Guidelines for Hotel Business Management for Elderly Tourists in the Central Region of Thailand

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Abstract: - This research aims to 1) study the guidelines for hotel business management for elderly tourists in the central region of Thailand and 2) test the influence of the management components of hotel businesses on elderly tourists in the central region of Thailand. The research sample consisted of 400 hotel entrepreneurs or hotel owners in the central region. The tools used include questionnaires. It is survey-based research. The statistics used for data analysis include structural equation modeling. The results showed that the assumed model was consistent with empirical data with p-value = 0.190, CMIN/DF = 1.090, GFI = 0.956, and RMSEA = 0.015. The research findings indicate that: 1) Marketing strategy directly influences service quality, 2) Service quality directly affects hotel management, 3) Marketing strategy directly impacts hotel management, 4) Marketing strategy directly influences customer satisfaction, and 5) Customer satisfaction directly affects hotel management.

Key-Words: - hotel management, elderly tourists, marketing strategy, service quality, customer satisfaction

1 Introduction

The United Nations acknowledges that the number of elderly individuals is rapidly increasing, and it is projected that there will be over two billion people aged 60 and above by the year 2050, accounting for 22% (or one in five) of the global population, [1]. As a consequence of this population growth, tourism for the elderly is expected to become a developing and evolving market, [2]. In 2020, the global population of "retirees" or individuals aged 60-65 and above increased by approximately threefold, reaching 700 million people, a trend that is mirrored in Thailand, [3]. Statistics for elderly individuals aged 60 and above in Thailand in 2019 indicated a total of 11,136,059 people or roughly 16.73% of the population. Thailand is poised to enter a fully aged society in 2021. Based on the definition of a "3-level aged society", it signifies that Thailand will progress to the second level, referred to as an "Aged Society. Based on the United Nations definition, a country is an Ageing Society when the share of the aged population (people aged 65 or older) is higher than 7% and is an Aged Society when this share rises above 14%. Once this share is over 20%, the nation is called a Super-Aged Society, [4]. More so today than ever before, ageing has become a unique stage in the development process. To achieve competitive advantage in times of rapid change, tourism stakeholders need to have a clear understanding of this direction of change, and its implications for business or destination management, [5].

Significant global trends are currently prompting the tourism industry to adapt. These trends include: 1) The trend of shifting the global population structure towards an aging society is particularly pronounced among international travelers when compared to other age groups, [6]. 2) The trend of promoting the tourism industry in several countries through the relaxation of visa regulations for tourists and support for investments has intensified international competition in the sector, [7], and; 3) The rapid advancement of digital technology has led to a growing role for social media and smartphones in consumers' daily lives. This shift has resulted in changes in the behavior of travelers, necessitating businesses to adapt promptly. Furthermore, the proportion of elderly tourists, who are increasing at a faster rate than other age groups and are entering aging societies, makes them an influential market segment for the tourism industry. Elderly tourists have both purchasing power and leisure time, [8]. This presents an opportunity for the tourism industry. Two primary groups with potential are elderly tourists and retired foreign nationals. Elderly tourists tend to spend more per person per trip compared to general tourists. Additionally, the increasing number of elderly tourists has had a significant impact on the population of retired foreign nationals in Thailand. The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) is pleased to report that Thailand has been ranked the best place in Asia and the fifth best place in the world for retirees by French magazine Capital, which published the list on the website Retraite sans Frontieres, [9].

Based on the aforementioned increasing trend of elderly tourists, the researchers are interested in studying the management strategies for hotels catering to elderly tourists in the central region of Thailand. The goal is to understand how hotel businesses in this region are adapting to the characteristics of elderly tourists. The researchers anticipate that the findings from this study will be beneficial for private sector organizations in developing management guidelines for hotel businesses catering to elderly tourists in the future.

1.1 Research Objectives
1) To study the guidelines for hotel business management for elderly tourists in the central region of Thailand.

2) To examine the influence of management components on hotel business management for elderly tourists in the central region of Thailand.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Tourism Management for Elderly Travelers
Elderly tourists are a group that requires care, services, and health risk management. They seek recreational activities and emphasize the importance of travel experiences related to relaxation and enjoyment, as they have more leisure time due to retirement, [10]. Additionally, elderly travelers are experiential tourists who seek genuine experiences during their journeys. They are interested in learning and gaining real experiences from the destinations they visit. Furthermore, elderly tourists prioritize convenience in travel and often value safety in the destination and accommodation, [11]. They also seek value for the money they spend, [12].

