

Factors that Contribute to the Success Isaan Restaurants Case Study of Surat Thani Municipality

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the factors that contribute to the success of Isaan restaurants in Surat Thani Municipality through social media marketing. Purposive sampling of entrepreneurs, business owners, managers, or marketing practitioners of Isaan restaurant in Surat Thani Municipality, where they were registered as an established restaurant, was used to determine the sample group for this study. In this study article, the data was collected from a semi-structured interview with the questionnaire also administered during the interview, resulting in a blended mix of qualitative and quantitative data. According to the findings of this study, Isaan restaurants primarily concentrated on social media marketing via Facebook, Google+, and Instagram, in that order. And it was discovered that Facebook application could reach out to customers more successfully. The sample most agreed with social media marketing that, quickly made customers take notice of new restaurants, according to the results of the success factors from social media marketing.

Keywords: 1) Isaan Restaurants 2) Social Media 3) Marketing

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Introduction

This essay is part of a research on the factors that contribute to the success of Isaan restaurants in the Surat Thani Municipality using social media marketing. The paper explored Thai people's eating habits, which show that they prefer to eat out more these days. As a result, the Thai restaurant industry expands across the country. Surat Thani is the province with the fastest growing restaurant industry in the southern region of the country. According to Business Information Online, there are 1,082 restaurants registered as a business, restaurant, or diner in 2017. According to the Business Information Division online, there are 80 Isaan eateries, which are quite popular among consumers. Even though Isaan food such as Somtam, Laab, and Nam Tok are not Surat Thani regional cuisine, the spices, appealing taste, and healthy image contribute to their high popularity. According to statistics, Surat Thani is among Thailand's top ten provinces with the most restaurants in 2019, and Isaan is among the top five of more than 4,000 newly opened restaurants nationwide. The rate of growth is 82 percent. This rate of expansion boosts the opportunity for additional Isaan eateries while also increasing commercial competition in Surat Thani.

The extremely competitive market was identified as a problem in this study. Many registered Isaan restaurants had to close their doors after only a short time in operation because they were unable to reach enough of their target clients. (Kamoljitrungreung, personal communication, December 20, 2018) Popular restaurants not only offer good cuisine, excellent service, and reasonable prices, but they also have effective offline and online

marketing tactics to reach their online customers. (Bangkok bank, 2019) The internet, computers, and smartphones are all products of the advancement of invention, electronic media, and technology. Because of advancements in innovation, electronic media, and technology, every group of the population now has access to the internet, computers, and cellphones. This has influenced consumer behavior. Through online marketing, consumers can now research and compare the information of any business or product. Many businesses have increased their efforts in online marketing via social media or applications such as Twitter, Google+, Youtube, Facebook Fanpage, or Instagram in order to reach their target consumers. The benefit of using social media for online marketing is that the information can be tailored to the target audience. This is a critical factor in the success of restaurants nowadays.

Objectives

1. To study the factors that contribute to the success of online marketing made by Isaan restaurants in Surat Thani Municipality.
2. To study the online marketing of Isaan restaurants in Surat Thani Municipality.

Literature Review

"Food" refers to a substance that is consumed or drunk in order to sustain life and growth. Food nowadays must be sold through presence at a **"food selling place,"** which is defined as any building, place, or area that is not public place or way arranged for the preparation or cooking of food for sale to buyers for immediate consumption, whether the sale is for consumption within the area or

arranged at the place or to be taken away for consumption at another place. Food selling places are also known as **“food storing places,”** which refers to any building, place, or area that is not a public place or way and is set up for the storage of food in fresh, dry or any other form for sale to buyers for consumption after preparation or cooking. (Surat Thani Municipality, 1996)

A food selling place or restaurant can be classified in a variety of ways based on a range of factors. It can be classified according to the decoration, type of service, or type of food. The food kind or food flavoring is used as a criterion to categorize Isaan restaurants. Isaan restaurant is a **“local cuisine restaurant”** that serves regional cuisine. The local cuisine restaurants are the restaurants which serve the local cuisine of each different region, northern Thai cuisine restaurants, southern Thai cuisine restaurants or northeastern Thai cuisine restaurants for instance. All these restaurants focus on the specification of each area. (Seubsman, et al., 2016)

