of Cha-am Beach, Phetchaburi, Thailand

Rosamarin Arunothaipipat

Abstract

Cha-am Beach is a popular resort in Thailand that caters primarily for domestic travellers. Most accommodation providers in the area take the form of small or medium-sized hotels and, as such, face challenges relating to service quality levels. One important aspect of providing high quality service in the hotel sector is the human resource management (HRM) system employed in the hotels concerned. This study uses in-depth qualitative and quantitative interviews to investigate the nature of HRM in the small hotel sector in Cha-am Beach region. Analysis of the interviews has provided a number of recommendations which have been made as a means of improving the viability and sustainability of the hotels involved.

Keywords: hotels, human resource management, SMEs, Thailand

1. Introduction

Cha-am Beach is situated in the west of the Gulf of Thailand, in Phetchaburi province. It is about 160 km away from Bangkok. It is one of the most famous beaches in Thailand because of its proximity to Bangkok, its level of personal safe, absence of nightlife and the provision of low-cost accommodation and other tourism services. For
these reasons, it is popular among local people and in the domestic conference market.

Accommodation for visitors to Cha-am Beach is mostly provided by small family businesses. Most business owners have limited management knowledge and investment capital and so find it difficult to develop their products and services and this has led to some risk. According to the Ministry of Tourism and Sport’s statistical survey (2011), the number of accommodation providers in Cha-am decreased from 135 in 2008 to 125 in 2009 and to 114 in 2010. The main competitors that small-scale hotels have are medium and large hotels which are supported by large amounts of capital and may be owned by Thai or international owners and investors, who have realized the beach’s tourism potential. The beach connects to the city of Hua Hin and, recently, land in Hua Hin has become very expensive and faces so much demand that business expansion is almost impossible there. Many of the investors that perceived business opportunities in Cha-am have bought land or acquired small-scale hotels that are now facing financial instability. Consequently, small-scale hotels will face difficulties if they do not adjust themselves to the changing environment.

The hotel industry is a service industry and so it relies to a considerable extent on human labour; that is, its service quality is directly related to its staff quality. Large-scale hotels have more advantage in human resource (HR) recruitment and development because the higher level of remuneration and welfare that they can offer makes them the preferred choice for highly capable staff. In addition, chain hotels have standard training development systems, which means they can offer superior service quality. Nonetheless, although small-scale hotels are faced with unfavourable conditions, they have opportunities to develop themselves using their strengths as small organizations with high levels of flexibility. They should focus on improving customer satisfaction and the quality of service through a process of systematic HR management.
This paper reports on the attempt to study HR management systems in place in small hotels serving the Cha Am beach area with the objective of assisting in the formulation of guidelines for developing more efficient and effective systems in line with the business environment that can contribute to sustainable growth with the involvement of local educational institutions. Consequently, it is possible to state the research objectives of this study as follows:

1. To study the current business situations of small independent hotels in Cha-am district of Phetchaburi province.

2. To study the HR management processes of small independent hotels in Cha-am district of Phetchaburi province.

3. To study HR management-related issues in small independent hotels in Cha-am district of Phetchaburi province.

In this paper, a small hotel is defined as one which does not have more than 100 guest rooms.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Small Hotels and Service Levels

There are no fixed definitions for ‘small hotel’ in the tourism literature. Some of the approaches that have been used to define them include the following:

1) Number of guest rooms – not over 100 (Henkins, cited in Poonsilp, 2004; Taki, 2006; Rattanaveerakul, 2008; Hotel Industry Learning Hub, 2010) or 1-150 guest rooms (Ismail, 2002);

2) Number of staff – 10-99 (Lee-Ross, 1999), 11-24 (Hospitality Training Foundation, cited in Lee-Ross, 1999), not over 50 (Nolan, 2002), not over 100 (Poonsilp, 2004);
3) *Investment capital* - which varies according to each region’s and country’s economy. For example, in Thailand, it is set as not more than 50 million baht, excluding the value of the land (OSMEP, 2000);

4) *Name* – inn, guest house and lodge, which refer to small scale accommodation. In Thailand, names that may also be used include Baan, Villa and Bungalow;

5) *Operations* – Most academics agree that small accommodation facilities are generally family businesses with independent management, in which the owners are involved in the tasks of daily management and operations control. In addition, small hotels’ investments and sales are restricted in scope (Medlik & Ingram, 2004).

There is a variety of hotels in term of sizes and characteristics and, consequently, the classification requires different criteria. Ismail (2002) has proposed criteria for classifying hotels and service levels (Service Level) as either full service or limited service. A full service establishment fulfills all the needs and requirements of guests staying at the venue and can aspire to offer an unlimited range of services to meet guests’ needs. By contrast, limited service establishments do not offer a full range of services and do not aim to meet all of the guests’ needs. Most limited-service hotels offer low room rates.

Service levels can also be classified into five sub-levels (Ismail, 2002), which are: a budget hotel is one in which the average room rates do not exceed 11% of the highest rates in the market; an economy hotel is one in which the average room rates do not exceed 22% of the highest rates in the market; a mid-price hotel is one in which the average room rates do not exceed 44% of the highest rates in the market; an upscale hotel is one in which the average room rates do not exceed 66% of the highest rates in the market and a luxury hotel is one in which the average room rates do not exceed 88% of the highest rates in the market. The service level that a hotel offers has a
relationship with operational costs, which affect room rates, but there may be other relevant factors, such as the prices of land, labour rates and other operating costs.

Smith Travel Research (2010) has established guidelines for classifying hotel service levels in accordance with the room rates in the USA, which is as follows:

1. **Budget hotel** – a hotel in which the average room rates are less than 20% of the highest rates in the market;

2. **Economy hotel** – a hotel in which the average room rates are not over 40% of the highest rates in the market;

3. **Mid-price hotel** – a hotel in which the average room rates are not over 70% of the highest rates in the market;

4. **Upscale hotel** – a hotel in which the average room rates are over 85% of the highest rates in the market;

5. **Luxury hotel** – a hotel in which the average room rates are 85-100% of the highest rates in the market.

### 2.2. HR Management in Small Hotels

HR management (HRM) is an operational process comprising human resource planning, staff recruitment and selection, staff training and development, staff motivation and retention. The organization can benefit from developing more valuable staff, which can lead to organizational success, while the staff will experience higher levels of satisfaction in that their better performance can be rewarded by better pay and conditions and progress along their career tracks. HRM in a small business can be a very important task leading to success, especially in the service sector, which relies to a significant extent on human labour. A business’s survival may depend on its ability to recruit efficient, qualified people while providing them with
incentives so that they work at full capacity to maximize the business’s profits.

3. Methodology

This study used both quantitative and qualitative research methods and the data collection process can be divided into two phases:

Phase 1: Data collection took place through a questionnaire with the intention of studying the current situations of small independent hotels – in this case, a sample of 77 hotels was drawn and they were selected through a simple random sampling technique; the data analysis was conducted by employing descriptive statistics.

Phase 2: Data collection took place through in-depth interviews and non-participatory observation to study HRM processes and HRM-related issues – the key informants were hotel owners or HR managers. The data analysed in Phase 1 were used to classify the hotels according to room rates, with categories for budget hotels, economy hotels, mid-price hotels, upscale hotels and luxury hotels. The samples were selected for interviewing by a snowball sampling technique and the data were analysed using a content analysis technique.

4. Research Results

4.1. The Current Situation of Small Independent Hotels in Cha-am District, Phetchaburi Province

All the hotels studied were independent hotels which were not depending on networks either in Thailand or overseas. Overall, 77.9% were operated by their owners and 22.1% were operated by experienced people employed by the hotel owner. Most of the hotels (93.5%) had 60 or fewer rooms. Most hotels were economy hotels
offering rooms costing 501-1,000 baht (38.9%) or budget hotels offering rooms costing less than 500 baht (37.7%).

Most of the tourists staying in the hotels were Thai (94.8%) and the majority were involved in leisure activities (85.7%) and staying for just one night (62.3%).

The principal selling points of the hotels surveyed were low prices (45.5%), convenient transportation (40.3%) and the friendliness of the staff (24.7%) (multiple answers were permitted).

Most of the hotels employed between 1-20 staff members (84.4%) and most staff members were 21-30 years old (55.8%), with high school certificates as highest level of education (50.6%). They were predominantly local residents (93.5%) and had been in their position for 1-2 years (31.1%). Most of the hotels had no HR departments and it was the hotel owners who were in charge of HRM (93.5%).

4.2. HRM Processes

4.2.1. HR Planning

Most of the hotel owners had inadequate knowledge and understanding of HR planning, especially in budget, economy, mid-price and upscale hotels, and they lacked the ability to conduct work analysis and manpower planning. They did not set staff duties clearly and, as a result, the staff had to rotate their jobs. Owners did closely supervise the performance of employees. The hotels that had HR Department were luxury hotels, in which there were HR staff and systematic HR planning took place.

4.2.2. Staff Recruitment and Selection

Most hotel owners recruited and selected staff from external sources by word of mouth from existing staff members and through the local media. The owners interviewed candidates personally.
4.2.3. Staff Training and Development

Most of the hotel owners did not think staff training was necessary as they thought it wasted money and was not beneficial to their business. They also believed that if their staff had higher levels of capacity, then they more likely to be attracted to and by other hotels. They felt that training provided by the government sector did not meet their needs and, besides, training caused the staff to be absent from work. Older staff members were assigned to train newer ones with a focus on instilling multiple skills so that the new staff could substitute for their co-workers when necessary.

4.2.4. Staff Motivation

Most of the hotels were family business which operated a patriarchal management style. Although the hotel staff received low salaries, they received more benefits and welfare than stipulated by law. The hotel owners looked after their staff as if they were members of the same family, which resulted in apparently good relationships between both parties. As for performance evaluation, hotel owners used informal evaluation through measures such as observation and obtaining information from supervisors. Concerning staff rewards, these were in the form of money.