2.2 Tourism for Senior Citizens
In 2003, the Elderly Persons Act was enacted in Thailand. Whereas Section 54 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand contains provisions on the rights of the elderly that they have right to receive aids from the State; in order to comply with the provisions of law and enact the law which encompasses every arenas for the elderly; therefore, to carry out work in relation to the protection, promotion and support of rights and benefits of the elderly in a manner that is efficient and consistent with provisions of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, it is necessary to enact this Act, [13]. Therefore, hotel operators should review their operational components to cater to the needs of senior citizen travelers, [14]. This can be done under the framework of EECE, which encompasses Employees, Enterprises, Customers, and Entrepreneurs, [15]. Such an approach ensures that hotel management aligns with the preferences and behaviors of senior citizen tourists, [10].

2.3 Kotler's Marketing 5.0
Marketing 5.0 is the integration of cutting-edge technology with human-to-human communication to enhance marketing capabilities in line with the changing behaviors and preferences of consumers in

the digital age, [16]. It involves the incorporation of secure technology systems (Blockchain) to drive digital businesses efficiently, [17]. This includes the analysis of customer-generated data to help marketers tailor their strategies to individual customers, a process known as "one-to-one targeting", [18].

2.4 McKinsey's 7s Model
Proactive management is becoming increasingly important as it is a process for defining an organization's direction and future course of action, [19]. Strategic management involves analyzing both external and internal environments, [20]. Managing with McKinsey's 7s Model includes at least 7 factors: 1) Strategy, 2) Structure, 3) Systems, 4) Style, 5) Staff, 6) Skills, and 7) Shared Values. It requires an assessment of how well the McKinsey 7s Model aligns with the organization's objectives and goals, [21].

2.5 Conceptual Framework
According to all concepts and theories, the guidelines for hotel business management for elderly tourists in the central region of Thailand can be summarized into 4 components, which are: Marketing Strategy, Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction, and Hotel Management as shown in Figure 1.

Fig. 1: Conceptual Framework

3 Research Methodology

3.1 Population and Sampling
The population for this research consists of hotel entrepreneurs or hotel owners in the central region of Thailand, totaling 6,054 individuals. This population includes small and medium-sized hotel operators total of 5,757 individuals and large hotel operators

total of 297 individuals, [22]. The research used hypothesis testing and analyzed the results using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The sample size used for analysis is determined by specifying the ratio of samples to parameters or variables based on, [23]. It suggests that the number of sample groups suitable for multivariate analysis should be at least 5-10 times the number of indicators. In this research study, there are 40 questionnaire items, so a minimum of approximately 400 samples is recommended. The research uses purposive sampling to select the sample.

3.2 Research Tools
The researchers used qualitative research with In-depth interview techniques with 9 hotel business experts to obtain the research tool and then used a questionnaire in the form of a Likert Scale rating scale, with criteria for rating responses on a 5-point scale according to Likert's method, [24]. The researchers created a draft questionnaire and assessment form and provided them to experts with knowledge and experience in the subject matter for evaluation. Five experts were consulted to assess the questionnaire to determine its quality using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC). The IOC values ranged between 0.60 and 1.00, with values above 0.50 considered appropriate, [25].

Subsequently, the researchers conducted a Try-Out with a sample population similar to the target population. This sample consisted of 30 individuals to analyze discrimination in the questionnaire items. This involved analyzing the standard deviation (S.D.) for items with a checklist format and calculating the correlation and reliability values for Likert Scale items. The discrimination values ranged from 0.49 to 1.35, while the overall questionnaire reliability was 0.98, which is considered the range of more than 0.9 is very good, [26]. The research then used this questionnaire to collect data by requesting responses from the sample group.

3.3 Data Analysis
Data analysis involved both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics using the SPSS software package. For multivariate analysis and structural equation modeling, the researchers used the AMOS software. Developing models that are consistent with empirical data must consider that the criteria used for evaluation must be accepted and widely used. The criteria used to evaluate the data-model fit as

outlined in the research, consisting of four values: 1) Chi-square probability greater than 0.05 2) Ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom less than 2.00 3) Comparative Fit Index greater than 0.90, and 4) Root Mean Square Error of Approximation less than 0.08, [27].

4 Results

The importance levels of the components in the guidelines for hotel business management for elderly tourists in the central region of Thailand are as follows:

1) Analysis of the Marketing Strategy component indicates an overall high level of importance ($\bar{X}$ = 4.38).

2) Analysis of the Service Quality component reveals the highest overall level of importance ($\bar{X}$ = 4.57).

3) Analysis of the Customer Satisfaction component shows the highest overall level of importance ($\bar{X}$ = 4.51).

4) Analysis of the Hotel Management component indicates the highest overall level of importance ($\bar{X}$ = 4.56).

The researcher conducted model improvements based on the Modification Indices obtained from the pre-established program along with theoretical foundations to remove observed variables that were deemed inappropriate one at a time and processed the new model iteratively until a model that met all four statistical criteria was achieved. After completing the model adjustments, the analysis results:

5) According to the objectives of studying the components of the guidelines for hotel business management for elderly tourists in the central region of Thailand, which consist of 4 components: Marketing Strategy, Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction, and Hotel Management. All 4 components were derived from a review of relevant literature. It was revealed that the empirical data demonstrated consistency, with statistical values of p-value = 0.190, CMIN/DF = 1.090, GFI = 0.956, and RMSEA = 0.015. It achieved statistical significance at the 0.001 level and aligned well with the literature and empirical data, as shown in Figure 2. The observational variables are presented in Table 1.
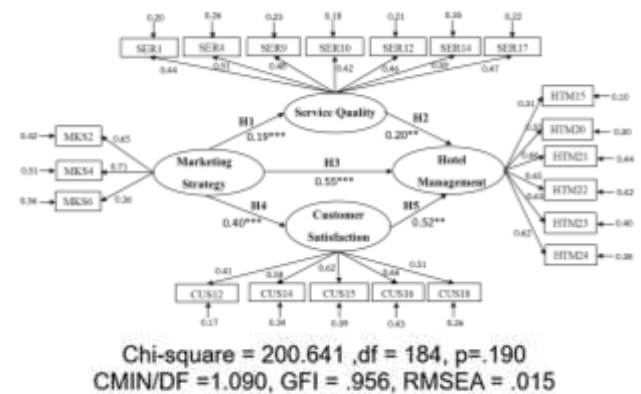

Chi-square = 200.641 ,df = 184, p=.190
CMIN/DF =1.090, GFI = .956, RMSEA = .015

Fig. 2: Path Diagram of the Structural Equation Model

Table 1. Observational variables

Abbreviation	Description
Marketing Strategy	
MKS2	Setting marketing strategies based on analysis
MKS4	Implementing marketing strategies
MKS6	Controlling and evaluating marketing strategy outcomes
Service Quality	
SER1	Convenience facilities
SER4	Safe environment
SER9	Clean rooms
SER10	Comfort of the place
SER12	Polite and catering staff
SER14	Quick room reservations
SER17	Providing tourist information
Hotel Management	
HTM15	Knowledgeable staffs
HTM20	Affordable room rates
HTM21	Efficient service staffs
HTM22	Building trust with customers
HTM23	Using technology for communication and operations
HTM24	Collaborating with hotels in the area
Customer Satisfaction	
CUS12	Friendly service staffs
CUS14	Online communication channels
CUS15	Luggage assistance service
CUS16	Convenient transportation near the community
CUS18	Good natural environment

Figure 2 shows the analysis of the overall influence of latent variables in the structural equation model, the business development guidelines for hotel business management for elderly tourists in the central region of Thailand in Standardized Estate mode after model improvements. The model consists of four latent

variables, one exogenous latent variable (Marketing Strategy), and three endogenous latent variables (Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction, and Hotel Management). The highest overall influence is on the Marketing Strategy components Direct and overall influence on Hotel Management with a weight value (Standardized Region Weight) equal to 0.55.

The results of the hypothesis testing to analyze the causal relationships among latent variables in the structural equation model of the guidelines for hotel business management for elderly tourists in the central region of Thailand revealed 5 hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1, marketing strategy components have a statistically significant direct influence on service quality, has been confirmed with a statistical significance level of 0.001 and a standardized regression weight of 0.19. This aligns with the research hypothesis as initially proposed.

Hypothesis 2, service quality components have a statistically significant direct influence on hotel management, has been confirmed with a statistical significance level of 0.01 and a standardized regression weight of 0.20. This aligns with the research hypothesis as initially proposed.

Hypothesis 3, marketing strategy components have a statistically significant direct influence on hotel management, has been confirmed with a statistical significance level of 0.001 and a standardized regression weight of 0.55. This aligns with the research hypothesis as initially proposed.

Hypothesis 4, marketing strategy components have a statistically significant direct influence on customer satisfaction, has been confirmed with a statistical significance level of 0.001 and a standardized regression weight of 0.44. This aligns with the research hypothesis as initially proposed.

Hypothesis 5, customer satisfaction components have a statistically significant direct influence on hotel management, has been confirmed with a statistical significance level of 0.01 and a standardized regression weight of 0.52. This aligns with the research hypothesis as initially proposed.

5 Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the research using descriptive statistics and a structural equation model can be concluded:

5.1 Marketing Strategy Component

1) The results of the research model analysis, as illustrated in Figure 2, reveal the following findings: Marketing Strategy has a direct influence on Service Quality, confirming Hypothesis 1. This aligns with the study conducted by, [28], which found that strategies related to product, pricing, promotion, place, personnel, and processes significantly impact service quality and customer satisfaction. A marketing strategy denotes a business's complete game plan for reaching potential consumers as well as turning them into customers of their products along services. A marketing strategy comprises the business's value proposition, important brand messaging, data on target customer demographics, as well as other high-level elements. Based on the role of marketing strategy and service quality in hotel business performance, it is evident that improving marketing strategies to enhance organizational efficiency involves innovative approaches to service delivery that meet customer needs.

2) The results of hypothesis testing for Hypothesis 3, Marketing Strategy has a direct influence on Hotel Management, align with previous research, [29]. It was found that incorporating digital marketing strategies, particularly in the analysis of online customer reviews, can be used to develop marketing plans and improve hotel operations. Additionally, research by, [30], highlighted the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the hotel industry, leading to travelers' reluctance to travel and stay in hotels. To instill confidence in hotel guests, hotels must establish cleanliness measures within the hotel premises and communicate these measures effectively through online channels, ensuring that travelers are well-informed and comfortable with the idea of staying in hotels.

3) The results of hypothesis testing for Hypothesis 4, Marketing Strategy has a direct influence on Customer Satisfaction, are consistent with previous research, [31]. It was found that employing close-to-customer marketing strategies leads to higher customer satisfaction. Additionally, the research by, [32], emphasized that marketing planning, considering factors such as business location, cleanliness, effective staff management, and direct customer relationships, directly influences customer satisfaction when using the services provided by the business.

5.2 Service Quality Component

The results of hypothesis testing for Hypothesis 2, Service Quality has a direct influence on Hotel Management, align with previous research findings regarding the impact of service quality on the hotel industry. It was found that improving the skills and quality of service among hotel staff significantly enhances the efficiency of hotel management, [33]. Research by, [34], also established a direct relationship between high service quality, perceived value, and satisfaction of guests staying in hotels. This relationship was further linked to internal hotel management processes. Additionally, the study conducted by, [35], revealed that high service quality promotes customer satisfaction and value, fostering clear communication and creative thinking, ultimately contributing to profitability.

5.3 Customer Satisfaction Component

The results of hypothesis testing for Hypothesis 5, Customer Satisfaction has a direct influence on Hotel Management, are in line with previous research findings, [36]. It was found that the decision-making process of business travelers when choosing hotel accommodations during their trips is influenced by the management of services, welcoming staff, and various amenities. Additionally, the research by, [37], highlighted that utilizing customer satisfaction survey results to formulate improvement plans for hotel operations helps in retaining existing customers.

5.4 Conclusion

The importance of the components of the hotel business management for elderly tourists in the central region of Thailand, analysis of the Service Quality component reveals the highest overall level of importance. According to, [38], they introduced elements to enhance the SERVQUAL (Service Quality) tools by identifying 10 service quality assessment factors and consolidating them into 5 dimensions to gain a better understanding of the true meaning of service quality in the service industry. The fundamental factors that customers use to judge the quality of service have been developed including Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy. Customer satisfaction is influenced by both HRM and service quality practices. Ultimately, this research supports the close association between HRM practices and hotel performance. Both human resource management methods and service quality practices have shown their impact on client happiness, [39]. It shows the importance of service quality that hotel business operators should focus on as their priority.

6 Suggestions

1) The theoretical contributions obtained from this research study aim to present strategic marketing, service quality, and customer satisfaction in managing hotel businesses for elderly tourists in the central region of Thailand. The research results provide theoretical contributions in generating knowledge and advancing research findings to develop new insights.

2) Hotel entrepreneurs should prioritize the development of service quality and create customer satisfaction that aligns with the changing characteristics of customers in different eras. Special attention should be given to the elderly customer group, which will become a major customer base in the future. Utilize appropriate technology and amenities to cater to the elderly.

3) Government agencies can use the research findings as guidelines for planning and preparing for the increasing number of elderly tourists in the future. This will ensure that it is aligned with the service of hotels.

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