

Development of Lodging Business Management Standards of Bang Khonthi Community in Samut Songkram Province

Poramet Saeng-On

Abstract—This research aims to develop ways of lodging business management of Bang Khonthi community in Samut Songkram province that are appropriate with the cultural context of the Bang Khonthi community.

Eight lodging business owners were interviewed. It was found that lodging business that are family business must be done with passion, correct understanding of self, culture, nature, Thai way of life, thorough, professional development, environmentally concerned, building partnerships with various networks both community level, and public sector and business cohorts. Public relations should be done through media both traditional and modern outlets, such as websites and social networks to provide customers convenience, security, happiness, knowledge, love and value when travel to Bang Khonthi. This will also help them achieve sustainability in business, in line with the 10 Home Stay Standard Thailand.

Suggestions for operators are as follows: Operators need to improve their public relations work. They need to use technology in public relations such as the internet. Management standards must be improved. Souvenir and local products shops should be arranged in the compound. Product pricing must be set accordingly. They need to join hands to help each other. Quality of the business operation should be raised to meet the standards. Educational measures to reduce the impact caused by tourism on the community such as efforts to reduce energy consumption.

Keywords—Homestay, lodging business, management, standard.

I. INTRODUCTION

THERE are many home stays and resorts in Bang Khonthi community in Samut Songkram province. There are various sites. In both the cultural, conservative, agricultural and conservation is a valuable resource in promoting the tourism of both Thailand and foreigners alike. Wuttichai Soontornsamai et al. [1] stated that the number of foreign tourists is increasing and they are interested in culture, tradition and the way of life of the Tapong community in Rayong province which are the key opportunity for business. Businesses related to culture therefore are boosting the economy of the province and consequently the country. Lodging business is important and community participation. Tourism business generates income distribution to various professions such as Longtail-boat rent business, Longtail-boat service and food business. People's livelihood is improved. The village has a well-developed road, dams, water supply and electricity throughout the community. Number of tourists

increase during weekends and holidays. They stay overnight in the Bang Khonthi community despite the travel time to Bangkok is only 1 hour drive. This is because the tourists want to experience and appreciate the life and culture of the locals and nature of Mae Klong. In line with Supol Chaithorn [2], Lao Wiang in Baan Don Kha village provides accommodation and tourism programs to experience Lao Wiang ways of life adhering the principles of cultural tourism and conservation. While Lao Song community tourism adhere to the 5 principles i.e. 1) Conservation and preservation of the local culture 2) managed by the community for the community, 3) tourist-oriented services 4) Real experience on the local ways of life and 5) Transparent and fair [5]. In conclusion, accommodation is the key element of tourism. Tourists have the choice of accommodation, thus, business operators must improve the standards in property management and services in order to be accepted and satisfied.

II. OBJECTIVES

To develop ways of lodging business management of Bang Khonthi community in Samut Songkram province that are appropriate with the cultural context of the Bang Khonthi community.

III. SCOPE OF RESEARCH

Scope and Content. The input factor of lodging business management for operators refers to general characteristics of operators, such as financial planning, accounting, quality management, resources and labor. Lodging business management process involved the Marketing Mix (7Ps) i.e. product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence and presentation and process.

IV. METHODOLOGY

A. Population

Lodging business operators: home stays or resorts in Bang Khonthi district. Data from January-June 2012 shows that there are 56 participants.

B. Sample Group

Choosing sample group of lodging business operators by divided into 2 categories: home stay category and use simple random sampling 4 from each group totaling 8 samples to conduct in-depth interview.