Northeastern or Isaan cuisine is a regional cuisine of Thailand’s northeastern or Isaan region. Isaan food exemplifies the simplicity of the Isaan people. Isaan cuisine is well-known, and its flavor is well-liked among Thais. Somtam or papaya salad, grilled chicken, sticky rice, Tom Saab or spicy soup, crying tiger or grilled tender beef brisket with Isaan style sauce or “Jaew” and sun-dried beef can be eaten anytime and anywhere. A tray of food set, or “Pa Lang,” is another popular type of Isaan food, consisting of steam fish with vegetables and Isaan style sauce, or “jaew.” These Isaan dishes are popular among Thais and foreigners alike. Their distinctive flavour is

characterized by saltiness from fermented fish or “pla ra,” pungency from fresh and dried chili, and sourness from local vegetables such as tamarin and olive. In addition, most Isaan dishes are dry, thickened, or have little soup. (Dechkunchon, 2009) Hence, “Isaan restaurant” can be defined as a restaurant that serve local northeastern cuisine. The important ingredient is “pla ra,” and the most distinctive and popular dishes are Somtam, Laab, Namtok (grilled meat salad), and Kaeng Oom (northern style curry). The key sauce is “jaew,” which has distinct flavor: saltiness from plara, pungency from fresh and dried chili, and sourness from a local vegetable. Isaan cuisine is typically served with steamed sticky rice. (Makchouy, 2018)

Somtam will continue to be popular in the future because of its diverse taste which attracts many people. Its ingredients are also easy and convenient to find. Season ingredients can also be used in making Somtam. One can say that Somtam is one of many delicious Thai dishes which no matter how time flies, its charm does not seem to fade. (Daily news, 2014)

Increased sales volume and profit margins are critical factors of a successful restaurant business. To increase sales volume and profit, marketing tactics must be tailored to your business’s needs. The following are the five marketing tactics for improving sales and profits. (Am2b Marketing, 2017)

Improve market share in the same market; the company can earn more profit without investing more money since existing costs can be used to increase profit.

Adding a production line; this is another typical approach for increasing sales volume. Increasing sales volume can be accomplished



by adding new products that are relevant to existing ones or by producing the same product in different sizes and prices to meet the needs of consumers.

Expand the sale channels; a sale channel is the route that a company or seller takes to market their products or solutions to customers. Customers can buy what they want utilizing the internet as a medium rather than going to the store like they used to in the old days. Adding the internet as a primary market or selling through social media or applications such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and many others can enhance the sale channel with not so much cost. However, it can help to improve opportunities, profit, and reach both target and new consumers.

Expansion to overseas market; this is the approach that will be implemented if the business has reached a point of saturation. Some things may be in high demand in another country because that country is unable to manufacture them. Some countries, for example, are unable to grow rice. As a result, rice had to be imported from a neighboring country. Some countries lack crude oil resources. As a result, crude oil must be imported for sale.

Improve after-sales service; after-sales service has become increasingly crucial in consumer decision-making. There are a lot of similar products on the market, which makes it more competitive. As a result, increasing after-sales service can help increase customer numbers. Because customers are more likely to seek convenience, which is after-sales services such as product delivery or making the service suited for each product, which must be superior to competitors.

