



College of Management
Mahidol University

CLSG
Consumer Life-course Studies Group

**International
Conference
Series 2020
Bangkok**

**The Ninth Annual International Conference
on Consumer Research and Marketing:
Frontiers of Theory, Method and Practice**

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



College of Management
Mahidol University

CLSG
Consumer Life-course Studies Group

**International Conference Series 2020 Bangkok, Thailand:
Ninth Annual International Conference on Consumer
Research and Marketing: Frontiers of Theory, Method,
and Practice**

November 21st 2020

Bangkok, Thailand

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

ISBN 978-616-443-503-2 (e-book)

Published by
College of Management, Mahidol University
69 Vipawadee-Rangsit Road, Phayathai, Bangkok, 10400, THAILAND

Copyright © 2020 College of Management, Mahidol University. All rights reserved.



Contents

Schedule	2
Life course explanations of the effects of COVID-19 on consumer behavior	4
Using the Life Course Paradigm to Study Financial Well-Being in Late Life.....	5
A Conceptual Framework for the Effects of Disruptive Family Events on Compulsive Buying of Young Adults Using the Life Course Approach.....	6
A Study of Factors Affecting Chinese MOOC Users' Satisfaction and Continuance Intention	7
Implementing A Problem-Based Learning (PBL) As A Methodological Approach to Enhance Online Learning Effectiveness Under the Covid-19 Pandemic: A Pilot Study	8
Investigation into New Skill Requirements Toward Enhancing International Hotel Management Program at Stamford International University: A Focus on Front Office Operations of Hotels in Thailand	9
The Evolution of Research on Sustainable Consumption	10
Managing Hotel Spa Business after COVID-19 through McKinsey's 7-S Framework: Case Study in Bangkok	11
Exploring an Impact of Digital SERVQUAL towards Customer Engagement: The Case Study of Telemedicine in Thailand	25
An analysis of TripAdvisor reviews of shopping malls in Thailand	26
Do Facebook Ads stimulate impulse purchasing behavior among adults in Bangkok?	27
A Study on the Travel Intention of the Generation Z	28
Academic Theories and Implementation obstacles to Develop Age-friendly Tourism in Phuket, Thailand under the New Normal Era	29



Schedule

Saturday November 21st, 2020

Venue: 2nd Floor at the College of Management, Mahidol University
(69 Vipawadee Rangsit Road)

Time	Schedule
09:00 - 09:30	Registration
<i>Morning Session 1: The Life Course Approach</i>	
09:30 - 10:00	Introduction The Life Course Approach to Research <i>Professor George P. Moschis</i>
10:00 - 10:20	Life Course Explanations of the Effects of COVID-19 on Consumer Behavior <i>Sarinya L. Suttharattanagul, Yuanfeng Cai, and George P. Moschis</i>
10:20 - 10:40	T Using the Life Course Paradigm to Study Financial Well-being in Late Life <i>Pattharanittha Prakitsuwan, George P. Moschis, and Randall Shannon</i>
10:40 - 11:00	A Conceptual Framework for the Effects of Disruptive Family Events on Compulsive Buying of Young Adults Using the Life Course Approach <i>Betül Balıkcıoğlu, Randall Shannon and George P. Moschis</i>
<i>Morning Session 2: Education</i>	
11:15 - 11:35	A Study of Factors Affecting Chinese MOOC Users' Satisfaction and Continuance Intention <i>Yanxia Nong (*presented via Zoom)</i>
11:35 - 11:55	Implementing a Problem-based learning (PBL) as a Methodological Approach to Enhance On-line Learning Effectiveness Under the Covid-19 Pandemic: A Pilot Study at Stamford International University <i>Angsaya Siepong</i>
11:55 - 12:20	Investigation Into the 21st Century Skill Requirements for Students Toward Enhancing IHM New Graduates at Stamford International University: A Focus on 4-5 Star Hotels in Main Cities of Thailand <i>Matuross Mathurasai, Areewan Cheewaprapanan, and Jarujan Songsakul</i>
12:20 - 12:40	The Evolution of Research on Sustainable Consumption <i>Murtaza Haider and Randall Shannon</i>



Time	Schedule
12:40 - 13:30	Lunch @ Student Lounge, the 2nd Floor
	<i>13:10 - 15:00 Afternoon Session 1: Marketing</i>
13:30 - 13:50	Managing Hotel Spa Business after COVID-19 through McKinsey's 7-S Framework: A Case Study in Bangkok <i>Umaporn Wiwatreungdech and Prattana Punnakitikashem</i>
13:50 - 14:10	Exploring an Impact of Digital SERVQUAL towards Customer Engagement: The Case Study of Telemedicine in Thailand <i>Niruth Sripawatakul, Wilert Puriwat, Nagul Cooharajannone, and Danupol Hoonsopon</i>
14:10 - 14:30	An Analysis of TripAdvisor Reviews of Shopping Malls in Thailand <i>Adamas Suwanprasit and Viriya Taecharungroj</i>
14:30 - 14:50	Do Facebook Ads Stimulate Impulse Purchasing Behavior Among Adults in Bangkok? <i>Alfonso Pellegrino and Randall Shannon</i>
14:50 - 15:00	Coffee Break and Networking
	<i>15:00 - 16:00 Afternoon Session 2</i>
15:00 - 15:20	A Study on the Travel Intention of the Generation Z <i>Shuangmei Pan</i>
15:20 - 15:40	Academic Causes and Motivational Strategies to Develop Age-friendly Tourism at Phuket, Thailand under the New Normal <i>Ke He</i>
15:45	Closing of the Conference

Please note: the papers or abstracts (authors can choose) will be published online after we obtain an ISBN number.



