

# **SOCIAL RESEARCH ON PERSPECTIVES TOWARDS THAI TRADITIONAL MASSAGE BUSINESS SME ETHICAL MANAGEMENT**

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**Received:** March 23, 2020; **Revised:** April 5, 2020; **Accepted:** May 22, 2020

## **Abstract**

This research aims to analyze the perspectives about Thai Traditional Massage Business SMEs, focusing on the management style of the Thai Traditional Massage Business. Thai traditional massage has been worldwide well known for the unique, natural and amazing treatment. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the overall contexts of their management and operations as to plan for the sustainability in the future. The research population refers to Thai Traditional massage SME owners. The qualitative approach, based in the constructivist paradigm, is principally employed, utilizing the depth observational interview with 20 business SME owners of the Thai Traditional massage service to apprehend and interpret insight of their operations. Means and Standard Deviations are then presented to stretch the phonemic and social realities. The findings disclosed that the business and operation model of the majority of the business entrepreneurs operates day-time services. Their majority of investment come from the private equity and loans from public financial institutions. The Thai Traditional massage business is organizationally structured, though loosely to some extent. The employees' work responsibilities are evidently supervised and divided, whereas the power of management still belongs to the owners' families of the businesses. The important challenge observed from the research is to consistently perpetuate employees' professional skill and competencies. Entrepreneurs have focused their quality of services to a key strategy to satisfy customers. However, the facing critical barriers were the shortage and high turnover of employees with sound skills.

In this work, efforts are being made to uncover some specific strategies that can be used to manage context information that reaches the center of decision making. The work is concluded with a detail comparison of the strategies to enable context application developers to make right choice of strategy to be employed in a specific situation.

**Keywords:** Thai Traditional massage SME, Perspective, Ethical Management, Social Realities

## **Introduction**

Thai Traditional massage SME business has been long existing and increasingly and more popular internationally. Thai Traditional massage market is, therefore, like other businesses, considered in the highly competitive situation. The success of the business relies on several factors, of which management is one of the key dynamics.

Thailand's economic development and direction, the promotion of tourism is mandated in the Eleventh Nation Economic and Social Development Plan (2012-2016), quite old references highlighting the quality by leveraging existing resources, environmental sustainability leading to the goal of self-sufficiency and, especially, poverty reduction. By such the concept, leveraging the production structure for increasing existing value and creating value of goods and services should be small capital based on knowledge and innovation.

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Thai traditional massage industry has growing collectively as one of the health services instigating Thailand's herbal along the rising services, using a variety of herbs available in the country as a selling point. Some herbs can replace products imported from other countries, whereas local herb prices is also lower. Thai traditional massage uses herbal products in various stages such as face, body and foot massages, etc. Thailand has tried to promote herbal medicinal treatment. To promote the economy in the country, the Ministry of Public Health has installed strategies for the development of pharmaceutical products and supports the production of a variety of drugs, including beauty products.

## **Statement of Problems**

Thai SME's have been nationwide promoted as being fundamental economic strength with sustainability. However, Thailand has gone through several sequences of changes and transformation of social, political and economic movements. Thai SME's has been seen that they are not very successful. Especially, those SME related to Thai Traditional businesses i.e. Thai traditional massage which actually have scattered around Thailand. The products and services are traditional by its nature, they remain practice as they have been doing, without adjust their management and operations or using technology to promote their businesses. Many business of Thai Traditional massage have closed themselves in few years of operations. The government

lacks of interest to apprehend the insight of Thai Traditional massage SME. Moreover, there are huge gap of the academic appreciation to such the business researches that emphasize the operations and management.