4.2.5. Staff Retention

The most common method used for retaining staff was informal communication, because of the small number of staff involved and the small size of the organizations concerned. When the staff had problems at work, they could communicate with the hotel owner or their supervisor directly. The relationships between the staff and their supervisors or hotel owners were generally good. There were lower turnover rates among staff with longer working years at the hotels surveyed.
In general, HR-related problems in the small independent hotels were related to the quality of staff, staff training and development, discipline, unattractive salaries and benefits and the comparatively high level of turnover of younger staff members.

5. Recommendations

5.1. HRM Recommendations

The business of small independent hotels cannot be successful without an efficient HRM system. As has been seen, hotel owners play the most important role in establishing such systems and so they should be the starting point of changes. Following are recommendations for hotel owners in setting up HRM systems on a rational basis:

First, small hotel owners should adjust their opinions that an investment in HRM is unproductive and realize that it can lead to business sustainability, since staff members are the most valuable resource that a service sector firm has. The small hotel does not need a substantial HRM system as a large hotel would do but there is a requirement to take care with staff selection and training to ensure that quality standards are maintained.

Second, a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) should be formulated for each business which includes working policies and procedures for staff members in each department, which will again help to define and maintain quality standards. Clear design of internal work processes can improve performance and, when a problem about service quality occurs, it can help in detecting the cause of the problem. HR planning should involve analysis of HR needs, capacity of existing staff members and preparation of job descriptions to define staff duties and qualifications and help provide transparent guidelines for staff selection and recruitment. Properly qualified and skilled employees should be remunerated properly, since low salaries and benefits will not attract qualified staff and this may lead to low-quality service
provision and, eventually, a decrease in customers and revenue. Great importance should be attached to staff training and development with respect to orientation, SOP, staff development and the use of external training to develop technical capacity and enable better career achievements. In general, it is better when staff members are involved in making these decisions because they are the ones who are in closest contact with customers and other important stakeholders and, therefore, they are people who have the best information on the needs of stakeholders and any gaps in existing service levels. This approach will boost staff morale as well, since people will feel empowered and valued and can have the effect of reducing the workload on the manager; however, it is still necessary for the hotel management to make it clear where the ultimate authority lies.

In some cases, the hotel manager would benefit from hiring a specific HR manager, in cases in which there are problems related to staff morale, high turnover or poor service provision, for example. Indeed, hotel owners should in general improve their knowledge about contemporary management practices and should expect to incorporate relevant management tools and technology in their own enterprises. Currently, there are various government and private agencies that provide training courses for small business owners, such as the Office of Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion, the Thai Hotels Association, the Thai Hotel and Hospitality Management Association and educational institutions. Small hotel owners should form a network with educational institutions in Phetchaburi and nearby provinces to serve as a source for recruiting permanent and temporary staff. They should also form a network of small hotel operators to allow them to share information, compare the results of operations and develop HR systems together.

5.2. General Management Recommendations

The results of the study on HRM in small independent hotels in Cha-am also revealed other problematic issues that the businesses face,
which include problems with marketing management, including identifying target markets, designing and developing products and services, setting pricing and using promotional channels. All of these issues can have an impact on company survival and on HRM directly and indirectly. Other suggestions are as follows:

1. Small independent hotels should do research on the tourist market to study tourists’ behaviour, since there is a tendency for tourists to be more individualistic and to seek new experiences. They should focus on understanding niche markets, the design of products and services that meet market demand and the development of unique products and services which can attract premium prices.

2. They should focus on the quality standards of their products and services, such as the cleanliness and hygiene of guest rooms and restaurants, safety within the hotel, aesthetics of physical design and the appropriateness of equipment provided in the hotel.

3. They should set room rates in line with operating costs and the quality of their products and services. To be able to survive in a sustainable fashion, they need to focus on improving quality rather than just cutting prices.

4. They should develop marketing channels via e-commerce in order to disseminate hotel information to potential customers. E-commerce can be used with hotels of all levels and this will help expand both domestic and international tourist markets.

5. They should form a marketing alliance. For example, they can create a brand for small-sized hotels in Cha-am and set minimum standards for member hotels and organize marketing activities together. Apart from having a strong network, this can enable them to save money.
5.3. The Roles of Educational Institutions in Developing Small Hotels

There are several ways in which local educational institutions can assist in developing small hotels to become more viable and sustainable businesses. For example, they can serve as a source of new employees by introducing small hotels to new graduates and providing the hotels with student trainees, temporary or part-time staff and internees. They can also help with networking and cooperating with relevant agencies and organizations, such as the Thai Hotels Association, Phetchaburi Hotels Association, Phetchaburi Department of Skills Development and the Tourism Authority of Thailand, Phetchaburi Office to provide small hotels with free or low-cost training.

They can also provide advice to small hotels on improving their management and marketing systems, e.g. accounting and finance for entrepreneurs, cost control, energy saving and environmental conservation, as well as new marketing approaches. Finally, they might help to conduct research to develop small hotels in terms of management to reduce operations costs, the development of information technology in small hotels and the establishment of quality standards there.

6. References


A Study of Factors Influencing Lubricant Purchases by Logistics, Mining and Construction Business Entrepreneurs in the Three Lower-North Thai Provinces of Uttaradit, Pitsanulok and Sukhothai

Manee Choo-Iead & Wattana Keawpoolpakorn

Abstract

This paper explores consumer decision-making behaviour a sample of entrepreneurs in the logistics, mining and road construction industries in the lower north of Thailand when it comes to engine lubricants. A quantitative survey of 150 respondents provides results that are used to formulate recommendations and to relate to similar marketing studies in Thailand.

Keywords: customer behaviour, lubricants, Uttaradit, Thailand

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1. Introduction

One of the principal services that government must provide is to provide public utilities such as transportation infrastructure and logistics for the movement of people and goods. This is a service that provides benefits for agriculture, mining and road construction itself. These businesses are all involved with engines and machines and these have to be kept in efficient order; one factor leading to
efficiency of this sort is lubrication. All engines need to be lubricated with motor oil, engine oil or lubricating oil, which is the main factor for reducing friction, prolonging the engine’s life and saving fuel.

Truck registration records consulted at the end of December 2008 revealed that there was a total of 2,350,482 registered trucks, which had increased by 375,731 (16%) on the previous year (Statistics Department, Department of Land Transportation, 2010).

A lubricant is a liquid substance for lubricating engines and machines for the purpose of reducing frictions and preventing the erosion of various metal parts. Lubricants are produced by mixing the base oil, which may be mineral or synthetic, with selected additives for additional functionality.

The researchers are interested in factors influencing lubricant purchasing behaviour in the logistics, mining and road construction businesses in the three lower-north provinces of Thailand – Uttaradit, Pitsanulok and Sukhothai. The research results may be used to produce guidelines for production and marketing plans that will be beneficial to lubricant producers and distributors.

2. Research Objectives

The research objectives of this study may be stated as follows:

1. To understand are the influencing factors for purchasing lubricants by entrepreneurs in logistics, mining and road construction businesses in the three lower-north provinces of Thailand, Uttaradit, Pitsanulok and Sukhothai.

2. To use the research data in product development and creating a strategic marketing plan for producers and distributors.
3. Literature Review

3.1. Decision-Making

Simon (1960) observed that making a decision is a process of intelligent activity or finding the opportunity to make a decision which means searching for information, searching for and distinguishing between possible alternatives depending on what is practical. This means choosing from existing alternatives that are practical and suitable. Chamnong (2010) said decision-making is unavoidable in management and, for managing, decision-making is the core of all operations, which will lead to objectives and tools that can be used for consideration. Personal reasons, emotions and preferences are all factors in the decision-making process.

A decision-making process has several steps:

1. Problem Identification: a purchasing process will occur when buyers realize they have a problem (i.e. need to purchase).

2. Information Search: at this stage, the customer will search information for making a decision, first the individual will search for internal information in order to evaluate alternatives and, if that is not enough, the individual will search for external information.

3. Evaluation of Information: the customer gathers available information and analyses it to determine which options are favoured.

4. Selection of Alternative: after evaluation has been undertaken, the evaluator will know the advantages and disadvantage of different options and will select the best alternative for solving the problem, using experience as an additional input.

5. Post-Purchase Evaluation: this is the last process, after purchase, the customer will use the purchased product while evaluating it. The
decision-making process is a continuous process, it does not end at purchasing.

3.2. Factors Influencing Decision-Making

Pongsakornsilpa (2004:69-71) described the Stimulus-Response (S-R) Theory, which considers consumer behaviour through the concept of the black box. It begins with marketing stimuli aiming to provoke a response in the customer. Stimuli can be divided into two types

1. Marketing stimuli, including the marketing mix, such as product/service, price, place and promotion.

2. Other stimuli, including uncontrollable marketing factors such as economics, technology, law and politics and culture. Other stimuli are related with customers’ purchasing decisions such as what, where, when, how and how much.

Pongsakornsilpa (2004:12-15) described the marketing mix as being the controllable factors which companies use for satisfying the target market, including the product, price, place and promotion (4Ps), which can all be varied and controlled as part of the attempt to encourage the desired purchasing behaviour in customers.

Uthaisri (2003) studied marketing factors which had influenced the purchasing of lubricants for motorcycle users in Bangkok. The objectives were to study individual motorcycle users and the correlation between marketing mix variables and purchasing behaviour for lubricant purchase in Bangkok. This study used a survey of 400 questionnaires with stratified systematic sampling. The study found that most respondents were male, aged between 25–35 years old, employees of private companies and average monthly income below 10,000 baht. Influence factors are: 1) price and quality, always change within 3-4 months, change lubricants at the petrol station on weekdays, most of them purchased by themselves and always used the
same brand; 2) individual factors about sex, career, education and average income are related to the lubricant buying behaviour and 3) factors related to salesperson promotion and public relations were also relevant.