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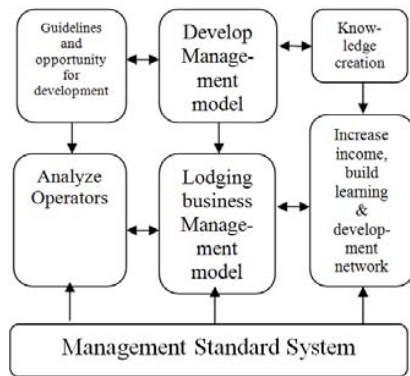


Fig. 1 Conceptual Framework

C. Tools

The participants were interviewed to obtain the in-depth information about the details of the property. The approach of business management developed by the researcher was tested by interviewing with the operators who are not in the sample group and then improved to achieve the correct understanding of the communication between the interviewer and the interviewees. This interview questions covered the business management aspects of the 10 standards: Accommodation, food and Nutrition, safety, hospitality, Tourism program, Natural resources and environment, culture Supplementary income and community business, Home stay management and public relations. Lodging business management process involved the Marketing Mix (7Ps) i.e. 1) product 2) price 3) place 4) promotion 5) people 6) physical evidence and presentation 7) process

Qualitative data analysis. Data were obtained from observation and in-depth interview. The 10 standards and the Marketing Mix for lodging business management process (7Ps) were jointly analyzed to verify and find the strong features that should be developed, then synthesize the approach to lodging business management in the Bang Khonthi community that are appropriate to their lifestyle and business sustainability.

D. Data Collection

Data on the current management model of operators were collected by observations during the Bang Khonthi Conservation activities and meeting with the group on a monthly basis, giving a better understanding on their management models, problems, needs and solutions of each operator.

In-depth interview was conducted to the home stay and resort business operators to collect data on the 10 standards and the Marketing Mix for lodging business management process (7Ps). After that, the researcher recorded the interview session with the sample group with their permission.

V. RESULTS

A. General Characteristics of Lodging Business Operators

Most home stay business are family business. The owners of the houses usually are the operator. There do not employ

full-time employees. The owners and the family members are responsible for taking of the accommodation. (There are part-time cleaner in some case.) Accommodations in the community have good structure and located in a decent natural environment. Many are surrounded by orchards. The owner and guest rooms are appropriately proportioned. All home facilities are prepared for customer service as well. Facilities are well-provided. Cleanliness is main importance. Bathrooms are well-proportioned. Safety, hospitality, booking, registration are food the issues that operators are closely monitoring.

Most resort operators are small and medium size group. They are able to receive around 50 - 150 tourists. Some are being improved and expanded at present to accommodate a seminar group of up to 200 people. Most of them are family business. Some employ managers and staff to do different jobs. Number of tourists is still unpredictable. Only a few operators have customers from public sector coming for seminars and they normally make a reservation in advance for months. These resorts provide various facilities. But the highlight is these resorts are tucked in the garden or fruit orchard depending on the location. A few among those, all meals are served. Some other resorts can also provide meals upon the guests' request. Safety is the main priority. Reservations can be made by mail, telephone and internet. Most customers made their reservations via telephone and pay deposit of 30-50% of the total amount depending on the conditions of each resort.

B. Current Situation of Lodging Business Management Model

The analysis of the current lodging business management model in relation to the 10 Home Stay Standards Thailand is as follow:

1. Accommodation Rooms are well-proportioned between the owner and guest rooms for both home stays and resorts. The properties are clean, safe, private and pleasant.
2. Food and Nutrition Especially for breakfast, all ingredients and cooking process are hygienic. Cleaning drinking water and provided. Utensils are clean. Only 2 of them buy breakfast for guests upon requests.
3. Safety All of them are trained to provide first aid and have tight security systems
4. Hospitality Hospitality is also important for all operators by making acquaintance and activities imparting knowledge about the way of life of the people in Bang Khonthi.
5. Tourism program All 8 operators provide a variety of tourism activities to choose from. Visitors may ask the owner to be their guide or provide transportation.
6. Natural resources and environment Everyone realize the importance of preserving travel destinations. Natural resources and environmental activities are hosted as well as those concerning energy conservation and waste management.