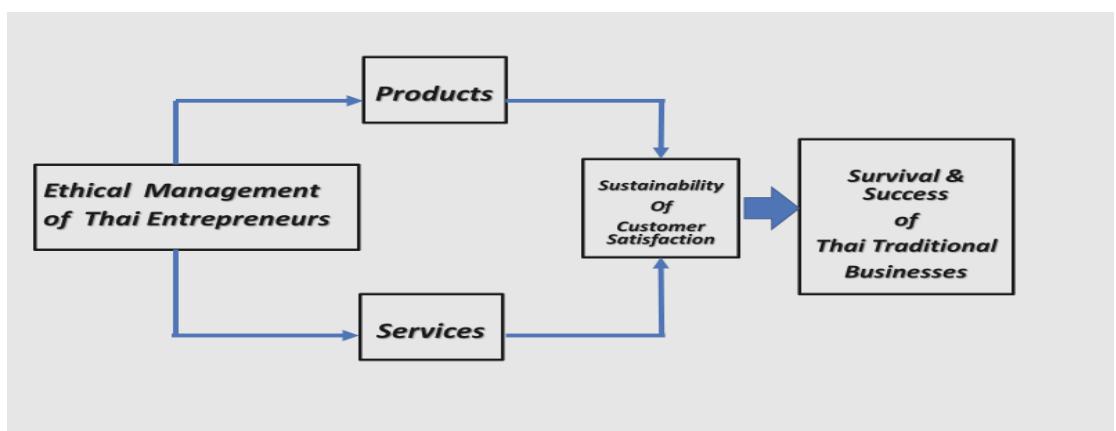
## Research Objectives

The objectives of this research consist of:

1. To explore the existing circumstance of SME Thai Traditional massage services.
2. To identify factors relating to the success of SME Thai Traditional massage business
3. To analyze the SME Thai Traditional massage service in terms of ethical management style of SME Thai Traditional services.

## Research Significance

This contributes to the fundamentally larger view of the Thai Traditional massage spa industry as consequences from observation of the actual business management of the Thai Traditional Massage spa industry, including the barriers is demonstrated. There has not been previous earlier consistent information. In addition, from interviewed entrepreneurs' perspectives, identifications of various factors on customers' behaviors are scrutinized and highlighted relating to customers' rationale and preferences in the service selections. This study benefits the preparation of marketing plan, customers' satisfaction for the development of the business



## Scope of Research

This research aims to study business and Thai Traditional massage SMEs in Bangkok. The Population are the business entrepreneurs selected purposively.

## Literature Review

### Concepts of Management

Management refers to the process of the goal of the organization of working together. The principles of management are universal and can be applied to all types of small to large sized organizations i. e. government organizations, private, non-profit, and religious. Concepts of the previous administration (Koontz, and O' Donnell, 1955) are concluded as follows:

Planning	Planning is to define objectives and consider how they should act in order to achieve that objective. Therefore, as a function of the service organization must decide what is intended to the future and pledging to act, how to achieve success on that objective. The plan includes conduct self-monitoring to determine the current state of the organization. The survey environment the specific objectives forecasting future situations stipulated guidelines and the need to use resources.
Organizing	Organizing is to organize people and resources to work and achieve the aim of the work or the allocation of resources include identify and describe the tasks needed to be performed. To spread out the duties combining various functions a position it. Assignment responsibility and authority to restructuring of the organization when the situation changes. Following the communication process thoroughly establish the necessary human resources. Recruiting qualified workers are selected by the party nomination.
Leading	Leading is to stimulate enthusiasm. Achieve organizational goals this will involve the efforts of managers to motivate employees. Leading will help achieve success. Providing guidance and advice to ensure compliance with the performance. The award is based on performance.
Controlling	Controlling is the follow-up work. And improve on what is needed. The process of evaluation work. This control includes establishing the standard, comparing and tracking performance against standards.

### Service Quality (SERVQUAL) and Customer Satisfaction

The relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction has received considerable attention in academic literature. The results of most research studies have indicated that the service quality and customer satisfaction are indeed independent but are closely related that and a rise in one is likely to result in an increase in another construct. SERVQUAL, a quality management framework, was first published in 1985, (Zeithaml and Berry, 1985).

SERVQUA highlights the main components of high quality service. The SERVQUAL originally specifies five factors i. e. Reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy and responsiveness. For businesses, this is used to measure and manage service quality asking information through questionnaires exploring both the customer expectations of service quality in terms of these five dimensions, and their perceptions of the service they receive. When customer expectations are greater than their perceptions of received delivery, service quality is deemed low.