Charoenpruksachat (2007) studied the marketing mix influencing the purchasing behaviour of PTT Plc.’s lubricant for the marine business in Samut Prakarn, Samut Sakhon and Samut Songkram provinces. The study found that marketing mix factors which influence PTT’s lubricant purchasing are: 1) Product; samplers pay attention to the overall product at a high level, while a minor factor is the desire to preserve engine quality; 2) Price; customers pay attention to overall price at a high level, while a minor factor is the price of a specific lubricant; 3) Place; respondents paid attention to overall place at a low level, with a minor factor being whether the salesperson is contactable such as by phone call and 4) Promotion; people generally pay attention overall at a low level, with a minor factor being free product with high-volume purchase.

The problems involved with purchasing PTT’s lubricant are: 1) Product: such as low quality, unsuitability to the particular engines involved and no after-sales service, like technicians visiting and giving advice regularly; 2) Price; it was found that when compared to other brands PTT’s price is not cheaper and there was no advance notice when changing price; 3) Place: it was found that distributors are careless and cannot keep products for the proper period of time; 4) Promotion: it was found that distributors are careless and inconsistent about customer visits, no technicians visited and there was introduction to products. This gives rise to the conceptual framework (see Figure 1).
4. Methodology

4.1. Population and Sample

The population in this research consists of entrepreneurs in the logistics, mining and road construction businesses in the three lower-north provinces of Thailand, Uttaradit, Pitsanulok and Sukhothai. The sample in this research are entrepreneurs in the logistics, mining and road construction businesses in the same geographic areas. As this is a finite population, the Krejcie and Morgan Formula was applied to set the sample size which, with simple random sampling, was set at 150 responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneur’s basic information</td>
<td>Marketing Mix</td>
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<td>- Logistics</td>
<td>- Product</td>
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<td>- Mining</td>
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<td>- After sales service</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Friend’s recommendation</td>
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<td>- Etc.</td>
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Figure 1: Conceptual Framework; source: Original Research

4.2. Research Tools

A questionnaire was developed for this research and it consisted of three parts. The first part asked for personal and demographic
information, with both open and closed questions about sex, age, education level and status. The second part asked about factors that influenced purchasing factors for lubricants, including the marketing and other business factors such as after-sales services, payment terms and conditions and the economic situation in the research site. This required 30 questions which used 5-point Likert scales, with scores ranging from a low of 1 to a high of 5.

Part 3 involved mainly open questions soliciting advice about the marketing mix for the products and how purchasing may be positively influenced.

In addition, a focus group was convened to study the needs of entrepreneurs in the three industries studied with respect to lubricants.

Data analysis was conducted through the use of calculating descriptive statistics, including percentages, means and standard deviations.

5. Findings

The study found that the majority of respondents are male (90.8%), with the highest proportion aged between 46-50 years old (26.1%), followed by 51-55 years old (24.6%). For education level, Bachelor’s degree was the most common (39.4%), followed by high school/vocational certificate (33.1%); most respondents were entrepreneurs (74.6%)

In terms of purchasing decision factors, product: overall has low influential for purchasing at 3.17; the most influential factor is quality of product at 4.64 and high influential factors are brand name and popularity at 4.01; low influential factors are modern production technology at 3.25, new product with clear qualification at 3.18 and any brand in the market at 2.68; imported product, at 1.26, had no influence.
Price: overall, this had low influence for purchasing at 3.25; high influential factors are credit payment at 4.22 and giving discount if purchasing by cash at 3.51; low influential factors are discount for volume purchasing at 3.42 and low price high quality product at 3.16; market price, at 1.98, had no influence.

Place: overall, this had low influential for purchasing at 2.54; high influential factors are purchase recommended by distributors or salespersons at 3.93 and purchase from shops that have delivery service at 3.91; a low influential factor is purchase by themselves at petrol station or distributors at 2.57; direct purchase from lubricant producer company at 1.27 and online purchasing, at 1.15, had no influence.

Promotion: overall, this had high influence for purchasing at 3.53; high influential factors are following-up of salespersons about product and after-sales service at 3.93, advertising via variety channels at 3.68, event, booth exhibition and introduction about lubricants at 3.61; low influential factors are lucky draw for year-end overseas trip at 3.46, year-end collective purchase volume cash-bonus at 3.42 and side gift products at 3.08.

Other factors: overall, this had high influence for purchasing at 3.79; the most influential factor is 60-day term of payment at 4.54; high influential factors are good after-sales service at 4.13, recommendation from friends or acquaintances at 3.92, recommendation from distributors or shops or other entrepreneurs at 3.86, entrepreneur’s economic circumstances at 3.75 and free trial for product quality before purchasing at 3.52; a low influential factor is trying the new product at 2.80.

From the focus group of entrepreneurs of the logistics, mining and road construction business in the research site, the following was found.
Product: consumers need gluey translucent lubricants with high quality and efficiency in maintaining engine performance.

Price: consumers want reasonable prices for lubricant with good production and cost levels and people should be notified two months or more in advance of any change in price.

Place: consumers want convenience when purchasing lubricants, on-time delivery and free delivery.

Promotion: consumers want companies and distributors to provide information about new lubricant technology or any factor concerning the buying decision. Salespersons should visit to give advice and there is no need for discount or premium because these might cause higher prices in the end.

Other factors: consumers want to pay on 60-day credit term payment and would like to have salespeople follow up with advice and new information.

6. Conclusion

Conclusions which may be drawn from the research described above include the following.

The most influential purchasing factor of product is quality of product, which is related to the study of Charoenprueksachart (2007) concerning the marketing mix that influences lubricant buying-decisions for PTT products in the marine business in Samut Prakarn, Samut Sakhon and Samut Songkram provinces. In this study, it was found that consumers pay attention to maintaining the quality of the lubricant. It was also related to Rojsanyakul (2001), whose study of market structure and buying behaviour of vehicle lubricant oil found that consumers pay most attention to product quality. Finally, this was also related to the study of Pongsakornsilpa (2003:12-15), which
observed that products and product development businesses serve customers’ need for maximizing satisfaction.

The most influential purchasing factor for price is credit payment and low price for high quality, which is related to Pongsakornsilp (2003:12-15), which stated that the company should set affordable prices for customers. The aim of price setting is to obtain competitive advantage and the company can generate profits while being affordable for customers. This is also related to Charoenprueksachart (2007), who found that the first priority of respondents is price.

Highly influential purchasing factors of place are purchase from distributors and salespersons and from shops that have delivery service. This is related to Charoenprueksachart (2007), who observed that the highest priority is convenience in communications with salespersons and also related to Pongsakornsilpa (2003), who stated that distribution should help customers by delivering their products and services on time.

High influential purchasing factors of promotion are follow-up visits by salespersons and advertising via varied channels, which is related to Pongsakornsilp (2003), who emphasized the role of advertising and public relations in affecting decision-making behaviour. This is also related to Uthaisri (2003), who noted that sales promotions and public relations are correlated with motor cycle lubricant oil buying behaviour in Bangkok.

Consequently, producer companies or distributors should consider the quality of lubricants as entrepreneurs want gluey, translucent, 100% synthetic lubricant, which has efficiency in maintaining engine performance, a reasonable price for the quality, distribution through convenience shops and distributors, salespersons should visit and follow up and also should offer 60-day payment credit terms.
7. Recommendations

Further research should be conducted to understand better the issues that affect entrepreneurs in the study area and to help them deal with threats by making better business plans. This research should also extend to tourism, since Uttaradit and neighbouring provinces has scope for development of its tourism business but this has mot yet been properly explored.

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A Study of Development Strategies for OTOP in Chiang Rai

Nongnout Kanthachai

Abstract

The One Tambon One Product (OTOP) scheme was introduced by the Thai government as a means of encouraging local communities to produce local specialities for national and international markets. The project has been successful for many communities but, as might be expected, not every instance has been successful because local people lack many skills and forms of capacity necessary to create a successful business and, in any case, traditional products are not always competitive in the contemporary market. This paper reports on a quantitative research study conducted in Chiang Rai province aimed at identifying marketing, operational and managerial issues constraining the success of certain OTOP projects and uses the research to propose solutions and recommendations to principal stakeholders.

Keywords: government, marketing, OTOP, Thailand

Author: Nongnout Kanthachai is Associate Professor at the Faculty of Management Sciences, Chiang Rai Rajabhat University, Thailand

1. Introduction

After the Asian financial crisis of 1997, the economies of affected countries slumped dramatically and this contributed to the growth of poverty throughout the region, including Thailand. The slowdown occurred in both industry and agriculture. Industry, in particular, experienced a rapid decline in the manufacturing of goods and a number of factories had to terminate their operations. Production also
decreased in the agricultural sector and the reduction in exports was significant. Affected by the economic downturn, Thai people began to suffer even more from problems of poverty and economic and income inequality. The Thai government has resolved to eradicate these twin problems of poverty and inequality and this was one of the principal factors behind the creation of the One Tambon One Product (OTOP) scheme, which incorporates local knowledge and wisdom into production at the community level. This will enable communities to produce for sale items with which they have been associated for a long period.

OTOP projects have, nevertheless, run across some problems in terms of the manufacturing process. This involves the high-cost of production which is translated into high prices for consumers and lack of competitiveness for some OTOP products. The market for OTOP items is also still quite limited in size and mainly includes low to moderate income households. Moreover, unclear responsibilities and distribution issues have led to some redundant operations. Efforts are wasted through repetition of activities when no one takes responsibility for overall management. Additional problems include the poor bookkeeping and accounting procedures, which are not up to international standard, as well as issues involved with obtaining funding from providers and administrators.