Life course explanations of the effects of COVID-19 on consumer behavior

Sarinya L. Suttharattagul, Yuanfeng Cai, and George P. Moschis

Abstract

COVID-19 outbreak could be viewed as a stressful life event that people have never experienced before. This study serves as the first attempt to understand how such life event influences consumers to change their existing shopping patterns and the onset of new ones during the early stage of the COVID-19 outbreak in Thailand.

Built upon a life course paradigm, we found that the level of acute stress associated with respondents' experience of the outbreak can lead to significant changes in consumers' behavior. In addition, such acute stress elevated the level of chronic stress, and led to more interaction with two socialization agents, namely personal and mass media. Moreover, consumers in higher SES positions was found to be more knowledgeable about the COVID-19 virus. Females had a significantly higher level of chronic stress than males.

Interestingly, somewhat inconsistent with previous findings, our findings reveal that the level of acute stress associated with consumers' experience of the outbreak did not increase their knowledge about the virus and interaction with social media. Consumers' knowledge about the virus and chronic stress did not lead to any changes in their shopping patterns. Moreover, both direct and indirect effect of consumers' interaction with all socialization agents (personal, mass media and social media) on the change of consumers' shopping behavior were not found. Age, duration of the outbreak and family size were also found have no any impact on the changes of the consumer behavior. Our findings provide insightful implications for researchers and practitioners.

Keywords: COVID-19, Life course paradigm, Shopping Pattern, Thailand



Using the Life Course Paradigm to Study Financial Well-Being in Late Life

Pattharanitcha Prakitsuwan, George P. Moschis, and Randall Shannon

Abstract

Purpose: This study shows how the increasingly popular life course paradigm (LCP) can be employed as an alternative to the successful aging perspective (SAP) as an overarching conceptual research framework to study elderly consumers' financial well-being.

Design/methodology/approach: A questionnaire was administered to a convenience sample of 804 Thai consumers over the age of 45 selected via the snowball method.

Findings: Significant results were found for hypotheses derived from the LCP for older consumers' financial well-being, suggesting critical roles of early life experiences, developmental factors, adaptation mechanisms, and contextual factors.

Originality/value: This paper shows how efforts to study consumers over the course of their lives can be improved by utilizing the principles and theoretical perspectives of the LCP and offers research directions for studying not only older consumer well-being but also numerous consumer behavior issues at any stage of life in an innovative way.

Keywords: Well-being, quality of life, older consumers, life course, financial satisfaction, financial solvency



A Conceptual Framework for the Effects of Disruptive Family Events on Compulsive Buying of Young Adults Using the Life Course Approach

Betül Balikcioglu, Randall Shannon and George P. Moschis

Abstract

By using the life course paradigm, this research examines the potential effects of earlier life events, family resources, and family communication styles on young adults' compulsive buying behaviors in later life. Disruptive family events can include divorce, death or separation and can lead to lower income, less parental time with children and changes in family communication styles, which in turn, may have negative effects on children in the family and lead to compulsive behaviors.



A Study of Factors Affecting Chinese MOOC Users' Satisfaction and Continuance Intention

Yanxia Nong

Abstract

MOOC stands for massive open online course. The numbers of MOOC platforms and MOOC users have increased in recent years. In China, there are more than 200 million MOOC users in 2019. There has been a significant surge in usage since COVID-19. Despite the huge growth of MOOC, the low completion rate is widely criticized. Few studies have researched Chinese MOOC users' satisfaction and continuance intention. Therefore, this study aims to propose a conceptual framework based on expectation confirmation model to examine the drivers of Chinese MOOC users' satisfaction and continuance intention.

With a well-structured questionnaire, 406 valid responses were collected and analyzed by Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Participants were Chinese employees who used or in use MOOC platforms. The results of this study revealed that confirmation has significant effects on MOOC users' perceived usefulness, perceived service quality, and satisfaction. Satisfaction is a key determinant factor of continuance intention. Perceived usefulness and perceived service quality have significant impact on MOOC users' satisfaction and continuance intention.

The researchers hoped the findings will contribute to the MOOC providers to be able to formulate differentiated learner management strategies and promotion plan. This will better MOOC users' experience and devote resources to satisfying learners needs that can maximize the chances of promoting their persistence intention and reducing the drop rate.

Keywords: MOOC; learner satisfaction; online learning; continuance intention



Implementing A Problem-Based Learning (PBL) As A Methodological Approach to Enhance Online Learning Effectiveness Under the Covid-19 Pandemic: A Pilot Study

Angsaya Siepong

Abstract

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic crisis and the precautionary guidelines for health and safety as imposed by Stamford International University administration, all classes have been shifted to an online teaching/learning mode instead of in person classroom basis. This pilot study was undertaken as it aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of online teaching/learning by implementing a ‘Problem-based Learning’ (PBL) approach. The primary objective is to understand how PBL can be utilized as an efficient methodological tool to reinforce the learning outcomes for students. An undergraduate course was studied during term 2 of 2019 (between March and June 2019) at Stamford International University, Bangkok (Rama 9 campus). Results reveal that PBL approach has contributed to heightening students’ satisfaction, motivation, self-directed study, participation, and achieving the intended learning outcomes of the course. Discussion and further study are also addressed.



Investigation into New Skill Requirements Toward Enhancing International Hotel Management Program at Stamford International University: A Focus on Front Office Operations of Hotels in Thailand

Matuross Mathurasai, Areewan Cheewaprapanan, and Jarujan Songsakul

Abstract

Hospitality industry is one of the largest industries to many countries all across the globe, Thailand included, Holjevac (2003) did a study on a vision of tourism and the hotel industry in the 21st century and found that human resource (HR) is the key factor that affected business performance. He also mentioned that the HR of a hotel could determine its service quality.