According to the findings of this study, the factors and indications of successful restaurants are as follows: 1) Be known to the target customers 2) An increase in customers 3) Higher sales volume 4) Customer satisfaction, retention of existing customers, and acquisition of new customers 5) Credibility of the restaurant based on internet information; quality of ingredients, taste of the dishes, comprehension of the true demands of the consumers whether taste-wise, price-wise, or service-wise, which must be delivered precisely to the needs of the customers. (Makchouy, 2018)

Online marketing is now a valuable tool for marketing communication. When compared to other modes of communication, communicating online is less expensive. Furthermore, consumers are increasingly utilizing online media. Individualism is also highly important in marketing currently. Brands not only communicate to their customers, but customers can also communicate back to brands. Customers also interact with one another, which has a significant impact on their feelings; in certain cases, customers may be more influential to one another than the mainstream media. (Chainiran, 2013)

Therefore, online marketing has gained more popularity from many brands. The internet is used as a medium for online marketing to send information quickly. Online media can be used for as many different types of communication tools as possible, ranging from interpersonal to public. Online media can also send out various types of information, such as text, voice mail, images, or videos. (Sukjarern, 2012)

The advancement of communication technology, computers, and the internet

has resulted in a social innovation known as “online social,” which is a well-known social network. The online social is a communication platform for people of all genders, ages, nationalities, religions, education levels, occupations, and subcultures. These members can share their stories, experiences, articles, images, and videos, which they can create or share from other media. The rapid growth of online social networks has resulted in a revolution in online media technology. Nowadays, social media plays an important role in not only the daily lives of consumers, but some entrepreneurs also use online social media as a tool for communication with their customers; to inform them of news as well as their marketing activities that pique their customers’ interest.

Almost every type of online social media has a sharing function that allows users to easily share their thoughts, such as the “share” button on Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Pantip, or “retweet” on Twitter. If users find a specific piece of content interesting, they can immediately share it with their social media friends. Recommendations from our online social networks, such as Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram, as well as ranking and review websites, are more influential than traditional word of mouth. Another distinction between face-to-face word of mouth and electronic word of mouth is the speed and size of propagation. (Chainiran, 2013)

Facebook is a social networking website that requires membership. It was founded by Mark Zuckerberg with his fellow college students. Initially, it served as a means of communication throughout the college.

(Raktham, 2015) Facebook allows its users to share their opinions, feelings, or information as text, image, or video using devices that can connect to the internet, such as phones or computers, making communication more effective and entertaining. (Nithiauthai, 2012)

According to a 2018 survey, Thailand has fifty-one million active users, accounting for 74 percent of its total population, and the number is rapidly increasing each year. (Brand buffet, 2018) An online social network is an important and influential micro-network. Instagram is yet another online social network that is gaining popularity among internet users. Following Facebook’s acquisition of Instagram, it has gained a large number of users. Because it can be linked to a variety of other online social networks. Instagram’s unique feature is also one of the reasons for its continued popularity. According to the data, there are more than thirteen million active users, accounting for 19% of the total population. Instagram has the second most active users after Facebook.

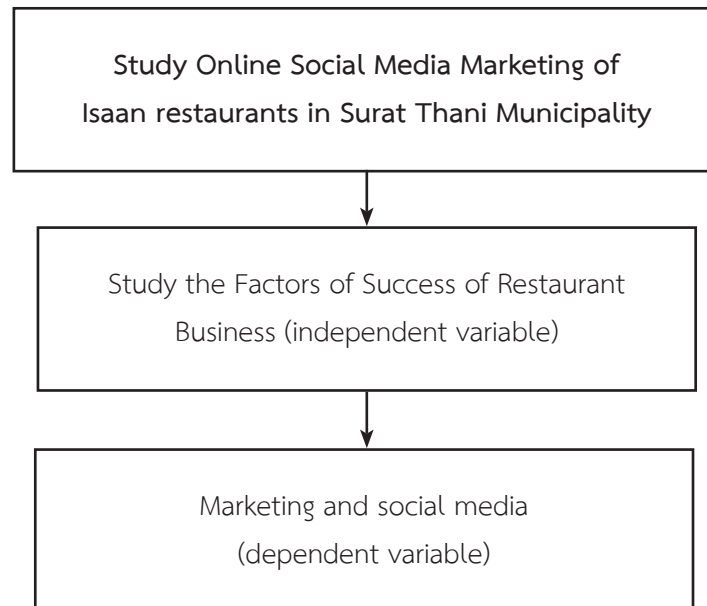
According to the text above, Facebook is a hugely popular online social network. It can connect with a variety of other online social networks, making Facebook extremely useful for both communication and business purposes. Facebook can also add value to individuals because of its quick communication capabilities, which make it an excellent tool for communicating with customers. It also implies that Facebook played a role in the success of the Isann restaurant in the Surat Thani Municipality.

