

# The enhancement of service quality by utilizing traditional service factors as competitive advantages for Thai tourism industry

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## Keywords

Competitive Advantages, Thai Tourism, Industries, Service Quality

## Abstract

*Service quality is extremely important as an ingredient success of Thai tourism industry and that it is also vital to apply the traditional service factors to be applied to tourism industry reformation and private sector of Thailand. The application of traditional service factors will enhance the sustainable service quality improvement both level of efficiency and effectiveness. The purposes paper were to investigate the influences of tradition services factors to the success of Thai tourism industry and to investigate ranking of the level of importance of each traditional service factors in Thai tourism industry. This was a survey research of tourism by using quantitative method and information from literature reviews of many articles, news, newspaper, and websites. The research findings revealed that traditional service factors included honesty, patience, kindness, humbleness, meticulousness, and dedication are the most important ingredient of success in service quality of Thai tourism and can be applied in every dimension.*

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## 1. Introduction

The globalization means the interdependent of buyers and sellers and more importantly it is always changing and affects every economy and every business in the world more or less. Certainly, globalization has tremendous effects on tourism industry. As we are in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, it is clear that there is increasingly complication in boundless environment. Achieving higher level of competitiveness becomes the main goal of most tourism businesses and entrepreneurs. Management Excellence is a key success of modern way that enables an organization and business to survive and achieve growth. However, when the level of competitive becomes intense, there is a need to find other ways to achieve the higher level of competitiveness in tourism industry, especially in service quality. Traditional service factors of Thailand has been practiced for many centuries. Thai people often know the best way to treat their guests of honors. These tradition of service can be used to be applied in the modern world of tourism and service quality.

For many decades, tourism industry is known as one of the most important industries of Thailand that can bring for foreign revenues and employment. Generally many people think that there are three major things to do in Thailand that create a huge revenues: Temples, beaches, and bars. In facts Thai can offer many tourist destinations and variety of food, culture, and entertainment. Presently, tourism industry brings huge revenues, 2.3 trillion baht annually from 30 million international tourists visiting Thailand. Tourism industry accounted for about 10 percent of the Thai gross domestic products and employs about 4.5 million labors or approximately 10 percent of the Thai labor force. Tourism industry of Thailand has a very high potential to be developed and improved to be highly competitive. It is a great vision to apply that that traditional service factors to improve service quality and in turn improve the Thai economy. While traditional service factors has been applied to use in many corporates and companies in private sector, then the public sector has started to promote the application of the ideas and principles of traditional service factors, then become an important and necessary policy of the government to apply to use both public and private sector. From the strategic marketing information of Thai tourism authority of 2016, Ministry of Tourism and Sports stated that there are many main drawbacks of Thai tourism industry and the major drawback was about the level of competitiveness. The weakness of Thai tourism industry are about the safety problems, transportation, traffic congestion, and poor environment. Significantly,

the strengths of Thai tourism industry included employees in tourism industry often aim to develop and improve their skills and knowledge of services quality. The government policy of tourism industry needed to be improved in order to catch up with the modern global tourism. Finally, there is a need of integration of planning and holistic management to coordinate both public and private sectors to enhance the level of tourism competitiveness in the world market. In other words, it is imperative that the tourism industry reformation need to apply the principles of traditional service factors to offer better service quality and allow the great level of competitiveness to be new engines of tourism industry growth.

## 2. Data and Methodology

There were two major purposes of this research. The first purpose was aimed to investigate the influences of tradition services factors contribute to the success of Thai tourism industry. The second purpose was to examine the ranking of the level of importance of each traditional service factors in Thai tourism industry in order to find out what kind of traditional service factor was the most importance and with what reasons. In fact, the traditional service factors included honesty, patience, kindness, humbleness, meticulousness, and dedication. These were the most important ingredient of success in service quality of Thai tourism and can be applied in every dimension. This research paper was conducted as a survey tourism research by using quantitative method and information from literature reviews of many articles, news, newspaper, and websites. A Likert-five-scale questionnaire was designed specifically to investigate traditional service quality from the perspectives of international tourists in Bangkok and to evaluate their level of importance as a service quality. The population included all international tourists in Bangkok, Thailand during the first quarter of year 2016. The probability sampling technique was performed to obtain a sample group that included 400 international tourists from the departure lounges of Suvarnabhumi international airport. Taro Yamane Technique was utilized to obtain a proper sample group. Descriptive statistics utilized in this research including percentage, mean, and standard deviation. In addition, 30 pilot questionnaires were tested so that each question have to pass the Cronbach Alpha criteria with at least 0.7.