Recruiting and training processes in almost all departments in hotel chains have become more complicated; the processes require more specific criteria to test candidates for certain positions. Given the rapidly changing business world of the current time, it is essential for hospitality schools to produce highly qualified graduates endowed with skills most needed by the industry.

The International Hotel Management (IHM) program at Stamford International University has served the hospitality industry around the world with qualified graduates in the past 10 years. Faced with dynamic changes in the industry, the IHM program strives to improve its curriculum further. The study will be based on focus group interviews with managers of high-end hotel chains, and a subsequent survey with a larger sample of hotels. Skills required for front office operations will form the study framework as they are the most robust set of skills applicable to many other functions. This investigation is a timely and strategic call to better shape learning outcome of fundamental courses of the IHM program as well as to provide insightful information to other similar institutions.



The Evolution of Research on Sustainable Consumption

Murtaza Haider and Randall Shannon

Abstract

Purpose: Understanding and promoting sustainable consumption behavior is the main aim of sustainable consumption research. Bibliometric reviews of research are designed to map the evolving landscape of knowledge. This bibliometric review aims to gain an empirical understanding of the evolution of the knowledge base of sustainability consumption from 1990 to 2020.

Method: Bibliometric analysis was used to create an empirical structure of the knowledge base of sustainable consumption research and by dividing the knowledgebase into three phases of 1990-2005, 2006-2017, 2018-2020, the evolution of scholarship was examined.

Findings: The bibliometric analysis identified top authors and documents, and with keyword and co-citation analysis three domains of sustainable consumption knowledge were synthesized.

Implications: Intellectual structure of sustainable consumption can be useful as a guide for future research projects. Evolutionary understanding can be used as a benchmark reference for academics for the future development of sustainable consumption scholarship.



Managing Hotel Spa Business after COVID-19 through McKinsey's 7-S Framework: Case Study in Bangkok

Umaporn Wiwatreungdech and Prattana Punnakitikashem

Abstract

The hotel spa industry has been severely hit by the COVID-19 outbreak due to the huge decrease in both local and foreign tourists. As the pandemic crisis seems unlikely to stop in the near future, hotel spas have struggled to survive the crisis and need to cope with the changes to sustain their business. The McKinsey's 7-S Framework is a tool to improve the organization performance and to determine how to implement a proposed strategy. To operate a business in changing external environments like the unprecedented COVID-19, it is important for hotel spa operators to understand how to prepare themselves and handle the problems effectively. Therefore, this study aims to investigate problems and challenges at the hotel spa during the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak and how they handle the problems and challenges resulted from the pandemic outbreak through the McKinsey's 7-S framework. Moreover, this study aims to explore the hotel's spa preparedness for the aftermath of the COVID-19 outbreak. This study adopted a qualitative approach involving an in-depth interview to gain deep understanding and insightful information from the hotel spa in Bangkok. The findings of this study provide guidance and recommendations for spa and other-related businesses to survive the crisis like the COVID-19 outbreak and get prepared for any other incidents in the future and it is also a secondary data for future research.

Keywords: Hotel spa, COVID-19, McKinsey's 7-S framework



Introduction

The spa business is one of the world's largest leisure industries and spas have become one of the standard facilities in luxury hotels and resorts (Cohen & Bodeker, 2008). The spa business segment is also considered as the main driver of the wellness tourism growth around the world. The number of spas globally has grown from 121,595 in 2015 to over 149,000 in 2017 with an increase in revenues from \$77.6 billion in 2015 to \$93.6 billion in 2017 and the spa employment has also grown nearly 2.6 million workers in 2017 (Global Wellness Institute, 2018). In the hotel and resort spas category, the number of spas dramatically increased from 30,180 in 2015 to 48,248 in 2017 and this spa sector gained the most revenue growth of \$36.4 billion compared to other spa categories (Global Wellness Institute, 2018). Since 2015, the hotel and resort spas have also surpassed day, club, and salon spas in their share of total global revenues. The rapid growth in the hotel and resort spas category is due to the strong growth in wellness tourism since more tourists also seek for wellness lifestyle when they travel. In response to the trend, more hotels and resorts are adding and marketing spa services and facilities to accommodate growing demand (Global Wellness Institute, 2018).

Among countries around the world, Thailand has been recognized as one of the world's primary countries for spa and wellness tourism in Asia. The spa business growth has been also driven by the current trend of health consciousness among Thai and foreign tourists and it has been greatly supported through the cooperation of the Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Commerce which aim to establish Thailand as the "Health Tourism Hub of Asia" and the Wellness Capital of Asia" (Johnston *et al.*, 2011). Despite the rising trends of health and wellness tourism and great support from the government sector, the spa business is not always run as smoothly as expected since spa operators have to tackle challenges such as the entry of new competitive spas and more importantly, the spa business as part of the wellness tourism is more vulnerable to threats caused by reoccurring catastrophe and unprecedented pandemics like COVID-19. The COVID-19 disease manifested in Wuhan, the capital city of Hubei, China in late December 2019 and it has spread rapidly across 203 countries around the globe as of 9 April, 2020, less than a month after the World Health Organization (WHO)'s pandemic outbreak declaration (Association of Southeast Asian Nations, 2020). Since the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, nearly 46 million infectious cases and 1.2 million deaths have been reported globally as of 1 November, 2020 (World Health Organization, 2020).