It will be evident from these problems that there is a need to study the development of OTOP projects for both manufacturers and traders. The results from such a study may be put to practical use by people involved in the businesses concerned. They will be able to help OTOP communities to develop their own capacities and find it easier to survive and also to spur business growth so that it is not limited but may become globalized in nature. These are the reasons that have inspired the current study, which is a study of development strategies for OTOP projects in Chiang Rai, focusing on consumer behaviour and satisfaction, as well as government policy so as to formulate new guidelines for effective future OTOP development in Chiang Rai.
2. Objectives

The objectives of this project may be stated as follows:

1. To study the development strategies for selected OTOP projects in Chiang Rai.

2. To study the targeted markets of those selected OTOP projects in Chiang Rai.

3. To study the development strategies for the selected OTOP projects in Chiang Rai in terms of consumer behaviour.

4. To study the development strategies for the selected OTOP projects in Chiang Rai in terms of consumer satisfaction.

5. To study the general information of the development strategies for OTOP projects organized by government sectors.

6. To study problematic issues and provide solutions and recommendations for OTOP communities.

7. To investigate the correlation between demographic features of OTOP consumers and development strategies for OTOP products in terms of consumer behaviour.

8. To investigate the differences between demographic features of OTOP consumers and development strategies for OTOP products in terms of consumer satisfaction.

3. Methodology

For data collection, questionnaires were distributed to two main groups: the first was 257 entrepreneurs and the second was 850 local consumers. Questionnaires were entered into a computer spreadsheet
for statistical analysis, involving calculation of frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations. In addition, the responses to the interviews from 24 community development officials were identified, categorized and presented in narrative form.

4. Findings

The research findings were as follows:

1. The development strategies for OTOP projects in Chiang Rai were generally at a high level. With regards to each category, however, the mean of production aspect was found to rank the highest.

2. The targeted markets of the OTOP projects in Chiang Rai were mostly female, aged between 41-50 years, who obtained a diploma at elementary level school. Most of them were sellers or run self-employment (own account) businesses. Their average income was less than 5,000 Baht per month.

3. In terms of consumer behaviour towards the development strategies for OTOP projects in Chiang Rai, it was found that the products consumers mostly liked buying were utensils, rattan basketry, alcoholic beverages, crispy crackling, herbal soaps and local tube skirts. Purchasing was mostly for domestic consumption. Moreover, it was found that families bought products more than six times annually, buying 1-2 items on each occasion and paying less than 500 baht each time. It was also found that consumers preferred to buy on special occasions such as New Year or Songkran festival holidays. Most importantly, they liked the splendid and authentic quality of the products and this was also the reason they bought them. For the method of buying, customers generally made the decision by themselves to buy from the OTOP distribution centres and they preferred to make the next purchase from the sample place. For the sources of OTOP distribution, they were recommended by others.
4. The customers’ opinions towards the development strategies for OTOP projects in Chiang Rai were generally moderate. With regard to each category, the mean of products themselves was found to rank the highest.

5. The government continuously supported both marketing policy and continuity of OTOP development in Chiang Rai. The most prominent feature of OTOP projects in Chiang Rai was that product quality was well-developed. However, its development from an international perspective was not yet systematic, consistent or interesting.

6. The significant findings on the problems of OTOP projects determined by government agencies include: (i) No understanding of the administration and management systems and lack of meaningful objectives; therefore, the provision of training was recommended; (ii) Insufficient budget for marketing campaign and so the government should consider providing more support; (iii) small number of staff was another issue involved. The recruitment of more staff as well as an increase in budget for salaries was recommended and (iv) OTOP communities paid little attention to the work and the involvement of all members to understand about potential group benefits was recommended.

7. According to the demographic comparison between gender, age, educational background, career and monthly income with the development strategies for OTOP projects in terms of consumer behaviour, it was found that the correlation between demographic features and the products they like buying was significantly different at the 0.05 level. These products included pottery, utensils, rattan basketry, bamboo works, souvenirs, tea, drinking water, coffee, herbal tea, crispy crackling, pineapple jelly, crispy rice products, herbal beauty products and cosmetics, herbal soaps, herbal medicines, local tube skirts, loincloths, cotton bags, tablecloths and other small cotton-made items. For the correlation between gender, age, education level, career and monthly income and the purposes of buying, the average
number of purchases per annum; the average items purchased per occasion; the expense spent per occasion; the opportunity for buying; the reason for buying; the method of buying; the places of buying; the participants involved and intentions for future purchases were significantly different at the 0.05 level. About the correlation between age and the sources of OTOP information, this was also significantly different at the 0.05 level; this involved the possibility of being introduced by others, finding by accident, word of mouth, displays at annual fairs and various forms of advertising such as newspapers, leaflets, fliers, internet communications and all kinds of mass media.

8. For the demographic comparison: gender, age, educational level, career and monthly income with the development strategies for OTOP projects, in terms of consumer satisfaction, these distributions were generally not significantly different at the 0.05 level. There were also no significant differences at the individual factor level.

5. Discussion

Regarding the level of the operations of manufacturers and entrepreneurs, it was found that overall production was performing at a high level. For individual factors, the highest mean was for quality control, which differs from the findings of Kaeobunrueng (2003), indicating that most of the communities or entrepreneurs used production strategies to set out orders without adding or lowering the number of members. Most of the raw materials or natural resources used were generated in the communities themselves. Raw materials were generally sourced from local wholesalers by telephone order. Manufacturers and entrepreneurs evidently look at production issues in different ways.

The level of the operation of manufacturers or entrepreneurs also indicated that the marketing was generally at a high level. With regard to individual categories, however, the highest mean was for price, which again contradicted the findings of Kaeobunrueng (2003),
suggesting that manufacturers or entrepreneurs did take the marketing factor into consideration. For greater effectiveness, it is suggested that entrepreneurs also survey their customers’ needs regularly.

The level of the operation of manufacturers or entrepreneurs indicated that the management was generally at a high level. With regard to each category, however, the highest mean was for fair benefits, which contradicted the findings of Kaeobunrueung (2003), stating that management and personnel for most communities had a monthly plan for setting out the objectives for social aid and career promotion. In particular, they mainly organized and assigned the production work themselves. They used different management methods. The first was focused on the benefits and the second was based on project planning. Regarding the level of the operation of manufacturers or entrepreneurs, the work on accounting was at a high level. When considering the individual aspect, however, the highest mean was for the updating accounts and the systematic approach to financial records was at a high level. Regarding individual categories, the highest mean was recorded for consistent capital analysis, which again was different from Kaeobunrueung (2003), since most of the capital received was from the government. Moreover, most communities had no advance financial plan but mostly concentrated on production plans. It is suggested that the first group of manufacturers or entrepreneurs is focused on operations whereas the latter concentrated on the source of funding.

In terms of consumer’s opinions towards development strategies for OTOP projects in Chiang Rai, they were generally high. With regard to individual categories, the highest means were recorded for arts and Thai culture as well as local wisdom. This result differed from that of Keawnaichit (2004) and revealed that developing product styles that are more attractive and in different sizes could prevent products from any damage. It can be seen that consumers focused on the importance of Thainess, whereas manufacturers or entrepreneurs focused on the packaging. This result indicated that manufacturers and entrepreneurs
were working at cross-purposes and better coordination would be helpful.

Consumers’ opinions concerning development strategies for OTOP projects in terms of prices were generally at a high level. With regard to individual categories, the highest mean was recorded for the reasonable price of products and quality. However, this finding differed from Keawnaichit’s (2004) study which stated that the wholesale price was fixed by The Palm Juice Centre (calculating the retail price from the capital plus 10% profit), with the standard price labelled. This indicated that the consumers focused on the importance of price and quality of products which must be reasonable, whereas the manufacturers or entrepreneurs focused on the same fixed price. As a result of this, it is suggested that manufacturers or entrepreneurs should review the price from a strategic perspective.

In terms of marketing promotion, consumer opinions indicated that they preferred buying the products from their OTOP distribution centres. That this result was not associated with the Keawnaichit (2004) study, which suggested that various channels for product distribution should be part of the strategic plan. Consequently, there is a need for revision of the product distribution strategic plan.

In terms of consumers’ opinions towards marketing promotion, the findings indicated that it was generally moderate. Concerning individual categories, the highest mean was recorded for the friendliness and human relationship aspects exhibited by sales assistants. This also differed from Keawnaichit’s (2004) study, which revealed the significant importance of the strategy of sales promotion through advertising and public relations through various channels of the mass media, including the radio, television, publications and billboards. Consequently, manufacturers and entrepreneurs should also consider creating a strategic plan for a new marketing promotion.
The study found that the most problematic issue of the development strategies for OTOP projects in Chiang Rai was the lack of knowledge and understanding of administration in the communities concerned. The findings also revealed that the strength of leadership was not really built up in communities. Also, the insufficient budget for advertising was another problem found. As a result of this, it can be seen that the government officials viewed the problems that occurred in OTOP communities differently from how the OTOP communities themselves viewed them. Consequently, the solutions offered by the government were probably not associated with what the OTOP communities really wanted and this led to inefficiency.

6. Applications and Recommendations

The study found that the goods with most demand included utensils like rattan baskets, alcoholic beverages and wines, crispy crackling, herbal soaps and local-style tube skirts. Consequently, the agencies concerned should support the development strategies so that the Chiang Rai OTOP products become more distinctive and outstanding. The less popular products found in the study were silverware, mulberry paper, fruit juices, jelly, pineapples, beauty herbs and cosmetics and various types of preserved silks. All of the agencies concerned should join together to encourage development so that the OTOP communities can earn more and strengthen themselves in the future.

The OTOP communities should increase their production capacity by rewarding the members who can efficiently produce or increase productivity in their communities. This is another way to support the group’s capacity development.