Generally, the improvement in service design and delivery helps achieving higher levels of service quality. The service design leads to changes brought about in the design of service products and facilities. For example, in service delivery, changes can be brought about in the service delivery processes and the circumstances where the service delivery takes place and improvements in the interaction processes between customers and service providers. Various techniques can be used to make changes such as: Quality function deployment, falsifying, moving the line of visibility and the line of accessibility, and blueprinting. In order to ensure and increase the 'conformance quality' of Services, that is, service delivery happening as designed, various methods are available. Some of these include Guaranteeing; Mystery: Shopping; Recovering; Setting standards and measuring; Statistical process control and Customer involvement. Ojasalo, (2010).

#### Previous Researches

Phoradet (2010), studies the factors that are important to the selection of Thai Traditional Message Services in Pak Chong district. The study showed that the customers of Thai Traditional Message service are mostly female, 21-30 years and 31-40 years, most of the private employees with monthly income of over 30,000 baht, popular service time 04: 00-08: 00 pm. and spending approximately 1,000— 1,500 baht per month, each visit 90 minutes. Related to this industry. Mauncharoen (2006), Studied business management processes for herbs product and use in Lampang. The study points out that information about the product is much important for business process management. Deefakvaan (2008), studies about personnel management, and concluded that wages are determined by skills and qualifications. Supervisors maintain good relationships with employees, while paying special extra helped keeping morale and mind power. The barriers found is that entrepreneurs' lack of knowledge about the management of marketing.

### **Research Methodology**

The main research methodology approach is qualitative, in order to gain perspectives from 20 business operators in several aspects

#### Population and Sample

The population is Thai traditional massage SME. The case study of this research is the Thai Traditional Massage Spa. The sampling size is 20 business shop operators.

### Data Collection

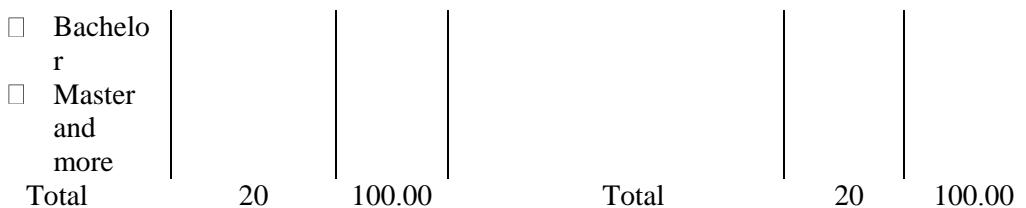
It uses a method of participatory observation and interviews. The interview will address the issues related to the conceptual framework created. The statistics used to analyze data are percentage, Mean and Standard Deviation. The tools used to collect data for the study is a Semi-structured questions for in-depth interviews.

### Finding

The Analysis of Data on entrepreneurs Thai Traditional massage spa classified by gender, age, education, experience in the business of investment and number of employees.

Table 1: Profile of Thai Traditional Massage SME Entrepreneurs

General information	Number	%	General information	Number	%
Gender			Years of Services		
<input type="checkbox"/> Male	10	50.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 1 year	0	
<input type="checkbox"/> Female	10	50.00	<input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 years	2	10.00
			<input type="checkbox"/> 4-5 years	5	25.00
			<input type="checkbox"/> Over 5 years	13	65.00
Total	20	100.00	Total	20	100.00
Age			Investment (baht)		
<input type="checkbox"/> 30-35	3	15.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 1,000,000	5	25.00
<input type="checkbox"/> 36-41	6	30.00	<input type="checkbox"/> 1,000,000 - 2,000,000	12	60.00
<input type="checkbox"/> 42 years	11	55.00	<input type="checkbox"/> 2,000,001 - 6,000,000	3	15.00
			<input type="checkbox"/> 6,000,001 - 10,000,000		
Total	20	100.00	Total	20	100.00
Education			Number of employees		
<input type="checkbox"/> Junior High / High School	0		<input type="checkbox"/> Fewer than 10 people	7	35.00
<input type="checkbox"/> High School Vocational.	4	20.00	<input type="checkbox"/> More than 10 people	13	65.00



From Table 1, twenty entrepreneurs were interviewed, 10 female and 10 male. Ages between 36-41 are 6, 42 up 11. Regarding their education, 10 of them holds master degree while 6 have bachelor and 4 are vocational level. Thirteen of them open the business more than 5 years, 5 for 4-5 years and 2 for 2-3 years respectively. Regarding their investment, twelve of them (60%) said that they invested between 2-6 millions, 3 persons between 6-10 million baht and five interviewees between 1-2 million baht. At last, 13 (65%) shops have more than ten employees and seven (35%) have fewer than 10.

From Table 2, the services ranks no. 1 is face massage (59.00%), body (54.00%), foot (51.30 %) and head (20.70%) respectively. The face massage users are male, the emphasis on the price factor and the location of more than female users. The overall factor products, the marketing personnel, physical environment and service process is important to choose the Thai Traditional Massage spa is no different. Customer aged 48 years and above, the important factor to the product rather than users aged between 18-23 years of age between 24-29 years, between 30-35 years.

Table 2: Entrepreneurs' Perspective on Customers' Pattern Use of Services

Service	%	Customers' Behaviors	%
			Duration of Service/Time
General Body Traditional Massage	54.60	30-60 minutes	48.00
Face Traditional Message	59.00	1-2 hours	45.00
Foot Massage	51.30	More than two hours	7.00
Head Traditional Message	20.70		Total 100.00
Total	100.00		
Selection of Shops		Days	
self	73.00	Mondays	7.70
friend	23.70	Tuesdays	6.00
Family members	2.70	Wednesdays	9.70
others	0.60	Thursdays	2.30
		Fridays	18:30

Total	100.00	Saturdays	26.30
		Sundays	46.00
		Total	100.00
Frequency use of service per month.			
1- 2 times / month	86.70	Accompanying	
3-4 times / month	12.00	Go alone	32.30
5 or more times	1.30	Spouses	6.00
Total	100.00	Friends	60.30
		Others	1.30
		Total	100.00
Spending Per Time			
Less than 300	22.70	Numbers of Shop Services Preferred	
301-500 baht	50.30	Visiting	
501-800 baht	19.00	1 time	55.70
More than 800 baht	8.00	2	37.30
Total	100.00	3	4.70
		More than of 3	2.30

### Entrepreneurs' Perspectives on Business Management Aspects

The entrepreneurs have provided information which are the feedback from their customers in seven aspects i.e. products, service fee, locations, marketing, human resources, physical environment and Services, Show in table 3.

Table 3: Entrepreneurs' Perspectives on Business Management Aspects

	X	S.D.	2) Service Fee (Prices)	X	S.D.
A product of innovative Services.	3.97	0.79	Clear signs	4.24	0.89
A variety of Services	4.01	0.69	Cheaper than other stores.	3.40	0.89
Use tools and modern equipment.	4.07	0.72	The price of the service	4.05	0.83
The products are used to see results in no time.	3.97	0.92	To pay by credit card.	2.93	1.18
The product is safe.	4.36	0.80	Payment by debit card fee.		

3) Location	X	S.D.	4) Marketing	X	S.D.
Apply a street level location easily visible.	4.19	0.78	Advertising from various publications.	3.96	0.94
Close to Home	3.29	0.89	The festival has reduced costs.	3.93	0.91
Near the work	3.37	0.93			
Parking for customers.	4.21	0.85	Cumulative coupon redeemable for a free service.	3.84	0.96
Convenient transportation	4.21	0.71	There are free drinks during the service.	3.92	1.05
Adjacent to the main road priority.	3.91	0.83	Prepare the card.	3.65	0.75
			Offer discounts to members	3.70	0.77
5) Human	X	S.D.	6) Physical Environment	X	S.D.
Beaming	4.49	0.64	beautifully decorated	4.28	0.76
Friendly	4.46	0.60	room	4.15	0.73
Sincerity	4.33	0.84	Separate Private	4.11	0.81
Good quality	4.47	0.68	Room	4.29	0.73
Emphasizes creating satisfied customers.	4.39	0.76	Atmosphere natural	4.26	0.75
	4.32	0.73	Fit	4.03	0.67
Personality and attitude of staff	4.13	0.82	Clean		
			Decoration		
			Good Waiting Area		
7) Service	X	S.D.			
New modern service	4.24	0.76			
Service Quality Fast	4.43	0.74			
Safety in Service and Standards	3.38	0.94			
Benefits of Service	4.25	0.73			
Additional Services	4.10	0.72			
Good Reception Showing respects	3.89	0.83			
	4.09	0.51			

## Conclusion

## Discussion

The business of Thai Traditional Massage is quite unique characteristics, however, most operators more focus on the operation; all were day operation. The funding comes from the funding comes their saving and loans from financial institutions. Management is found as family style, and work as a team to provide customer satisfaction in service. Organization is clear by dividing responsibilities but the administration. The number of staff were approximately 10 people, massage skills are very important, determining a fair wage and it is crucial to retaining talent. It is an important part of the business. Operators assigned shop managers responsible whereas they listened among themselves the feedback for improvement. The meeting are arranged regularly to discuss various problems and share update information from government. . Creating a sense of involvement and ownership of the business. Entrepreneurs are motivated employees, most enterprises have a good relationship with all employees. The operator has an incentive to employees to work. Control plays roles on the quality of management, emphasizing also 6S consisting Smile, Speak, Speed, Sincere, Services, Satisfaction and focused Services to meet the standards set out four areas where personnel, equipment and Services evaluating the performance of the employees themselves. The management is concluded as short-term plans as their business are small size. They are affected by many external business factors. According to all interviewed operators, the operation must consist of joint consultation and solutions, and this is quality services. Massage staff must be well able to communicate with customers, asking customers what they particularly like to do, for example, face, shoulders, body or foot massages. The key operating principle is based on the satisfaction of customers.

### **Thai Massage Business Entrepreneurs**

Entrepreneurs interested in investing in Thai Traditional Massage spa operations should, for the Health Care, should hold at least basic massage knowledge, health and wellness services. Entrepreneurs should be ready and willing to serve, friendly and courteous to build better relationships with customers, which will impress customers and they will come back to the shops. The operator has the knowledge and understand product, tools and equipment used, as well as various herbal formulations to serve its customers. Regarding investments, transactions a day Thai Traditional Message spa will cost quite high. Table 4 below the priorities arrangement for the massage services.

Table 4: Priorities Arrangement of Management

No.	Priorities	Ranks	Mean
1	Human Resources	1	4.49
2	Service Process	2	4.43
3	Product	3	4.36
4	Physical Environment	4	4.29
5	Prices	5	4.24
6	Location	6	4.21
7	Marketing	7	3.96

### **Ethical Management**

According to the entrepreneurs' interviews, they all agree that the honest to customers are the first major factor in management, especially keeping promises to customers. So, the faithfulness is the element that customers were given and reconfirmed. The treatment of ethical management has been applied to both customers and their own employees. They cannot less pay attention to either parts, as they need customers to continue their business, and this cannot exist, unless they can keep massage staff with good skills. Therefore, it concludes that trustfulness and justice must be automatically held high for the satisfaction both customers and their own staff. The ethical management must actually been tested and evaluated by both product and services, which then will initial the sustainability of customer satisfaction leading to the survival and success of Thai Traditional Business. This is the only front way to sustain the business in the long term purposes as purposed in the figure 1 below.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

The above research is carried out in the complete context of Thai Culture in Bangkok. The gap still exists in term of other aspects, such as foreign customers, due to the popularity of Thai massage worldwide. So, it is strongly recommended to conduct future investigation accordingly.

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