The outbreak of COVID-19 has had great impacts on tourism and hospitality sectors which are key pillars for economic growth in several countries due to the



imposed disease outbreak control measures including travel restrictions and entry bans on travelers from countries with certain levels of active COVID-19 cases. Besides the strict travel measures, people's fears and high anxiety of the novel disease have caused cancellation of planned trips, flights, and hotel room bookings. 80% of hotel rooms globally become empty amid the COVID-19 crisis (Asmelash & Cooper, 2020). Countries dependent on arrivals of foreign travelers are more vulnerable and hugely devastated by the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis (International Labour Organization, 2020) due to the sharp decline of international tourists. Several businesses have been forced to shut down as the current disease had led to the dramatic changes in business practices and consumer behaviors such as social distancing and more time spending at home in accordance with mandatory regulations imposed by worldwide governments. Considering the spa industry in Thailand, there were 1,326 registered spa and massage businesses, with 13 companies closed down as of May, 2020, according to Department of Business Development, Ministry of Commerce (Bangkok Post, 2020).

Thailand is praised as one of the countries with the best handle on the spread of COVID-19 compared to other countries worldwide (World Health Organization, 2020). As of October 2020, zero new COVID-19 positive cases were reported in Thailand thanks to the effective and rigorous disease control measures through the cooperation of all government units in the country (Ministry of Public Health, 2020). Thai and foreign tourists together with spa and other business operators now also have more confidence with resuming their operations after the government eased all business and activity lockdowns due to zero cases of COVID-19 infections. However, the spread of COVID-19 pandemic seems unlikely to stop in the near future. All entrepreneurs and operators of businesses including hotel spas have inevitably faced several problems and challenges during the crisis. Therefore, they have to put a considerable effort to survive by adopting various business management models to adjust their business operations in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

The McKinsey's 7-S framework is one of the effective business management tools useful for tackling challenges and handling all problems emerging during the crisis. The McKinsey's 7-S framework is a business management model developed by McKinsey & Company consultants, namely Tom Peters, Robert Waterman, and Julien Philips, together with Waterman's friends in 1980s (Peters & Waterman, 1982). It was also developed as a tool to handle organization efficiency problems and to help form an effective strategy in response to influences caused by changing environment or situations. This business model is comprised of seven essential elements: 1) Strategy, 2) Structure, 3) Systems, 4) Shared Values, 5) Style, 6) Staff, and 7) Skills (Waterman



et al., 1980). These elements are also categorized into two main areas: 1) “Hard S” including Strategy, Structure, and Systems, which are easy to identify and management can influence a business directly, and 2) “Soft S” including Shared Values, Skills, Staff, and Style, which are more influenced by company culture (Peters & Waterman, 1982). The model has been considered and widely used to form successful strategies by leading global companies such as IKEA (IKEA, 2019) and Microsoft (Microsoft, 2019) and the framework remains one of the most popular tools for strategy formulation and effectiveness enhancement. As a result, the elements of McKinsey’s 7-S framework need to be considered by key management in different businesses in order to survive crises like the current COVID-19 situation.

It is interesting that how the hotel spa handles problems or difficulties through the McKinsey’s 7-S framework, especially during the emergence of the unprecedented COVID-19 outbreak which has caused much greater impacts on numerous business sectors when compared with other pandemics in the past. Moreover, since there is the limited number of research thoroughly exploring the hotel spa business after experiencing the COVID-19 crisis, this study aims to fulfill the research gaps by investigating what problems and challenges the hotel spa in Bangkok encounters and how the hotel spa handles or manages the problems during the outbreak of COVID-19 through the McKinsey’s 7-S framework. In addition, the study explored how the hotel spa prepares for the aftermath of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Methodology

This study made use of a qualitative method to gain deep understanding and insights on problems, challenges, management, and preparation of hotel spa management and operations during the COVID-19 crisis. We used purposive sampling to recruit potential interviewees to gain insight on one hotel spa in a capital city, Bangkok, Thailand. This sampling technique suggests researchers to choose the samples with actual experiences. The selected sample in this study possesses appropriate knowledge and real experiences contributing to the completion of spa management during the crisis.

The population are the all spa businesses located in the 5-star hotels located in Bangkok. The spa has to be operated before, during, and after the COVID-19 outbreak. The sample was a hotel spa case in Bangkok. In-depth interview on a one-on-one basis was used to collect data from the sample in response to the research objectives. In general, interviews consist of meaningful data expressed through words, pattern and impacts (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). Total of 4 respondents were sampled based on a



convenient basis. The respondents included 1 hotel spa manager and 3 hotel spa staff. The hotel spa manager and staff have to be on duty before, amid, and after the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The interview contained open-ended questions based on the McKinsey's 7-S framework. Open-ended questions enable respondents to include more information including feelings, attitudes, and understanding of issues (Kothari, 2004); therefore, they are useful for researchers to collect qualitative data in order to gain a better understanding of certain issues and more insightful interpretation of research results. Based on the McKinsey's 7-S framework and the situation of the COVID-19 crisis, the open-ended questions in the in-depth interview were developed from Gaspar (2017), Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors (2015), mindtools.com (2011), and The Organizational Strategist (2011).

The interview was conducted at the selected hotel spa in Bangkok and the interviewees' responses were recorded by note taking and voice recording. Data collection was conducted during October 2020 – November 2020. In addition, the personal interviews on a one-on-one basis were conducted in accordance with the World Health Organization's preventive measures including hand and respiratory hygiene and physical distancing for preventing transmission of COVID-19 (WHO, 2020). The researcher and the respondents had to wash hands with soap or alcohol-based hand-rub before and after the interview, wear a face mask throughout the interview, and keep a distance of at least 1 meter between each other during the interview.

The primary data collected through the in-depth personal interviews was fully transcribed and analyzed based on content analysis which is a systematic replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories (Krippendorf, 1980). Since the open-ended question interview approach allows interviewees to fully express their answers in as much details as they want, a comprehensive data coding process is necessary. Coding is a way of developing and refining interpretations of the data in qualitative research (Charmaz, 2014; Saldana, 2011). The data coding was adopted to make categories and concepts become smaller analyzable units by compressing extensive data sets in a systematic way. The content from in-depth interviews of the respondents were analyzed through the content analysis. One of the key advantages of using the content analysis to analyze social phenomena is non-invasive nature, different from collecting surveys (Bryman *et al.*, 2011).