It is not recommended to the OTOP communities to advertise their products by radio, because radio broadcasting is not considered very interesting by OTOP customers. Both government and private sector actors who are concerned with the development of OTOP businesses
should cooperatively work to educate and train people to understand how to deal with organizational structure. For accounting, people should be provided with knowledge of international accounting standards and an increase in capital should be considered, for example by asking for more shares by OTOP members.

Both government and private sector actors who are concerned with the development of OTOP should support and promote OTOP products such as utensils, rattan basketry, wines, teas, crispy crackling, herbal soaps and local tube skirts because these are the most popular OTOP products.

The findings also indicated that consumers bought only one or two items each time and spent less than 500 baht per time. Thus, OTOP communities should seek new methods of marketing promotion so that customers would have more purchasing opportunities and more chances to be exposed to the products. In addition, the consumers stated that they were recommended by others, by word of mouth, which should also be encouraged.

The OTOP communities should start marketing by emphasizing the authentic and traditional characteristics of their products, as well as seeking new markets to distribute their products.

Both government and private sector actors who are concerned with the development of OTOP should support and promote OTP businesses by providing knowledge of online business practices, not only for convenience but also for a more efficient sales function.

OTOP products should be improved in terms of product packaging, with the dates of production and expiration labelled clearly.

Finally, OTOP distribution centres should be decorated and well-furnished. In particular, enough clean seats should be made available for the guests.
7. References


Sufficiency Economy as Human Development for Economic, Social and Environmental Sustainability with Emphasis on Ethnic Minority Communities

Makha Khittasangka

Abstract

This paper reports on a programme of participatory learning research aimed at investigating the nature of Sufficiency Economy villages within Thailand. This has involved studying the Sufficiency Economy as a form of natural ally of human development. Like human development, the Sufficiency Economy places humanity at the centre, focuses on well-being rather than wealth, makes sustainability the very core of the thinking, understands the need for human security and concentrates on building people’s capabilities to develop their potential. Research results are reported and discussed, particularly with respect to the previously under-investigated issue of ethnic diversity.

Keywords: ethnic diversity; Sufficiency Economy; Thailand

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1. Introduction

The Sufficiency Economy Philosophy laid down by King Bhumibol Adulyadej, is an important contribution to His Majesty’s conclusions
about how to achieve real development with real benefits for ordinary people. Progress had to be achieved in stages. Before moving to another stage, there first had to be a firm foundation of self-reliance or else there was a strong chance of failure or loss of independence. The driving force for development had to come from within, based on the accumulation of knowledge. Consequently, the Sufficiency Economy is an approach to life and conduct which is applicable at every level, from the individual through the family and community to the management and development of the nation. Sufficiency has five components: moderation; reasonableness; self-immunity - the need for built–in resilience against the risks which arise from internal or external change; knowledge and integrity. In addition, the application of theories in planning and implementation requires great care and good judgment, in particular to integrate the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy at every stage (UNDP, 2007). The vision for successive Five-year Plans, the Ninth (2002-2006) and the Tenth (2007-2011) and going forward to the Eleventh Plan (2012-2016), has been a restatement of and formal adoption of the Sufficiency Economy approach.

In Phase I of the project, Khittasangka (2010) investigated three types of Sufficiency Economy villages; subsistence villages, better living villages and wealthy villages, in a sample consisting of 21 villages in 7 provinces (Chiang Rai, Tak, Nong Khai, Mukdahan, Srisaket, Buriram and Trat), located along border regions. It was found that the implementation of development programs and projects through application of the Sufficiency Economy as a sustainable economic, social and environmental foundation indicated that group formation is an essential element for the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy’s socialization process. When individuals, families and communities attended group activities such as Village Fund and Rice Mill meetings or animal raising, as introduced by the government and local organizations, it demonstrated that the individual, family and the group had increased capabilities in economic, social, cultural, natural resource-based and environmental development. This enabled
individuals, families and community groups to adopt the five components of the Sufficiency Economy and undertake the Sufficiency Economy Socialization Process which further stimulated behavioural changes compared to what had actually taken place in the past.

The adoption of practices of Sufficiency Economy, to a certain extent, revealed similarities in the three income level groups (i.e. poor, middle-class and wealthy). However, the degree of adoption was found to be somewhat different when taking into consideration the types of Sufficiency Economy villages (i.e. subsistence, better living and wealthy). The difference was that in the subsistence village, the villagers were aware of their depressed economic situation, they thought of ways to find the means to earn a living in order to obtain quick cash. Their adoption of the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy was at the level of understanding and the stage of learning how to reduce economic risk by growing vegetables or raising animals for family consumption. The better living and wealthy villages both were experiencing and had adopted practices of Sufficiency Economy and knew how to increase the capabilities which enabled them to earn more income from various sources. Aside from these substantive findings, the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy was found to be consistent with human development, in particular, in strengthening the capability of individuals, families and community groups, to some extent, in returning to an integrated approach towards economic and social development.

This paper discusses Phase II of the project, “Sufficiency Economy as Human Development for Economic, Social and Environmental Sustainability with Emphasis on Ethnic Minority Communities,” which was a continuation of Phase I. This has involved studying the Sufficiency Economy as a form of natural ally of human development. Like human development, the Sufficiency Economy places humanity at the centre, focuses on well-being rather than wealth, makes sustainability the very core of the thinking, understands the need for
human security and concentrates on building people’s capabilities to develop their potential.

The Phase II project will, therefore, investigate ethnic minority communities, as ethnicity has often been a neglected dimension in development theory (Hettne 1995:15), since neither modernization theories nor classical Marxist theories properly consider ethnic diversity. “Ethnicity is a highly complex concept, but simply stated an ethnic group is “a distinct category of a larger population whose culture is different from its own. The members of such as group are, or feel themselves to be, or are thought to be, bound together by common ties of race, nationality, religion or culture (Ogden 1986:139-40).””

2. Research Objectives and Questions

The research project has made an attempt to investigate the following objectives:

1. To examine the implementation of community planning processes based on an application of the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy consistent with the adoption of development programs/projects in the economic, social and environment dimensions of individuals, families and community groups, in particular with respect to the role of gender, thereby gaining insights about knowledge, practices and sense of consciousness.

2. To synthesize the lessons learned through applying human development components towards the success of implementation of the community plan process.

3. To investigate the factors contributing to the implementation of community planning processes in strengthening community capacity or creating weaknesses.
These objectives have been used to formulate the following research questions.

1. What is the effect of capability development on individual males and females, at the household and community levels, through the integration of the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy into the community planning processes?

2. What would enable individual males and females who have been involved in personal capability development, by utilizing knowledge and skill as well as attitude change, on implementation of community planning processes integrated with the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy? What are the outcomes of economic, socio-cultural and environmental development?

3. What are the differences in application of human development components among different levels of the Sufficiency Economy villages? Are there any contributing factors involved?

4. Are there any appropriate approaches to maintaining sustained human development components which are the basis for economic, social and environmental development, in particular in building learning capability in diversified ethnic minority communities?

5. Will development outcomes through utilizing community planning processes integrated with the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy enhance community empowerment in terms of economic, social and environmental capital or not?

3. The Research Methodology

This research is based on utilizing mixed quantitative and qualitative research approached by conducting focus groups with Participatory Learning Action (PLA) to gather data from community and group leaders responsible for operating various socio-economic, cultural and
environmental activities in the communities concerned, as well as gathering data from 360 household heads. The target population was the diversified ethnic minority communities in eight provinces (Chiang Rai, Chiang Mai, Mae Hong Son, Nan, Phayao, Lamphun, Phrae and Lampang), located in the upper northern part of Thailand. The sample was selected by a Multiple Stage Sampling approach based on stratified sampling at the provincial level using the categorized Sufficiency Economy villages and then drawing the selection by simple random sampling. From this, 24 villages were identified and then purposive sampling was employed for the household heads, village leaders, local organization officers and villagers, resulting 360 respondents. The selected ethnic minority groups having residences in the research areas consisted of the Tai Yai (Shan people), Tai Lue, Tai Yong, Tai Yuan, Khmu, Akha, Karen, Hmong, Iu-Mien, Lawa and Lisu.

3.1. Scope of the Study

This research project has investigated the formulation of the community planning processes based on the integration of Sufficiency Economy components; Moderation, Reasonableness, Self–Immunity, Knowledge and Ethics. It has followed up the implementation of the community plan on three dimensions of activities; (1) Economics, (2) Social and Cultural and (3) Natural Resources and the Environment. These implemented activities were further investigated through the relationship between the applications in the varying degrees of the Sufficiency Economy components by individuals, households and community members.

3.2. The Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for the project is shown in Figure 1 below.
Integration of Sufficiency Economy Components: Moderation, Reasonableness, self-immunity, interlocking of knowledge and ethics

Participatory Community Plan Process:
- Community needs and choosing alternatives,
- Formulation of community plan,
- Implementation,
- Following up and evaluation,
- Review and improvement of the plan

Community plan based on Sufficiency Economy Philosophy implemented by government and private organizations: correspond to people’s needs and solving community’s problems

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework; source: Original Research
The conceptual framework as shown in Figure 1 can be delineated as follows:

The human development component consists of the capability of individual men and women and households to undergo the process of change through learning activities from the development agencies involved and, also, derived from the local wisdons by which practitioners’ own identities and capacities are formed and developed that enhancing individual freedom in assessing capabilities to earn a living congruent with well-being. This is consistent with the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy.

The strengthening community capacity element has led to the attainment of social well-being goals, which imply that people who follow the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy as part of their way of life will be involved in striving for social well-being. The community planning process has to be integrated by the people and the development agencies into every stage of plan formulation. Consequently, with the commitment of the people and community, good programs and projects have to be integrated into the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy and, in return, it can increase community empowerment.