7. **Culture** All 8 operators agreed that local tradition and culture including Bang Khonthi ways of life should be maintained.
8. **Supplementary income and community business** All 8 operators acknowledged the importance of community products, in case of Operator 7, local food such as Nam Prik Long Rua (a type of chili paste) and Thai mackerel fish products
9. **Home stay management** Bang Khonthi Conservation group is strong community association with committee, rules and regulations adhered together and provide assistance to each other such as passing customers, hosting community activity. All of them have the advance reservation system.
10. **Public relations** All have brochures, pamphlets, maps and websites for the accommodation including interesting information of the area for tourists. There are some websites that have not been updated. Some websites have no information. However, all of them realized the importance of electronic public relations and willing to provide information and help create Bang Khonthi community website as well as setting up signs at and to their accommodations.

The analysis of the current lodging business management model in Bang Khonthi community in relation to the Marketing Mix (7Ps) are as follow:

1. **Product:** Operators are able to respond to the tourists' needs quite well. Reservations are usually made in advance before the visitors arrive therefore there are not many problems.
2. **Price:** Each operator set their own pricing.
3. **Place:** Accommodation information are placed at the provincial tourism authority. Some operators have their own websites. Brochures, business cards and word of mouth are also useful.
4. **Promotion:** This is of the most important tools of communication to guests. The objectives are to inform or influence the attitudes and behavior on the service. The promotion can be divided into two parts: the pre-decision marketing and after the guests decided to stay at the property. Resorts tend to have clearer promotional campaigns than home stays.
5. **People or Employee:** The medium-sized resorts employ more than 10 staff. Each staff is given a specific roles and responsibilities but they can rotate and assist other departments as assigned by a manager. For small-sized resorts, owners are usually in charge of everything and may hire 3-5 staff, which means everyone must do everything. Although a specific job description is set, but after finishing the main job, they have to assist with other duties.
6. **Home stay operators** do not employ full-time staff. Owners take care of the property and provide services. Only some hire a part-time staff on a daily or hourly basis to clean rooms, or take care of the garden.
7. **Physical Evidence and Presentation:** The properties, rooms and facilities are in a clean and good condition.

Simple lifestyle and calm atmosphere are naturally pleasant.

8. **Process:** Information on regulations and services are provided to the tourists. Some operators jointly inspect and monitor standards among their group. This provides assistance in operating and development of standards, especially the cleanliness aspect.

C. Lodging Business Management Model in Bang Khonthi Community

After data were analyzed, the researcher and lodging business operators in Bang Khonthi community have come up with guidelines *Bang Khonthi Lodging Business Management* and the 10 regulations for Bang Khonthi Lodging business management are expressed as given below:

1. Fresh, clean and hygienic food and drink
2. Clean bathrooms and toilets
3. Reasonable-priced rooms
4. Clean, quiet, beautiful nature
5. Interesting local history and culture
6. Interesting activities
7. Appealing stores and souvenir shops
8. Safe for tourists
9. Friendly and smiling owners
10. Kindly help each other

VII. DISCUSSION

The results revealed that some of the lodging business operators in Bang Khonthi community have not reached the standards because they are small-sized business, lacking group cooperation, and lacking public relations strategies to reach the public. This is an early stage of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) business development. Operators do not have sufficient knowledge in systemic business management. Therefore, more development is needed in order to sustain the business.

The study also found that the collaboration of operators' network will allow the operation to be successful and sustainable. This is consistent with Terdchai Chuaybumrung's [3] and Sudarat Saengchamnon and Somdech Rungsrisawat [4] view that the principles of sustainable tourism development should include the community cooperation. Balance between the economic, social, cultural and environmental objectives as well as cooperation between tourism destinations and operators.

VIII. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE WORK

1. Operators need to improve their public relations because it is the main weakness according to this study. The use technology such as the internet in public relations is necessary. For those who have already proceeded, it is also essential to constantly update their websites in order to provide up to date information to attract the interest of visitors.

2. Operators should continue to improve the management standards including the prevention or pest control, variety of food, communication tools in an emergency, first aid,

direction signs in the compound and inform the regulations to the guests.

3. Lodging business management model according to the government standards should be studied to get more insight and beneficial to the improvement of the business management in the future.

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