Findings

‘Hard S’ Elements

1. Strategy

The hotel spa’s strategy before the epidemic outbreak was mainly to achieve sales target. Thanks to its ideal location in the heart of Bangkok and near BTS sky trains offering easy access to the city’s great restaurants and popular shopping malls, the hotel appeals to international tourists and the hotel spa accommodates these hotel guests, especially from the Middle East which is a major customer group accounting for approximately 80%. However, during the COVID-19 crisis, the hotel spa has been hit hard because the Thai government announced to temporarily close certain places including spas which pose a risk for COVID-19 infection. Also, a temporary ban on all international flights to Thailand from 27 April, 2020 to 30 June, 2020 to maintain the continuity of the disease prevention and control measures resulted in the loss of the major customer group and the loss of revenues respectively. As a result, the hotel spa had to adjust its strategies to the changes as follows:

- **Operating on a limited budget**

The hotel spa’s budget had been cut down by 75% during the COVID-19 crisis due to the dramatic decrease in major spa customers and revenues. The hotel spa previously provided testers of a wide selection of aromatic or massage oil for customers to choose from before using the spa service. During the COVID-19 outbreak, the hotel spa, however, removed all testers of aromatic and massage oil in order to save the budget. Instead, the hotel spa has selected certain oil types which match each spa package for customers in order not to place orders of the oil products redundantly. In terms of marketing, the hotel spa has now welcomed more local customers to help promote the spa products and services through online reviews on social media such as Instagram and Facebook. The hotel spa can save some marketing budget and in the meantime, can raise awareness among Thai customers through the help from the online reviewers.

- **Attracting more Thai customers**

The hotel spa has to put a considerable effort to attract more local or Thai customers than before after losing a majority of international customers from the Middle East and Asia respectively. Before reopening in September 2020, the hotel spa had participated in several tourism booth events and fairs at leading shopping centers in Bangkok to publicize the hotel spa’s products and services among Thai customers. In terms of pricing, the hotel spa has reduced prices of its spa packages to more than half of the original prices to make them affordable for Thai customers. The hotel spa also



has to double its spa and other-related services quality specifically for Thai customers who have much higher expectations of product and service quality from the spa located in a 5-star hotel than international customers. In addition, the hotel spa has used more social media platforms including Instagram and Facebook to publicize its spa packages, discounts, and promotions for Thai customers.

- **Assuring customers about hygiene**

The hotel spa has to reassure customers of high sanitation and health safety because customers have become much more concerned about hygiene amid the COVID-19 outbreak. In fact, the hotel spa has gained customers' confidence and trust in cleanliness as it has been committed to rigorous cleaning procedures under the hotel's program which includes deep cleaning with hospital-grade disinfectants since 2015. In addition, the awarded Amazing Thailand Safety and Health Administration (SHA) certificate also gives extra assurance to the hotel spa customers. The certificate, in fact, is presented to establishments that meet hygiene and health safety standards for their products and services. Looking in more details, every pen provided for customers to fill out pre-treatment forms is sterilized after use. Moreover, the hotel spa's staff stop taking customers' shoes off to avoid touching contaminated objects in order to reduce the risk of getting the COVID-19 disease.

2. Structure

The hotel spa's structure divides roles of spa staff on the basis of services they expertise such as Traditional Thai Massage Therapist, Aromatic Massage Therapist, and Skin Therapist. Each hotel staff is also responsible for certain spa products. They have to check inventory and place orders of products under their supervision. The hotel spa staff have freedom to share their opinions and suggest ideas such as welcome or after-treatment drinks and other refreshments for customers to the spa manager. However, the spa manager still makes all major decisions for the hotel spa and the spa manager reports directly to the hotel manager in case of urgent and important issues. After the COVID-19 crisis, since the number of staff has been reduced, the relationship among the remaining staff have become closer. Moreover, the departmentalization has been adjusted based on functions because the hotel spa staff have to switch to do other tasks of a security department.

3. Systems

The hotel spa had used a software named 'SpaOne WebConnect' before the COVID-19 disease outbreak in order to help manage its spa business. This web-based application with costs starting from \$110 per month includes features such as customer



appointment management, room management, employee management, inventory management, and online booking. However, during the COVID-19 crisis, the hotel spa's budget had been cut, so the software subscription was not extended. The hotel spa has managed clients' spa room bookings and spa therapists' work schedules in a conventional manual system in order to save budget. A spa staff fills in paper-based spa room bookings form and spa therapist work schedules which are posted on the spa's notice board. In fact, this manual system has become more suitable and convenient during the COVID-19 crisis because it saves costs and is easy to manage due to the low number of spa customers per day, according to the spa staff who are responsible for spa room bookings and arranging work schedules of the hotel spa therapists. So far, the number of customers have remained not as high as the previous period before the epidemic outbreak; therefore, the manual spa room booking and spa therapist work schedule systems continue to be used during the COVID-19 crisis.

'Soft S' Elements

4. Shared Values

The hotel spa has been committed to staying well-informed and educated on evolving circumstances and adapting services to keep customer safety and comfort a top priority. The hotel spa staff has been also committed to following global etiquettes to provide the best quality service. They are always aware that customers' cultural differences are important and can affect customer satisfaction. The hotel spa staff keep learning cultural diversities of each customer group through a training provided by the hotel and the cultural differences of spa customers. The global etiquettes are emphasized again by the spa manager in morning briefing every Friday. The global etiquettes are also displayed on printed paper posted inside 'Staff Only' elevators. Before the COVID-19 crisis, a majority of customers were foreigners from the Middle East and Asia such as China and Japan. After the COVID-19 crisis, the hotel spa customer group has changed to local or Thai people. They have to learn more about Thai customers' behaviors, perceptions, and expectations.