The conceptual framework indicates that the increasing capabilities of individual men and women has to depend on three elements of human development; knowledge - a resource that affects decisions; action – the involvement of knowledge production and consciousness – how the production of knowledge changes. This conceptual framework will be taken into consideration as the human development attributing factors for analysis and synthesis in the diversified ethnic minority communities.

While knowledge is not for its own sake, neither is action; the relationship between the two is interactive and dialectical. Through action, knowledge is created, and analyses of that knowledge may
lead to new forms of action. By involving people in gathering information, knowledge production itself may become a form of mobilization: new solutions or forms of action are identified, tested and then tried again. Thus, in action research, knowledge must be embedded in a cycle of action–reflection–action over time. It is through such a process that the nature of action can be deepened, moving from practical problem–solving to more fundamental social transformation (see Figure 2).

The data were collected by in-depth interview and organized the focus group with the community leaders and administered the structured interview with the household heads through participatory learning approach on the follow up of the implemented projects or group activities.

3.3. Research Hypotheses

The research hypotheses for this project may be stated as follows:

H1: Increasing the capabilities of individual men and women depends upon their freedom to assess their own capabilities in increasing economic, social, natural resource and environmental development in their local setting in the diversified ethnic minority communities.

H2: Community empowerment depends on the integration of Sufficiency Economy Philosophy components into the formulation of community planning processes.

H3: The implementation of development programs and projects based on the integration of the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy depends on contributing factors in strengthening the community capacity or else creating weaknesses.
Community Plan Based on Integration of Sufficiency Economy Philosophy

The Follow-up of the Implemented Activities/Projects of the Community Plan Based on Sufficiency Economy

The Follow-up of the Sufficiency Economy Policy Implementation as Introduced by the Governmental Sectors &

Moderation
Reasonableness
Self-Immunity

Knowledge

Ethics

The Follow-up on the Outcomes of Implemented Community Plan Based on Sufficiency Economy

Policy on Sufficiency Economy Philosophy

Figure 2: The Process of Data Collection; source: Original Research
3.4. The Research Area

The Department of Community Development has classified ethnic minority villages into three categories of Sufficiency Economy villages: (i) subsistence villages, (ii) better living villages and (iii) wealthy villages. Further, those villages situated in remote or fractured landscapes adjacent to forest reserves or watershed enclosure areas may be considered to be ‘model villages,’ indicating that they are undergoing a process of continuous improvement.

The distribution of the diversified ethnic minority villages by tribal classification and geographical areas is as follows:

1. Karen: 7 villages (Chiangrai, Chiang Mai, Mae Hong Son, Lampoon, Phrae and Lampang provinces)
2. Hmong: 5 villages (Chiangrai, Chiang Mai, Phayao, Phrae and Lampang provinces)
3. Iu-Mien: 2 villages (Phayao and Lampang provinces)
4. Tai Lue: 3 villages (Nan and Phayao provinces)
5. Lawa: 1 village (Chiang Rai province)
6. Akha: 1 village (Phrae province)
7. Lahu: 1 village (Chiang Mai province)
8. Lisu: 1 village (Mae Hong Son province)
9. Khmu: 1 village (Nan province)
10. Tai Yuan: 1 village (Lamphun province)
11. Tai Yong: 1 village (Lamphun province)
3.5. Data Analysis and the Statistical Tools Used

Descriptive Statistics have been used to describe the characteristics of the ethnic minority households and their ability to increase their capabilities in economic, social and environmental development. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient is used to study correlations of two types of the independent variables and multiple regression to determine the best predictive variables.

4. Findings

The results of the study are presented with respect to the following objectives.

Objective 1: To examine the implementation of community planning processes based on the application of the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy consistent with the adoption of development programs/projects in the economic, social and environment dimensions of individuals, families and community groups, in particular the role of gender in gaining an insight of knowledge, practices and a sense of consciousness.

The formulation of the community plan requires understanding by the people involved of the factual situation of community needs and problems. When the meeting was organized by using the Participatory Learning Approach, the villagers discussed the problems until they agreed to propose alternative ways to solve problems that lay within their own capacities and the available community resources. With the assistance of the research team, the villagers agreed that all stages of the community planning process matched the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy components. The results show the relationship in terms of interwoven, overlapping and interlocking components of the integrated Sufficiency Economy in the community planning process, which can be delineated as in Figure 4 below.
Figure 4: The Formulation of the Community Plan Process with the Integration of Sufficiency Economy Components; source: Original Research

The livelihoods of the ethnic minority people of the 24 villages surveyed were mostly bound up with traditional farming practices, in
which everyday lives are cohesive and people live in harmony with
strong traditional norms and beliefs. The practices of farming may be
linked to either production or consumption activities. Mostly,
households are both production and consumption units. The land for
agriculture is used for growing crops such as rice, maize and some
other field crops on parcels of land located near a reforested area or
cultivated on community land for fruit trees or vegetables. The
majority of the people still communicate among family members with
ethnic dialects and, during traditional events, people perform ritual
ceremonies where relatives and friends attended. The ethnic minority
people were asked to assess their capabilities with respect to three
aspects of their real life situations, as these activities were parts of the
follow–up to the community implementation plan: (1) Agriculture and
Non-agricultural Activities; (2) Social and Cultural Activities and (3)
Natural Resources and Environmental Activities. These three real life
situations were used to ask respondents how they connect the practice
of Sufficiency Economy components in those real life situations.
Traditional beliefs and village norms as well as the geographical areas
where the people live are all slightly different, in particular, the way
the people are exposed to government services, accessibility to
transportation systems as well as the location of market facilities. This
had impacts on the ability of people to perceive the practices of
Sufficiency Economy components in real life situations and within
their environment.

The self assessment of the villagers concerning the implementation of
the community plan involved the completion of economic, cultural
and social and environmental activities. There were 12 groups of
Sufficiency Economy components which the respondents had
evaluated according to different ways of thinking, different
geographical locations and surroundings, different income levels as
well as the living conditions of different ethnic groups. The 12 groups
of Sufficiency Economy components will be used as indices derived
by ways of thinking and interpretation from the everyday life practices
as follows: (1) Moderation, (2) Moderation, Reasonableness, Self –

The 12 groups of self–assessment indices derived from the 11 ethnic minority groups in 24 villages located in the 8 provinces of the upper northern part of Thailand were used to test the relationship between the integrated Sufficiency Economy components with the implementation of three dimensions of activities; (1) Agricultural and Non-agricultural Activities, (2) Social and Cultural Activities and (3) Natural Resources and Environmental Activities. The self–assessment indices were further investigated as to the level of development outcomes of the individual, household and community members as respondents have perceived from the practices in terms of: (1) Increasing Knowledge, (2) Application in Households and (3) Increasing Income. The self-assessment outcomes appear in Table 1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sufficiency Economy Components in 12 interwoven indices</th>
<th>Development of Individual, Household, Community (n=360)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1) Increasing Knowledge (2) Application in Households (3) Increasing Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Economic: Agriculture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Rice growing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) Mod</td>
<td>0.191(<strong>), -0.183(</strong>), (NS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Mod + Rea + Imm</td>
<td>-0.150(<strong>), 0.155(</strong>), (NS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Fruit orchard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) Mod + Imm</td>
<td>0.265(**), (NS), (NS)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sufficiency Economy Components in 12 interwoven indices</th>
<th>Development of Individual, Community (n=360)</th>
<th>Household, (3) Increasing Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(2) Rea + Imm</td>
<td>(1) Increasing Knowledge</td>
<td>(2) Application in Households</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Gardening</td>
<td>-0.188(*)</td>
<td>(NS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) Mod</td>
<td>0.648(**)</td>
<td>-0.546(**)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Mod + Rea + Imm + Kno</td>
<td>-0.648(**)</td>
<td>0.546(**)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Agricultural processed products</td>
<td>(1) Mod + Rea + Imm + Kno</td>
<td>-0.314(**)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Rea + Imm + Know</td>
<td>0.314(**)</td>
<td>-0.235(**)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Bio fertilizer production</td>
<td>(1) Mod</td>
<td>0.265(**)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Mod + Rea + Imm + Kno</td>
<td>-0.427(**)</td>
<td>0.406(**)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Rea + Imm + Know</td>
<td>0.252(**)</td>
<td>-0.241(**)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 Poultry</td>
<td>(1) Mod</td>
<td>0.307(**)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Mod + Rea + Imm</td>
<td>-0.168(**)</td>
<td>0.133(*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Mod + Know</td>
<td>-0.169(**)</td>
<td>0.129(*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Economic: Non-agriculture</td>
<td>2.1 Cloth weaving</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Embroidery &amp; cloth sewing</td>
<td>(1) Mod + Imm</td>
<td>-0.219(**)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Mod + Know</td>
<td>-0.196(**)</td>
<td>(NS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Rea + Imm</td>
<td>0.229(**)</td>
<td>(NS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Rea + Imm +</td>
<td>0.192(**)</td>
<td>(NS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufficiency Economy Components in 12 interwoven indices</td>
<td>Development of Individual, Household, Community (n=360)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1) Increasing Knowledge</td>
<td>(2) Application in Households</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3 Clothing production
(1) Mod -0.169(*) (NS) (NS)
(2) Mod + Rea + Imm + Kno (NS) 0.174(*) (NS)
(3) Rea + Imm + Know 0.215(**) -0.214(**) (NS)

3. Social and Culture
3.1 Learning center and ethnic museum
(1) Mod + Rea + Imm + Know (NS) -0.209(**) (NS)
(2) Imm + Rea + Know -0.159(*) 0.176(*) (NS)

3.2 Tradition and cultural revitalization
(1) Imm + Rea + Know -0.250(**) 0.287(**) -0.113(*)
(2) Imm 0.258(**) -0.323(**) 0.196(**)