## 3. Findings

From the findings, it revealed that all six traditional service factors were the important ingredient for Thai tourism industry in short term and long term to improve the level of competition in service quality. There were three areas that needed to cooperate in order to improve the level of competition. First, the government policy or public sector needed to promote the rules and regulation, structure and process of working to incorporate the traditional service factors such as honesty, patience, kindness, humbleness, meticulousness, and dedication. The private sector which included hotels, airlines, restaurants, tour agents and etc., needed to improve and implement traditional service factors in their working process as well as being honesty and fairness to international tourists as well as to provide a high standard of service quality. Lastly, the local tourism entrepreneurs needed to understand the meanings and practices of traditional service factors. In addition, there are six important ways to apply the traditional service factors into tourism industry effectively and efficiently. From the survey of 400 international tourists, the ranking of traditional service quality has been ranked as follow: honesty, patience, kindness, humbleness, meticulousness, and dedication. Honesty is the most important service quality in the perspective of international tourists and the three sectors of public, private, and local entrepreneurs. As the Thai proverb said, "Honesty can keep customers with you for a long time, while crooked can fool customers only one time" Therefore, honesty is considered as the most important traditional service quality.

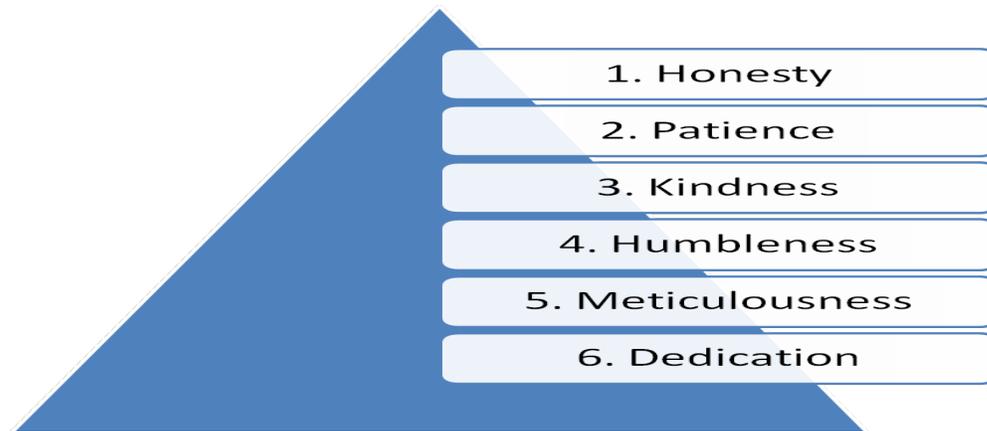


Fig 1. Traditional Service Factors

First, it is important to apply traditional service quality to all public sector, private sector, and local entrepreneurs of tourism by encouraging the three sectors promote the virtue of traditional service factors in order to manage the tourism destinations and service quality such as being patience, offering fair prices, and providing high standard quality of services, and increasing customer satisfaction. Second, it is important to promote traditional service quality by ways of the transparency method. The needs to be promoted as the common policy such as allowing the third party to monitor the progress, opening dialogue and distribute information freely, and revealing all important information on website as much as possible. Third, it is important to increase the participation level. Certainly, free participation should be high and open the general public as much as possible. Allow many nonprofit organizations to participate and monitoring the progress of the promotion and the activities. The positive power of three sectors would create a positive synergy of ideas and new concept to enhance the level of competitiveness of Thai tourism industry. Fourth, it is important to utilize the laws and regulations in order protect international tourists 'rights. Make certain that they feel protected by the laws as well as good culture and tradition of services. Fifth, it is important to take direct responsibility. This means every sector must be aware of their duty and their responsibility to take care of international tourists as good as they can. The fact is if the international tourists are satisfied with their experience of receiving the high standard of service quality, they are more likely choose to be back to visit Thailand again as well as willingly recommend their family members and friends to visit Thailand in the near future. Finally, it is important to create high service quality that is the value of money. This means to utilize all the tourist environment, tourist resources, and tourist destinations effectively and worth the value of money of international tourists. In other words, to manage the tourist resources properly. In addition, in order to manage the tourism properly and effectively, there is a need to focus on all traditional service factors: honesty, patience, kindness, humbleness, meticulousness, and dedication. In addition, to ensure the success of applying these factors, there is a need to cooperate and monitor the progress of organizations that applying the traditional services factors (Koolrojanapat, 2017).

#### 4. Conclusion

The competitive level of Thai tourism industry need to be improve in order to survive in the world tourism in the long run and in a sustainable way. To apply the concept of traditional service factors is so vital to the success of tourism industry improvement which requires the faithful and dedicated strong cooperation of private sector, public sector, and local community of Thailand. The application of traditional service factors was designed to enhance the sustainable tourism economic development, increase the revenues, increase the level of customer satisfaction in service quality, and crate a high potential of level of competitiveness both efficiency and effectiveness. The major contribution of this concepts of traditional service factors was to bring the concepts that rooted in Thai society, easy to understand by the Thai employees but focus more on the service quality

improvement. Therefore, in the long run, it certainly can enhance the level of competitiveness of tourism industry.

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