5. Style

The spa manager possesses a participative managerial style. The spa manager listens to all of the staff's ideas, comments, and feedbacks and at the same time, the spa manager also corrects and warns the staff when they make mistakes. The hotel spa has a family-like work environment. The spa manager acts as an older sister who takes good care of the staff as younger sisters. They are willing to help and support each other and they show greater support for each other especially during the COVID-19. After the



COVID-19 crisis, the spa manager together with the spa receptionist help clean a spa room after use when there are not any other customers. The spa manager is also concerned about the staff's financial burdens, so she coordinates with other departments in the hotel to find other jobs for the hotel spa staff in order to help them get extra paid. During the temporary closure, the hotel spa manager used LINE application to keep in touch with the staff who felt uncertain about their job and nervous and lacked of motivation. With this way of communication, the staff feel connected, supported, and motivated and they strongly believe they are not left behind.

6. Staff

The hotel spa comprised of 10 staff before the COVID-19 outbreak. The hotel spa was closed in accordance with the Thai government's temporary business shutdown measure in March, 2020 to prevent the spread of the epidemic. During the closure, the staff had to work from home and they were assigned to create video clips presenting their spa products and services and share them on social media like Facebook. The hotel spa's therapists were also allowed to do other part-time jobs while the hotel spa was still closed. After reopening in early September 2020, the number of staff was reduced to 6 people in order to lower operating costs and save budgets. The other 4 staff were laid off based on their performance. To help ease financial burdens of the remaining hotel spa staff during the COVID-19 crisis, the staff are still offered three meals a day and given an additional relief grant. The hotel spa also considers to hire more staff when there are more customers after promoting its products and services and after the government eases the entry restrictions for international tourists.

7. Skills

The hotel spa has skilled and experienced staff. All of them have received certificates in spa services and management and they have also received ongoing trainings by a spa specialist in order to be in accordance with the 5-star hotel's service standards and existing spa service standards. During the temporary business closure, some trainings were conducted via Zoom's video-conferencing platform in order to keep skills of the staff up-to-date. After reopening, spa therapists with higher work experiences have to help train other therapists with lower experiences because the spa specialist quit the job during the COVID-19 crisis. More importantly, the hotel spa staff also need to do other tasks of different departments as assigned apart from their main responsibilities at the spa due to a decrease in the number of the hotel's employees after reopening. Leave without pay has been applied during the COVID-19 outbreak to reduce costs and this allows the hotel spa staff to have 8 days off in a month. During the



days off, the hotel spa staff can decide whether they will do another task. Some of them work as a security guard at a part of the hotel as assigned. They have to learn how to use a digital thermometer to check the hotel guests' temperature and learn other relevant skills of a security guard.

Discussion and Conclusion

The hotel spa places more emphasis on 'Hard S's, particularly 'strategy' because the COVID-19 crisis has brought about dramatic changes in marketing and management. At the same time, 'Soft S's are also important for the hotel spa to lead to success in strategy implementation and also enhancement of organizational performance amid the crisis. The hotel spa has quickly responded to several changes caused by the COVID-19 crisis. Its original strategy was adjusted as it seemed not to be impractical in time of this crisis and the entire hotel spa staff well understand the current situations and accept all the changes. None of the hotel spa staff show resistance to the formation and implementation of the new strategies. They earnestly embrace its hotel spa organizational cultures and absorb the hotel spa's shared values. The Shared Values element in the McKinsey's 7-S framework is essential to develop all other elements; that is, if Shared Values change, all other factors are directly affected (Waterman, 1982). With the strong shared values, the entire hotel spa is adaptable to any changes. The hotel spa's shared values are efficiently and continually communicated formally and informally before, during, and after the COVID-19 crisis and this constantly reminds the staff what are important. Communication skills are as important as management skills for the spa manager to enhance organizational effectiveness and facilitate relationships between staff (Bucăța & Rizescu, 2017). From this case study, it is obviously seen that the spa manager has kept communicating with their staff before, during, and after the COVID-19 crisis to ensure the staff of organizational and career certainty. Moreover, the findings revealed that in time of the crisis, a job rotation scheme is implemented; therefore, the staff need to learn other new skills besides their job-related skills or possesses a multitasking skill in time of the crisis when the optimization of resources is necessary (Marchewka, 2018). Finally, after analysis based upon the McKinsey's 7-S framework, it was found that all 7 elements in the hotel spa are aligned and this results in effective organizational management even amid the COVID-19 crisis. In contrast, if an organization is operating in different directions and does not act in a consistent and coherent way, it can lead to misalignment and an organizational ineffectiveness or strategic failure (Waterman, 1982; Waterman *et al.*, 1980; Johnson *et al.*, 2008).



In conclusion, the unprecedented COVID-19 outbreak has had a huge impact on the hotel spa. However, the hotel spa can reopen and fully resume its operations while others are unable to do and some were permanently shut down. After analysis based on the McKinsey's 7-S framework, the hotel spa has well adapted to changes resulted from the COVID-19 crisis. Our findings suggested that the hotel spa has adapted by means of rethink, reduce, revive, reskill and retain. Rethink means the hotel spa has to shift its focus to Thai customers and adjust products and services to meet the Thai customers' needs and expectations. Reduce means the hotel spa cuts down unnecessary operating costs and has the lower number of staff than before in line with the lower number of customers during the COVID-19 crisis. Revive means the hotel spa brings back customers' confidence with hygiene and health safety and also the staff's confidence with career certainty. Reskill means the hotel spa staff need to learn other new skills, not only job-specific skills since a job rotation scheme is implemented after the COVID-19 crisis and retain means the hotel spa keeps the staff who enable the spa to deliver products and services by providing them with various forms of support and rewards.