One of the factors, increasing in sales channels on the internet, was discovered in a study of concepts, theory, factors, and



indicators of a successful restaurant. It is more profitable, and restaurants can earn more opportunities, by selling on websites that serve as a central market or by selling on application such as Facebook and Instagram. Selling online can also help businesses in reaching more of their target customers and gaining new customers.

Conceptual Framework



Methods

Population and Sample

In both qualitative and quantitative research, the population and sample are the same. The population and sample are Isaan restaurants in Surat Thani Municipality that have been recognized as a well-established restaurant, Isaan restaurant type. These are restaurants that serve northeastern cuisine, have a license, and pay an annual fee on a continuous basis. According to this research, there were 48 Isaan restaurants in the area. (2018 Isaan restaurant inspection in Surat Thani Municipality, Surat Thani province) Among the 48 restaurants, 40 obtained the establishment certificate, license, and paid the annual fee on a continuous basis.

Sampling Methodology

In this study, Purposive Sampling was used. The population, sample, or primary

informant is the same: 40 restaurants. To ensure that this research was as thorough as possible, the researcher decided to collect data from all 40 restaurants. However, there are some difficulties in this research. Some restaurants refused to let the interview take place. Some restaurants had closed down before the data was gathered. As a result, the number of restaurants included in the sample or primary informant has been reduced from 40 to 30.

Data Collection and Data Analysis Methods

A blended mix of qualitative and quantitative research was used to ensure the trustworthiness and quality of the data, as well as to meet all of the study's objectives. All of the objectives are listed below.

1) Data Collection and Research Instruments; the two primary sources used in

this study are

1.1) Primary Data; this data was obtained through semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. From each restaurant, one entrepreneur, business owner, manager, or marketing practitioner with related knowledge or experience was chosen. The data was then used to achieve the research objectives.

1.2) Secondary data; this information was gathered from printed documents, books, textbooks, studies, articles, analytical articles, case studies, and those published in digital format.

2) Data Analysis Method

The descriptive data analysis method was used to analyze the data. The data from the semi-structured interviews was analyzed using the content analysis method and the research conceptual framework. The descriptive statistics method was used to analyze the information obtained from the questionnaires, which included frequency, mean, and standard deviation.

3) Research Instrument

3.1) Semi-Structured Interview

To achieve the research objectives, a semi-structured was created. Three experts were given in-depth interview questions to consider and revise to completion, and the IOC is 0.85.

Before collecting data, the questions were used in other types of restaurants similar to Isaan restaurants to assess the level of comprehension of the interview questions.

To assess the level of comprehension of the questions,

3.2) Questionnaire

The questionnaires were created with as much detail as possible in order to cover all of the

research objectives. Three experts evaluated the trustworthiness, and the IOC is 0.88.

Before collecting data, the questionnaires were used in other types of restaurants that are similar to Isaan restaurants to assess the level of comprehension of the questionnaires.

Results

The results of this research can be analyzed to meet all objectives of the research as follow,

Qualitative Data Analysis Result

Content Analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data. The content from the semi-structure interview of the sample, 30 restaurants. The interview content was transcribed, then analyzed and 4 aspects were found as a result.

From studying the marketing used by the sample of Isaan restaurants in Surat Thani Municipality, it is shown that

(1) General information; some Isaan restaurants in Surat Thani Municipality have been running for not less than 30 years. Some have been running for not over a year and some have just closed down due to the current economic consequences. The majority of Isaan restaurants in the sample are run by owners who have moved from another area to make a living. The liking and aptitude for northeastern cuisine is the starting point for their investment. Community areas, main roads with a high volume of traffic, a nice atmosphere to attract customers, convenient parking, and an area with no competition or restaurants of the same type are all factors considered by these Isaan restaurant owners when choosing a location. They also consider land or buildings with low rental fees. In addition, some restaurants



are opened in the owners' homes to reduce the rental fee. The size of service area is considered by the number of tables in the restaurant. Isaan restaurants range in size from 10 to 100 tables, and the dishes served are a fusion of central Thai and northeastern Thai cuisine. Dishes are also created to meet the needs of their customers or to follow a social trend. Each restaurant has its own fermented fish, or "pla-ra," which is a signature ingredient of Thai northeastern cuisine. Each restaurant has its own suggested dish. Each restaurant focuses on selecting fresh and high-quality ingredients in order to serve a delicious and high-quality dish. Customers may have to service themselves in Isaan restaurant because the service is not full service. These restaurants, on the other hand, focus more on the impression they make on their customers and the friendliness they provide. There are 2 types of restaurant decor. The first are restaurants that maintain the signature of northeastern cuisine while decorating in a garden style. Modern decoration is another option. This decoration is a mix of modern and northeastern restaurant styles. Surat Thani Municipality has granted the Food Selling and Storing Place License to all restaurants in the sample. Some of them have also received the "Safe Ingredients and Q Goods" banner from the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives.

(2) Marketing and the Use of Social Media; this study reveals that the owners of Isaan restaurants in Surat Thani Municipality are directly in charge of the marketing. The marketing or related activities are as follow

- Facebook Page to approach their customers.

- Using their own Facebook account to publicize their restaurants or the menu.

- Location pinning on Google + for the restaurant location and convenience of their customers to travel to their restaurants.

- Publicizing through television, radio as well as create promotions

(3) Online social media: all interviewees are familiar with Facebook as a social media platform and use it to reach out to customers and share news with them as well as other Facebook users. Despite the fact that some interviewees are familiar with Instagram and Google+, they do not consider using these platforms for marketing. The reasons for this are that these platforms are more complicated and may be able to reach fewer customers than Facebook. The popularity of each social media is the criteria used to select the online platform for marketing.

Facebook are widely used comparing to other platforms mentioned above. Friends or acquaintances of the interviewee are users of Facebook and use Facebook to communicate.

Therefore, all interviewees selected Facebook for their marketing. All interviewees also agree that Facebook is the most effective online social media to reach their customers because Facebook can truly and quickly reach their target customers.

(4) Factors that contribute to the success of online social media marketing; based on the interview, the factors that contribute to the success of Isaan restaurants in Surat Thani Municipality are

- 1) Taste of the food (Impression or the like in the taste of cuisine contribute to the compliments or re-purchase)

2) Service Quality (Impression or preference in a restaurant's service)

3) Additional Service to meet the needs of their customers (Additional service as required by customers such as catering service or delivery service)

4) Atmosphere and the decoration (Impression or preference for the atmosphere, décor, and other elements of a restaurant other than the food and service.)

5) Marketing, Advertising and Publicising (Success that is contributed by increasing sales and reaching out to target customers through advertising and publicising.)

6) Hygiene (Assurance or preference in food ingredient hygiene, container, cook, service provider, and restaurant area)

7) Keep developing and expanding (Creating new menu, activities to boost sales and attracts consumers)

8) Patience (Owners and employees are patient with both internal and external issues.)

The analysis of data from qualitative research using in-depth interviews reveals that the three most discussed factors that contribute to the success of restaurants are food taste, advertising and publicizing, and service quality. Marketing, advertising, and publicizing are factors that contribute to the success of Isaan restaurants in Surat Thani Municipality. According to the interviewees, marketing is an important part of running

a restaurant business, especially marketing through online social media. Online social media is a channel for introducing the restaurant to new customers. It aids in reaching out to the target consumers. It also demonstrates an increase in customers from both dining in and delivery services. According to the interviews, some restaurants discovered that marketing is only effective in the beginning and does not last long. They do, however, insist that marketing is an important part of running Isaan restaurants. Every respondent also agrees that marketing through online social media is a necessity in operating restaurants in today's world, which is constantly changing and competitive. As a result, in order for Isaan restaurants to adapt to the change, online social media is used as a medium to reach customers, advertise, and inform customers as quickly as possible.

Quantitative Research Data analysis results

Part 1 General information of the respondents

General information of the respondents shows that most of the respondents of this research were female (56.67%), aged 46 - 50 years or 20.00%, had the highest education at the bachelor's degree or 56.67%, and 60.42 percent were business owners, while some business owners were still working in other positions by themselves as shown in Table No. 1.

**Table No. 1** General information of the respondents

General information of the respondents		Frequency (person)	Percentage
Gender n = 30	Female	17	56.67
	Male	13	43.33
Age n = 30	20 – 25 years	3	10.00
	26 – 30 years	5	16.67
	31 – 35 years	5	16.67
	36 – 40 years	2	6.66
	41 – 45 years	4	13.33
	46 – 50 years	6	20.00
	more than 51 years	5	16.67
The highest level of education n = 30	lower than high school	2	6.67
	High school	10	33.33
	Diploma	1	3.33
	Bachelor's degree	17	56.67
Job position (more than one answer) n = 48	Business owner	29	60.42
	Manager	11	22.92
	Marketer	4	8.33
	Admin	4	8.33

Part 2 Information of the restaurant

Information of the restaurant shows that most Isaan restaurants, which is a sample group of research, has been operating for the past 5 years or more, representing 60 percent.

Every restaurant has requested permission and gets a license to establish a place to sell food and store food, representing 100 percent and every store has online marketing, accounted for 100% as shown in Table No. 2.

Table No. 2 Information of the restaurant

Information of the restaurant		Frequency (person)	Percentage
The period that the business has been in operation n = 30	1 - 2 years	2	6.67
	2 - 3 years	1	3.33
	3 – 4 years	5	16.67
	4 – 5 years	4	13.33
	more than 5 years	18	60.00

Table No. 2 (Continued)

Information of the restaurant		Frequency (person)	Percentage
Have permission license n = 30	Yes	30	100.00
	No	-	00.00
Does the restaurant have online marketing?	Yes	30	100.00
	No	-	00.00

Part 3 Marketing through social media accounted for 100 percent, followed by Online marketing shows that Isan restaurants that are a sample group of this research are doing online marketing. Most popular marketing is through Facebook marketing through Google + accounted for 26.67% and Instagram accounted for 13.33 percent as shown in Table No. 3

Table No. 3 Online Marketing

Online Marketing		frequency (person)	Percentage
Which social media are used for marketing your business	Facebook	30	100.00
	Instagram	4	13.33
	Twitter	-	00.00
	YouTube	-	00.00
	Google+	8	26.67
	Others	-	00.00

The most effective social media platforms to reach customers were Facebook ($\bar{x} = 4.47$), Google Plus ($\bar{x} = 3.50$) YouTube ($\bar{x} = 3.33$) and others ($\bar{x} = 1.00$) respectively as shown in Table No. 4.

Table No. 4 Online Marketing Effective

Social Media	Total score	Average ($\bar{x}$)	Rating
Facebook	180	6.00	1
Instagram	137	4.57	2
Twitter	134	4.47	3
YouTube	100	3.33	5
Google+	105	3.50	4
Others	30	1.00	6



There are 6 remarks that most of the respondents strongly agree with about online marketing, which can be sorted by the averages in descending order as follows: firstly, social media can be used to present the information as quickly and frequently as needed ($\bar{x} = 4.63$). Next, it can be used to present in the forms of articles, pictures, videos, music, and shared with others ($\bar{x} = 4.53$). Social media is an important platform to introduce restaurants' new information, products, services, and ideas ($\bar{x} = 4.50$).

Social media can reach customers of all genders, ages, races, religions, educational backgrounds, occupations, and societies ($\bar{x} = 4.50$). Restaurants should use online marketing ($\bar{x} = 4.43$). Lastly, social media is convenient and easy to use ($\bar{x} = 4.40$). There is a remark that the respondents also agreed on which is that restaurants should use social media to send the information and as a way to communicate with customers ($\bar{x} = 4.2$) as shown in Table No. 5.

Table No. 5 Online Marketing Opinions

Online Marketing Opinions	$\bar{x}$	S. D	interpret
1. Restaurants should use online marketing.	4.43	0.57	Strongly agree
2. Restaurants should use social media to send the information and as a way to communicate with customers.	4.20	0.48	Agree
3. social media is an important platform to introduce restaurants' new information, products, services, and ideas.	4.50	0.68	Strongly agree
4. social media can be used to present in the forms of articles, pictures, videos, music, and shared with others.	4.53	0.57	Strongly agree
5. social media can reach customers of all genders, ages, races, religions, educational backgrounds, occupations, and societies.	4.50	0.68	Strongly agree
6. social media can be used to present the information as quickly and frequently as needed.	4.63	0.49	Strongly agree
7. social media is convenient and easy to use.	4.40	0.62	Strongly agree

As the second research objective is to study the success factor from the online marketing of Isaan restaurant in Surat Thani Municipality, it can be analyzed by using the data from the fourth part of the questionnaire as shown in Table 8 mentioned below.

Part 4 success factors from online marketing

The study on the success factors from online marketing shows that there are 4 remarks the respondents strongly agree: online marketing make customers aware of new restaurants faster ($\bar{x} = 4.60$), followed by online marketing increases ways for selling

goods and services, such as ordering food and booking through direct messages ($\bar{x} = 4.50$),

online marketing increases the number of customers ($\bar{x} = 4.37$), and online marketing make adding new products and activities easier and faster ($\bar{x} = 4.30$). In addition, there are 3 remarks that the respondents agree: social media is an important factor that makes

the restaurant successful ($\bar{x} = 4.17$), online marketing leads to higher sales compared to before ($\bar{x} = 4.17$), and social media help building credibility in terms of quality, taste, and good service through reviewing and sharing service experiences ($\bar{x} = 4.10$) as shown in Table No. 6.

Table No. 6 Success Factors of online marketing

Success Factors	$\bar{x}$	S. D	interpret
1. social media is an important factor that makes the restaurant successful	4.17	0.70	Agree
2. Online marketing make customers aware of new restaurants faster	4.60	0.56	Strongly agree
3. Online marketing increases the number of customers	4.37	0.56	Strongly agree
4. Online marketing leads to higher sales compared to before	4.17	0.65	Agree
5. Online marketing make adding new products and activities easier and faster	4.30	0.60	Strongly agree
6. Online marketing increases ways for selling goods and services, such as ordering food and booking through direct messages	4.50	0.57	Strongly agree
7. Social media help building credibility in terms of quality, taste, and good service through reviewing and sharing service experiences	4.10	0.80	Agree

The result revealed the interrelation between the independent variable which is the success factors of running restaurants and the dependent variable which is using online marketing and social media, that online marketing and social media is one of the three important factors to the success of running Isan restaurants. Every Isan restaurant that participated in this research uses at least one social media channel to help reach out to customers, causing the number of customers to

increase which results in higher sales as well as builds credibility in terms of quality, taste, and good services through reviewing and sharing service experiences. Consequently, using online marketing and social media tends to lead to the significant success of the Isan restaurant business.

Conclusions

As stated in the study of social media marketing of Isaan restaurants in Surat Thani Municipality, most of the interviewees and



the respondents are females, who account for 56.67%. Most of them fall under the age range of 40-50 years old, who account for 20%. Most of their highest education levels are bachelor's degrees, which account for 56.67%. Additionally, most of the interviewees work as restaurateurs. This study explores that the Isaan restaurants in Surat Thani Municipality have been established for at least 30 years and were started from the owners' culinary interests and professional skills. Each of them has the restaurant licenses and permits to operate a business for selling and stocking up food supplies from Surat Thani Municipality, which accounts for 100%. Every restaurant also creates social media marketing through various platforms – Facebook (71.42%), Google+ (19.04%), and Instagram (9.52%). According to the questionnaire, the application Facebook is the most effective way to reach the customer groups, which accounts for 26.23%. In terms of using social media marketing, six of the 7 questions are strongly agreed by the respondents. The strongest agreement is that social media can represent the information as rapidly and often as the users want ($\bar{X} = 4.63$). In terms of the success factors related to utilizing social media marketing, four of the 7 questions are strongly agreed by the respondents. The strongest agreement is that social media marketing introduces customers to new restaurants more rapidly ($\bar{X} = 4.6$). As stated in the research of the success factors from social media marketing of Isaan restaurants in Surat Thani Municipality, it could be concluded that there are three primal success factors in running the restaurant business. The first factor is the taste of food, the next factor is mar-