3.3 Arts conservation, play and folk music
(1) Mod + Rea + Imm + Know -0.125(*) 0.128(*) (NS)

4. Natural Resources and Environment
4.1 Forest conservation and control measure
(1) Rea + Imm 0.195(**) -0.195(**) -
(2) Rea + Imm + Know + Eth -0.195(**) 0.195(**) -

4.2 Community forest & agricultural land use
(1) Rea + Imm -0.347(**) 0.347(**) -
(2) Rea + Imm + Know + Eth 0.347(**) -0.347(**) -
Table 1: Summary of the Relationship between Sufficiency Economy Components Practices (12 interwoven indices) and the Self-Assessment on Three Aspects of Real Life Situations; source: Original Research

Note: Mod = Moderation; Imm = Self-Immunity; Rea = Reasonableness; Know = Knowledge and Eth = Ethics

Table 1 indicated that the respondents had adopted Sufficiency Economy principles in real life situations. Further analysis of this relationship was conducted through multiple regression with a forward step-wise method. This revealed that: (1) all cases of the three dimensions of implemented activities had positive coefficients and were significant at the 1% level in increasing knowledge, comprising: rice growing; fruit orchards; gardening; agricultural processed products; bio fertilizer production; poultry; embroidery and cloth sewing; clothing production; tradition and cultural revitalization; forest conservation and control measures; community forest and agricultural land use and, finally, conservation of water resources; (2) all cases of the three dimensions of implemented activities have positive coefficients and are significant at the 1% level in application in households, comprising: rice growing; gardening; agricultural processed products; bio fertilizer production; poultry; clothing
production; learning centre and ethnic museum; tradition and cultural revitalization; forest reservation and control measures; community forestry and agricultural land use and, finally, conservation of water resources and (3) only two cases (Natural Resources and the Environment) exhibited positive coefficients which were significant at the 1% level in increasing income, which were embroidery and cloth sewing and, also, tradition and cultural revitalization.

In conclusion, as determined by self–assessment of the respondents, it was found that the distinctive characteristics of Sufficiency Economy components can be useful and are interwoven in the ways of thinking and doing, as follows:

(1) Moderation is the way of thinking when respondents found things that they have decided to do are related to their capabilities within the available resource and potentials.

(2) Self–immunity is the way of thinking that respondents had anticipated would in the future sustain their food production, natural resources and environment as well as securing conservation of culture and avoiding risks.

(3) Reasonableness and Knowledge contribute to the way of thinking that respondents led to respondents being exposed to new technology and communication, both in the form of media and services, provided by government officers such as in agricultural training and health care protection. This indicates that it is a way to help people improve their capabilities for income earning or increasing knowledge in order to assist them to contact the world outside their villages.

**Objective 2:** To synthesize the lessons learned through applying human development components towards the success of implementation of the community planning process.
The economic dimension consists of agricultural and non-agricultural activities with relationships between the varying degrees of Sufficiency Economy component integration. This involved the analysis of the self-assessment indices, which were further investigated to test the stated hypothesis in three separate dimensions of activities.

1. Economic Dimension with Relationships between the Varying Degrees of Sufficiency Economy Components.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>SE_b</th>
<th>beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mod</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>0.064</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>0.159</td>
<td>0.874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Mod + Rea + Imm</td>
<td>0.242</td>
<td>0.056</td>
<td>0.337</td>
<td>4.314</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mod + Imm</td>
<td>0.053</td>
<td>0.052</td>
<td>0.055</td>
<td>1.007</td>
<td>0.315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Mod + Know</td>
<td>0.164</td>
<td>0.060</td>
<td>0.183</td>
<td>2.718</td>
<td>0.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Mod + Rea + Imm + Know</td>
<td>0.246</td>
<td>0.062</td>
<td>0.258</td>
<td>3.949</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Rea + Imm</td>
<td>-0.002</td>
<td>0.046</td>
<td>-0.002</td>
<td>-0.037</td>
<td>0.971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Rea + Imm + Know</td>
<td>-0.223</td>
<td>0.044</td>
<td>-0.300</td>
<td>-5.028</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Imm</td>
<td>0.236</td>
<td>0.059</td>
<td>0.282</td>
<td>3.974</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Constant 1.656; SE_{est} = ±.291
R = 0.606; R² = 0.367; F = 16.363 ; p-value =0.000

Table 2: Results of Multiple Regression Analysis; **source:** Original Research

In Table 2 above, the goodness of fit equation for the application of economic activities indicated that the eight independent variables had positive coefficients (R = 0.606, F-value 16.363 and Standard Error = ±0.291) and were significant at the 1% level. This data implies that when the respondent, including household and community members, applied practices in varying degrees of the Sufficiency Economy components, it is likely that the economic activities (both agricultural and non-agricultural) are positively interwoven in the way of thinking and acting in real life village situations. Both predictors provided
sufficient evidence to accept the stated hypothesis (i.e. reject the null hypothesis) that there is a relationship between Sufficiency Economy components and the application of economic activity.

2. Social and Cultural Dimension with Relationships between the Varying Degrees of Sufficiency Economy Components.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>SE_{b}</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mod + Rea + Imm + Know</td>
<td>-0.982</td>
<td>0.353</td>
<td>-0.690</td>
<td>-2.779</td>
<td>0.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Mod + Rea + Imm + Know + Eth</td>
<td>-0.877</td>
<td>0.286</td>
<td>-0.741</td>
<td>-3.071</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Rea + Imm + Know</td>
<td>-1.664</td>
<td>0.599</td>
<td>-1.401</td>
<td>-2.776</td>
<td>0.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Imm</td>
<td>-1.075</td>
<td>0.262</td>
<td>-0.989</td>
<td>-4.102</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Imm + Know</td>
<td>-0.928</td>
<td>0.330</td>
<td>-0.780</td>
<td>-2.810</td>
<td>0.005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Constant 3.354; SE_{est} = ±0.423
R = 0.370; R^2 = 0.137; F = 8.994; p-value = 0.000

Table 3: Result of Second Multiple Regress Analysis; Source: Original Research

As shown in Table 3, it was found that the application of social and cultural activities with the varying degrees of Sufficiency Economy incorporation showed positive coefficients and was significant at the 1% level (R = 0.370, F-value = 8.994, Stand Error = ±0.423). The data imply that when the respondents applied social and cultural activities in varying degrees of Sufficiency Economy components, it appeared that the Sufficiency Economy components were interwoven into their ways of thinking and practices. Both predictors provide sufficient evidence to accept the stated hypothesis (i.e. reject the null hypothesis) that there is relationship between Sufficiency Economy components and application of social and cultural activity.

3. Natural Resources and Environment Dimension with Relationships between the Varying Degrees of Sufficiency Economy Components.
As indicated in Table 4, the best predictors for the application of natural resources and environmental activities and Sufficiency Economy components have shown positive coefficients (R = 0.431, F–value 9.199 and Standard Error = ±0.405) which were significant at the 1% level. The data implies that when respondent households and community members adopted practices of Sufficiency Economy components and applied the implementation of natural resources and environmental activities in their real life village situations, then it appears that these are positively interwoven between the varying degree of Sufficiency Economy components and the application of natural resources and the environment. The data, therefore, provided sufficient evidence to accept the stated hypothesis (i.e. reject the null hypothesis).

**Objective 3:** To investigate the contributing factors to implementation of the community planning process in strengthening community capacity or creating weaknesses.

The strength or weakness of the community will depend largely on the increasing capabilities of male and female in the implementation of
the community plan and application of practices in household and community activities as well. Women and men in the research areas were asked to assess their own capabilities as contributing factors in enhancing the economic, social and cultural and, also, natural resources and environmental activities. The findings appear in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Result of Increasing Capability</th>
<th>Level of Capability</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Economic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Learning in agricultural production skills</td>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Development of production plans</td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Reduction of production costs</td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Economic group formation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Learning about market functions</td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Increasing household incomes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Learning about savings</td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Financial planning</td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Learning how to reduce indebtedness</td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Social &amp; Cultural</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Making good use of local wisdom</td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Conservation of indigenous cultures</td>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Good health care prevention</td>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Involvement in formulation of community plans, evaluation and provision of recommendations</td>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Natural Resources and Environment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Household improvement</td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Protection of near home and surroundings</td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Garbage disposal</td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Protection of drinking water &amp; agricultural use</td>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Management of community ecology</td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5 indicated that both women and men assessed themselves overall at the moderate level of improvement, apart from the case of social and cultural activity, where men reported their performance as being higher than that of women. Men assessed “Learning in agricultural skills,” “Conservation of indigenous culture,” “Good health care prevention,” “Involvement in formulation of community plans, evaluation and provision of recommendations” “Protection of drinking water & agricultural uses” and “Planning for use of community resources” at the high level. For women, the assessments of “Good health care prevention,” “Household improvement” and “Protection of near home and surroundings” were reported to be at the high level.

Assessment of their own capabilities for improvement by both women and men did not mean that they did not contribute their own efforts to community development. It has been demonstrated that there are opportunities for them to implement community plans continuously until it becomes a definite part of community life. This results from integrating Sufficiency Economy components into real-life situations.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This research has found that there is a distinct relationship between the community planning process and the integration of Sufficiency Economy components into daily situations so that they become interwoven into everyday customs and practices. According to Habermas (1996), in his discussion of the development of the theory of communicative action, there is a problem parallel to the problem of
the philosophy of the subject: the problem is that much thinking about social change and social issues is based on the idea of a “social macro-subject” – the notion of a self – regulating the social whole. Yet systems theory and many of the developments of post modern and post structuralist theory rightly persuade that this notion of a social whole is illusionary. There are no ‘whole’ societies, or ‘whole’ systems, or ‘whole’ states which are the implication of social theory or practice. There are just interwoven, interlocking, overlapping networks of social relations which galvanize power and discourses in different directions and in different ways in relation to the personal, the social and the cultural realms. This phenomenon of findings has proved that the relationships between facts (social – macro subject as known in the form of national policy implementation) and norms are found legitimate by the people and community. In this regard, all components of the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy have been integrated into the national policy coupled with the following up of the implementation plan on development programs and projects, which have been considerably changed in value and attitude with morally rights and socially integrated into the 24 diverse villages. This has confirmed that the legitimate norms; economic, social and cultural, natural resources and environment were correlated with the reality of a social world perspective. To a certain extent, with their ethnic culture as demonstrated in traditional practices, belief, ritual performance and, in particular, some still manifest the peasant ways of livelihood, all agreed that they are familiar with the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy as something which they have delved into ways of life which have been passed to them from generation to generation.

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The Research Team of the International College of the Mekong Region, Chiang Rai Rajabhat University, comprised of Mr. Gomin Wangon, Mr. Phitak Saengrattana, Mrs. Natthida Jumpa and Mrs. Kulthida Intrarachai.
6. References


BOOK REVIEWS
Mediums, Monks, and Amulets: Thai Popular Buddhism Today

Pattana Kitiarsa


170 + XXI pages.

ISBN: 9-786162-50494

Reviewed by John Walsh, Editor of the SIU Journal of Management
Newcomers to Thailand are generally led to believe that religious beliefs are syncretic in nature: that is, people are willing to incorporate additional beliefs alongside the philosophy of Buddhism that is professed by the great majority of the population. This is why it is possible to see spirit houses outside of residences and statues of the Guan Im (Kuan Yin) goddess in some temples. According to the concept of syncretism, there is no contradiction between believing in the need to propitiate the spirits of nature and the dead or else to pay respect to a long-dead Chinese princess who has transcended humanity. Instead, these different elements are incorporated wholesale in a mindset that permits possibly contradictory issues to exist together. However, ethnographer Pattana Kitiarsa, drawing on years of careful and thoughtful observation, believes that Thai popular religious belief should be characterized by hybridization. That is, when new elements are introduced, they are not incorporated wholesale as in syncretism but instead have a dialectical relationship to the existing elements; that is, they change the existing elements in the mind and are themselves changed by them. This is quite a democratic idea in that it suggests more influence for the people vis-à-vis the religious establishment which makes occasional efforts to encourage standardization of beliefs across the Kingdom. In that sense, then, the various outbursts of enthusiasm for amulets and for deceased celebrities and monks should be seen, at least in part, as outbreaks of regional or local consciousness. The very basis of animism, after all, which is very specifically circumscribed in terms of space: the spirits occupy particular parts of nature and tend not to move around too much. As Kitiarsa emphasizes, when local deities (i.e. the deceased celebrities or monks) emerge, they are at once rooted in a specific temple and, hence, bounded in space. People will travel to that location to show their dedication, test their luck and so forth. The processes involved are summarized as follows:

“Deity, media, and money are three key elements in the creation of Thai popular Buddhism. They are central to the triple and interrelated processes of deification, mediation, and
commodification. Such processes are made possible by the life and work of individual key actors, as much as by mass followers or their audiences (p.7).”

When a new belief emerges, therefore, it represents an opportunity to create a new and local power source which can generate income, influence and good karma. That this has a political subtext in contemporary Thailand is evident. However, there are broader implications for hybridization and many of these are related to the nature of commodification and its relationship with the market economy. Kitiarsa sees changes in Thai society arising from the intensification of capitalism and manifest in such phenomena as increased personal mobility, demographic changes and rapid urbanization and, consequently, constantly changing the place where hybridization occurs, which is “… where several religious faiths come together and where popular concerns over the impact of the market economy are channeled (p.31).”

Having established this framework for analysis, Kitiarsa then goes on to explore how popular religious belief is expressed in modern Thailand and this makes for a colourful and fascinating account, touching upon spirit mediums, dead pop stars, the mania for magic amulets and a range of other practices. These are clearly explained in the author’s sympathetic but well-informed manner. Particularly interesting (and new to me) is the story of the folk singer Phumphuang Duangchan, whose not entirely happy life ended very early after critical medical conditions which have lent themselves to suspicions of supernatural agency. The lukthung queen has become a goddess and many pilgrimages are made to her wat with a view to seeking her assistance in providing winning lottery numbers. The lottery, in legal and illegal forms, is enormously popular throughout Thailand and the belief that spirits of the dead and other supernatural entities have the power to grant knowledge of winning numbers is widespread. In return, the spirits receive some kind of succor from the attention paid
to them. Locking the spirits of the dead into this kind of cash nexus rather validates the author’s theses.

I was fortunate enough to meet Khun Pattana once at a seminar in Singapore but my wife, who was working there for some years as Labour Counselor, knew him well. He was very active as an academic and particularly in working with migrant Thai workers. He came from a working-class background and never forgot his roots or lost his compassion for and understanding of fellow workers. His death at so early an age was a terrible tragedy for his family and friends. This book helps show the quite separate loss to the academic world.
Secret Genocide: Voices of the Karen of Burma

Daniel Pedersen


271 pp.

Reviewed by John Walsh, Editor of the *SIU Journal of Management*.

Political and social change in our neighbour Myanmar over the past few years has taken place at a staggering rate and has been surprising in nature. As recently as the tragedy of Cyclone Nargis in 2008, at least 138,000 people and probably many more, the grip that the military junta had on the country seemed to be as absolute as ever – so much so as to be in a position to refuse international relief, thereby callously condemning thousands of people to death, while insisting that a referendum go ahead irrespective of the suffering. Yet just a few years later, a civilian president has visited the White House, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is free to do as she pleases and industrial estates and infrastructure to link the interior of the country with international markets and places of consumption is being pushed ahead at a rapid pace. Hungry for profits, corporations are flocking to the country and jobs are to be created which will finally provide decent standards of
living to the long suffering citizens. Surely, then, the future must be bright. Unfortunately, of course, the weight of the past lies like a nightmare on the brains of the living. For decades, numerous ethnic groups have been fighting the military force of the central state – the *tatmadaw* – for a measure of autonomy and in some cases have used drug production and smuggling to fund their armed struggles. The fighting that has been involved has been in many cases vicious, with human rights abuses and atrocities committed against civilians. Most of the reportage of these struggles have depicted the *tatmadaw* as the principal protagonist and there is, indeed, plenty of evidence of wrongdoing by the army. However, even if the rebels have been brutalized by the attacks made on them, few people come out of the conflict well. These issues are at the heart of Daniel Pedersen’s reporting of the portion of the struggle affecting the Karen people, based on personal observation and face-to-face interviews with a number of important participants. The coverage is centred on the concept of genocide and the question is posed of whether the Burmese government was guilty of having conducted such a crime against the Karen people. The fact that the question is raised, not to mention raised as the central issue of the book, will give a good indication of the author’s opinion as to the answer. With wider coverage, of course, the same charge may be levelled against the junta and army in the case of other ethnic conflicts. Unfortunately, it seems unlikely that any charges will ever be laid against those culpable because of the culture of impunity that has settled across so much of the Mekong Region and because atrocities took place away from public scrutiny, involving people whose voices are rarely heard and who have little opportunity to collect and mobilize the evidence that would be necessary. It is possible that external assistance might make this possible but, as the trials of the Khmer Rouge leaders in Cambodia have indicated, the process can be incredibly lengthy and far from guaranteed to end well, even if the process of testifying and having the evidence treated seriously may be helpful to some people.
However, the outbreaks of violence against Muslim Burmese in recent months across the country rather suggest that long suppressed tensions and grievances are being given the opportunity to emerge and are being expressed along ethnic lines. A similar phenomenon took place in the former Yugoslavia after the death of Tito: years of unhappiness inspired violence that was channeled against what seemed to outside observers to be convenient victims rather than the real perpetrators. If this is similar to what is going to happen in Myanmar, then that would be dangerous indeed because there are so many weapons apparently loose in the country and experienced fighters with little to lose and much bitterness to assuage. In the north of the country, for example, there is evidence of the nervousness of the Chinese government at the potential total collapse of the Wa armed forces, which would leave untold numbers of armed fighters loose in the region, which would not be conducive to harmonious relations.

In terms of Pedersen’s book, this is not the best of its genre – there are several books available covering similar material and they tend to follow the same pattern of the author describing his journeys across the border with their exoticism and dangers and then the slightly star-struck interviews with the fierce fighters, victims and leaders. Each provides interesting information but tend to lack an overview of the issue that would be useful for anyone beyond the wholly unfamiliar with the region. This pattern is too often followed here and the book leaves the impression that more could have been achieved with the data collected.
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The idea of establishing a private university to support private sector development in Thailand and the region was initiated in 1996 by Dr. Thaksin Shinawatra and Professor Dr. Purachai Piumsombun. This was followed by the design development of an environmentally friendly campus by Dr. Soontorn Boonyatikarn in 1997. A year later, the innovative plans were presented to Her Royal Highness Princess Mahachakri Sirindhorn, and then to the Ministry of Universities which granted the license for operation towards the end of 1999. The first Shinawatra University Council Meeting was held on May 19th, 2000, marking the initial milestone of the long road to becoming an accomplished private university. In September 2002, the first batch of students was admitted, and the venture of creating and nurturing a prospective university had begun.
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- 100% graduate employment with very high average salaries.
- Top 10% of all higher education institutes accredited by The Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (Public Organization) ONESQA.
- Ranked 2nd by ONESQA among private higher education institutions in Thailand.
- Education Standards of SIU and all its schools in 2006 were unconditionally approved by ONESQA.
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- Over 70% of faculty members with doctoral degrees and 60% hold academic rank position.
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- More than 50% are graduate students.
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