The findings from this study may be guidance of how spa or other related-businesses can practically apply the McKinsey's 7-S framework to overcome struggles or difficulties during the COVID-19 crisis through this case study. Moreover, the study hopefully provided useful and practical recommendations of how spa business operators can adapt and prepare themselves for reoccurring pandemics in the future.

Our recommendations for future research are to explore more hotel spas within a region or in other regions and investigate other types of spas such as day and destination spas which can be reopened and fully operated amid the crisis in order to study how different types of spas tackle difficulties and challenges, sustain their business during the epidemic outbreak crisis, and prepare themselves for future incidents.

Acknowledgement

The authors gratefully acknowledge the support from College of Management, Mahidol University (CMMU).



References

- Asmelash, L. & Cooper, A. (2020). Nearly 80% of hotel rooms in the US are empty, according to new data. CNN. Retrieved October 12, 2020. from <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/04/08/us/hotel-rooms-industry-coronavirus-trnd/index.htm>
- Association of Southeast Asian Nations. (2020). ASEAN Policy Brief. Retrieved October 11, 2020, from https://asean.org/?static_post=asean-policy-brief-2
- Bangkok Post. (2020). Spas, massage parlours banking on local demand. Retrieved November 10, 2020, from <https://www.bangkokpost.com/business/1931072/spas-massage-parlours-banking-on-local-demand>
- Bryman, A. (2011). *Business research methods*. Bell, Emma, 1968- (3rd ed.). Cambridge: Oxford University Press.
- Bucăța, G. & Rizescu, M. (2017). The Role of Communication in Enhancing Work Effectiveness of an Organization. *Land Forces Academy Review*. 22. 10.1515/raft-2017-0008.
- Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis* (2nd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors. (2015). McKinsey 7S questions. Retrieved October 13, 2020, from <https://www.iaa.org.uk/media/598963/mckinsey-7s-questions.pdf>
- Cohen, M. & Bodeker, G. (2008). *Understanding the Global Spa Industry*.
- Gaspar, M., Popescu, S., Dragomir, M. & Unguras, D. (2018). Defining Strategic Quality Directions based on Organisational Context Identification; Case Study in a Software Company. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*. 238. 615-623
- Global Wellness Institute. (2018). Global Wellness Economy Monitor. Global Wellness Summit. Retrieved November 10, 2020, from https://globalwellnessinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Research2018_v5webfinal.pdf
- IKEA. (2019). IKEA McKinsey 7S Model. Retrieved October 10, 2020, from <https://research-methodology.net/ikea-mckinsey-7s-model/>
- International Labour Organization. (2020). COVID-19 and employment in the tourism sector: Impact and response in Asia and the Pacific. Retrieved October 10, 2020, from https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/briefingnote/wcms_742664.pdf



- Johnson, G., Scholes, K. & Whittington, R. (2008). *Exploring Corporate Strategy*. 8th ed. FT Prentice Hall, p. 11-12.
- Johnston, K., Puczko, L., Smith, M. & Ellis, S. (2011). *Global spa summit*. Colorado: Global Spa Summit.
- Kothari, C.R. (2004). *Research methodology and techniques*. New Delhi: New Age Publications.
- Krippendorff, K. (1980). *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Marchewka, M. (2018). The effects and determinants of multitasking. *Aspirare: an International Journal of Commerce and Management*, 5.
- Microsoft. (2019). Microsoft McKinsey 7S model. Retrieved October 10, 2020, from <https://research-methodology.net/microsoft-mckinsey-7s-model/>
- Mindtools.com. (2011). McKinsey 7-S Framework. Retrieved October 12, 2020, from https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newSTR_91.htm
- Ministry of Public Health. (2020). Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) Thailand Situation. Retrieved November 10, 2020, from <https://ddc.moph.go.th/viralpneumonia/eng/index.php>
- Peters, T.J. & Waterman, R.H. (1982). *In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best-Run Companies*. Harper & Row, New York.
- Saldana, J. (2011). *Fundamentals of qualitative research*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Saunders, M. N. K., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A. (2009). *Research Methods for Business Students* (5th Edition). London Pearson Education.
- The Organizational Strategist. (2011). McKinsey 7S Model: A strategic assessment and alignment model. Retrieved October 13, 2020, from <https://whittblog.wordpress.com/2011/04/24/mckinsey-7s-model-a-strategic-assessment-and-alignment-model/>
- Waterman, A. S. (1982). Identity development from adolescence to adulthood: An extension of theory and a review of research. *Developmental Psychology*, 18(3), 341–358.
- Waterman, R. H. Peters, T.J. & Phillips, J. R. (1980). Structure is not organization. *Business Horizons*. 23, (3) 14-26.
- World Health Organization. (2020). The Ministry of Public Health and the World Health Organization Review Thailand's COVID-19 Response. Retrieved November 10, 2020, from <https://www.who.int/thailand/news/detail/14-10-2020-Thailand-IAR-COVID19>



World Health Organization. (2020). Contact tracing in the context of COVID-19.