keting, advertising and public relations, and the last one is the quality of service, which is considered the critical key element that makes the restaurant business successful.

Discussions

According to the research of social media marketing of Isaan restaurants in Surat Thani Municipality, the findings could be explained from the research objectives into two ways:

1) According to the study of social media marketing by Isaan restaurants in Surat Thani Municipality, every restaurant where the researcher conducted a survey created social media marketing by using Facebook as their main platform. This consequence is in accordance with the study of Wutthammakhun (2017) that aimed to observe the restaurant reviewing via social media and the decisions on choosing restaurants to dine out of consumers in Bangkok. It suggests that in terms of a consumer's behavior of searching restaurants based on the reviews, the number of people who have experienced using social networking like Facebook is at the top of the sample groups. Furthermore, the result is in agreement with the study of the influence of social media advertising on the consumer response process (Chobdamrongtham, et al., 2011, pp. 16-26) which found Facebook was the most-used social media platform. In addition, the study of Isaan restaurants in Surat Thani Municipality revealed that the business owners usually employed Facebook to promote their restaurants with articles and illustrations. It is reasoned that the visual content can be seen clearly and can be used with articles to advertise restaurants or attract

customers' attentions. In relation to the study of the success factor of Facebook Fanpage Wongnai influencing the interest in the restaurant service written by Janesakan (2015, pp. 45-47), the most popular tools to communicate with customers were included images, texts and videos orderly. The fact that communicative tools get the highest attention conveys that consumer attach great importance to the easily understandable communication methods. This empirical evidence represents that the usage of social media marketing on Facebook to reach the customer groups connect with the behavior of consumers who have utilized social networking like Facebook to review restaurants with pictures, messages and videos as well.

2) According to the study of the success factors from social media marketing of Isaan restaurants in Surat Thani Municipality, the majority of the restaurant owners agreed that one of the important factors making the restaurant business successful was marketing, advertising and public relations. This outcome is relevant to Tanasut's study (2015) that observed the marketing strategy factors and social media's impacts on the success of running the premium low-fat cake business in Bangkok. This success factor of the premium low-fat cake business is statistically significant at 0.05 level, according to the hypothesis testing. It is also relevant to the study of Charuwan (2012, pp. 38-49) which investigated the behaviors and key factors from marketing communication in social media that encouraged consumers to purchase. This

observation indicates that the average social media users attach great importance to the key factors of marketing communication on social media mightily. Moreover, consumers place much significance on the marketing communication on social media at the comprehension stage, emotion stage, and behavior stage which generally gains the highest level of purchasing. Likewise, the result is according to the study of marketing factors and purchasing behaviors through the electronic commerce system of consumers in Bangkok written by Cherdboonmuang (2014, pp. 76-91), revealing all consumers are able to do everything via online networking. Consequently, social media plays an essential role in advertising or creating a positive brand perception to attract customers. Not only the objectives, but this study also created a body of knowledge. Apart from traditional trading, all marketing, advertising and public relations on social media are another success element of the restaurant business. It helps increase sales from the food orders via online platforms or applications like Grab Food, Food Panda and Line Man, etc. These ways contribute to stimulating consumers' demands. Certainly, this kind of modern online trading leads to a change in consumers' behaviors. They pay more attention to delivery service, reservation, and food ordering in advance since the electronic commerce system on social media, which is time-saving convenient and cheap, are available to order food and contact the restaurant.



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