Retrieved October 12, 2020, from

<https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/332049>

World Health Organization. (2020). Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

Retrieved November 10, 2020, from

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>



Exploring an Impact of Digital SERVQUAL towards Customer Engagement: The Case Study of Telemedicine in Thailand

Niruth Sripawatakul, Wilert Puriwat, Nagul Cooharajanone and Danupol Hoonsopon

Abstract

Years to come will be an excellent opportunity for Thailand's telemedicine. There are many positive drivers. Firstly, the Medical Council of Thailand has officially released a guideline for telemedicine, which makes telemedicine treatment becomes legal. Secondly, the number of patients with access to telemedicine could reach 5 million within the next three years due to the pandemic encouraging new users' adoption. Without the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) outbreak, changes in consumer or physician behaviors might take as long as a decade. It is still very early for telemedicine as a tool for delivering medical care, especially in Thailand. In the meantime, marketing scholars and practitioners are interested in exploring increased customer engagement by improving and developing more valuable service quality. This study aims to propose the new digital SERVQUAL and customer engagement measurement conceptual framework for telemedicine in Thailand. Data collected by using an in-depth interview method. The expected result to find the structural customer engagement measurement model for telemedicine in Thailand.

Keywords: Customer Engagement, Digital Service Quality, Telemedicine, COVID-19, Thailand



An analysis of TripAdvisor reviews of shopping malls in Thailand

Adamas Suwanprasit, Viriya Taecharungroj

Abstract

Shopping is an important part of the tourism industry, which has been affected by the current pandemic worldwide. Although shopping has been studied as part of a tourism experience, no study has comprehensively explored the shopping experience using a large corpus of data. The purpose of this research is to discover and analyse various types of shopping experience in Thailand based on 40,529 TripAdvisor reviews of 46 malls. The authors used an unsupervised machine learning technique – a topic modelling algorithm called latent Dirichlet allocation (LDA) – to identify the types of experience. Subsequent salience-valence textual analysis was performed to analyse factors that drive positive and negative experiences. LDA identified five types of experience including plenitude, connectivity, food, merchandise, and commercialism. To improve the experience of visitors, malls should pay attention to important factors such as impressive cinemas, unique interior design, high-quality food court, and fair and affordable commercial practices.



Do Facebook Ads stimulate impulse purchasing behavior among adults in Bangkok?

Alfonso Pellegrino and Randall Shannon

Abstract

The research aim is to examine users' attitudes and experiences among Thai adults in relation to Facebook advertising and to determine whether Facebook ads are responsible for unsustainable consumption behaviors in the specific impulse buying behavior. The research method employed was qualitative with open ended, semi-structured interviews. The survey targeted middle income Thai adults ranging between 25 and 55 years of age. The results showed that majority of respondents did not always appreciate Facebook ads especially if they were promoting irrelevant products or services. Common reactions to uninteresting campaigns were boredom and annoyance leading to report the ad as repetitive and uninteresting. However, higher engagement was reached for product categories such as: fast food especially snacks, clothes and travel services which also led to significant impulse purchases especially for cheaper, low involvement products. Almost all respondents agreed that Facebook ads had some sort of beneficial impact on their lives as it helped them gaining awareness about new products and services available which they were not aware of earlier on. Issues about trust and sellers' reliability were also raised by users who expressed they would prefer more transparency when purchasing through Facebook. Users acknowledged that proper targeting, eye-catching images, relevant content by interesting brands would bring the most benefit to both customers and advertisers.



A Study on the Travel Intention of the Generation Z

Shuangmei Pan

Abstract

Does Generation Z (Gen Z) behaves different from other generations? A large number of studies have verified that the theory of planned behavior can effectively predict individual behavior intention and behavior. Many studies proved that Gen Z has its own characteristics which are distinguished from other generations. The global tourism industry is developing rapidly. As an important part of the world's population, the travel intentions of Gen Z have an important impact on the development of the tourism market.

This study reviewed the relationship between attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control and behavior intention based on TPB, aiming to test the key factors that influence travel intention of Gen Z through primary data.

Results showed that attitude has a significant influence on the behavior intention of Gen Z. However, perceived behavioral control does not contribute to the behavior intention of Gen Z as believed in the theory of planned behavior and most research. Therefore, this study offers useful insight into understanding behavior intentions of Gen Z and has reference significance in developing Gen Z tourism market.

Keyword: Generation Z; Travel intention; Tourism market; Perceived behavioral control; The theory of planned behavior



Academic Theories and Implementation obstacles to Develop Age-friendly Tourism in Phuket, Thailand under the New Normal Era

Ke He and Nicha Tovankasame

Abstract

In order to explore new ideas for reviving the tourism in Thailand under the new normal, this article carries out qualitative research on developing age-friendly tourism at Phuket. The idea of active ageing, which was proposed by the World Health Organization, and the theory of public finance, the incentive theory, and the stakeholder theory, have been used to elaborate the academic causes for this development initiative. The research shows that: on the one hand, current outdated paradigm of reviving tourism is not only difficult to be applied due to the Covid-19 epidemic, but could limit the capacity to seize innovative opportunities. On the other hand, as Thailand has entered an ageing society, the elderly is becoming an essential force in tourism activities and consumption; it is feasible to create a society where the contribution of older people generally outweighs social investments. Based on this, and after pointing out the existing implementation obstacles at Phuket and proposing corresponding countermeasures, the authors conclude that the Thai government should take the new normal as an opportunity to change their negative stereotypes about the elderly, push a supply-side reform of tourism industry, construct an integrated, elderly-centered service system, and then in the long run, build Phuket into a demonstration base integrating tourism, with elderly care and medical care by developing age-friendly tourism at Phuket, Thailand. This article also aims to lay a theoretical foundation for this innovative development, meanwhile, provide practical reference for Thailand to adapt to the profound consequences brought about by the ageing population.

Keywords: Phuket; active ageing; age-friendly tourism; new normal



College of Management
Mahidol University

CLSG
Consumer Life-course Studies Group

**International
Conference
Series 2020
Bangkok**

**The Ninth Annual International Conference
on Consumer Research and Marketing:
Frontiers of Theory, Method and Practice**

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS