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PUBLIC POLICY FOR GREEN PRACTICES BY RESTAURANTS AND ITS IMPACT ON SOCIAL WELFARE: NEW LOOK FROM THAILAND

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Abstract

Earlier studies have paid their attention on green practices and its impact on the business performance. However, significant gap has been identified in the literature to integrate the public policy in terms of green practices adopted by the restaurant industry and their subsequent impact on social welfare. This study tries to fill this gap, taking the factors of green satisfaction, green guesting, green quality, green energy, and green certificates for their effect on the value of social welfare as performed by restaurant industry of Thailand. Data is collected through a questionnaire from a sample of 288 employees in various classes of restaurant. Descriptive and regression analysis are conducted, and findings are presented with details. It is found that public policy in terms of green practices adopted by the restaurant industry of Thailand has shown a positive influence from green satisfaction, green quality, and green certificates on social welfare of Thailand. Besides, study covers both theoretical and practical gaps in literature while providing a good understanding in the field of green practices and social welfare.

Keywords: Public Policy, Green Practices, Social Welfare, Restaurant Industry, Thailand

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Introduction

The term of policy is an ability or proficiency, while public policy is a statement or will of the government regarding an activity carried out in a particular field to improve the welfare of society (Anasiru, 2011; Junaedi & Jermsittiparsert, 2020). Public policy has been observed under several dimensions. The growing fields in the literature are the green practices adopted by the business firms and green policies defined by the government for the business firms to reflect them in their operational activities (Baumann, Boons & Bragd, 2002; Carter & Fowler, 2008; Rasool, Iftikhar, Nazir & Kamran, 2016; Tseng, Tan & Siriban-Manalang, 2013; Liu, Low & He, 2012). Since 1990s, the field of green management has been emerged and got its place in the list of most influential topics of the century (Kamran & Omran, 2018; Krause, Vachon & Klassen, 2009; Sarkis, Zhu & Lai, 2011). In this regard, the role of administration and related departments in both developed and emerging economies has got much attention. In the country of Thailand, the discussion over environmental issues and industry role is of key concern by the researchers (Huitric, Folke & Kautsky, 2002; Ninlawan et al., 2012; Natsuda & Thoburn, 2013; Saengchai, Rodboonsong & Jermsittiparsert, 2019; Somjai, Rattamanee, Thongdonpum & Jermsittiparsert, 2019). The reason is that there is significant growth of tourism in Thailand and major contribution in the domestic economic growth comes from this sector (Halloran, Roos, Flore & Hanboonsong, 2016; Kaosa-ard, Bezic & White, 2001; Natsuda & Thoburn, 2013; Ponjan & Thirawat, 2016; Scheyvens, 2007; Wattanakuljarus & Coxhead, 2008). The inflow of tourism is highly associated with the hospitality sector like hotels and restaurants. In this way, considering the sustainable and positive output from the restaurant industry is not only a key concern of this industry but also of the local community too. In recent decade, research study by Kasim & Ismail (2012) have focused on the environment management, green practices and their relationship in the food service in general, and more specifically with the restaurant industry. Their study was conducted in the Penang state of Malaysia, keeping a sample of 26 restaurant managers. Their survey has shown the fact that there is a weak implementation of green practices in the restaurant industry, which needs serious attention for better future results. In this regard, government intervention with the provision of education to the general public, capacity building and other positive activities may provide some different output (Chaskin, 2001; Eade, 1997; Faludi & Gilbert, 2019; Yi, Li & Jai, 2018). In their study, Yusof, Awang, Jusoff & Ibrahim (2017) have considered the link between the tourism industry and green practices. A study by Nielsen (2004) has indicated the fact that there is significant need in the restaurant industry of United States to participate in the green practices. Such participation can provide better results and more satisfaction to the customers. Additionally, it is recommended that in the Asian economies, similar practices may follow by the restaurant industry.

In addition, the factor of social welfare is widely discussed in the theoretical and empirical literature. For example, Sakyi, Bonuedi & Opoku (2018) have observed the social welfare and its association with the trade facilitation. It is observed that trade facilitation and related activities in the economy have their positive effect on the social welfare in the African economies. Basakha & Kamal (2019) has considered the effect of industrial development and social welfare in the region of Iran. Their findings show the fact that industrial development has its positive and significant impact on the social welfare in Iran. Some other studies have also provided their contribution in terms of social development, financial development and social welfare (Abito, Besanko & Diermeier, 2019; Boyd & Bee, 2014; Dobelstein, 1999; Hawkins & Weis, 1985; Ingham, 1984; Kamran et al., 2016; Koo, 2018; Parke, Roisman & Rose, 2019; Sabia, Burkhauser & Mackay, 2018). However, the trends of research studies have provided the fact that there is little attention towards the public policy in terms of green practices in restaurants and their impact on the social welfare. To the best of author's findings, this study is probably the very first attempt in the economy of Thailand to

understand the impact of public policy in terms of public practices on social welfare by restaurant industry.

Research Methodology

For the better understanding, this study has developed a questionnaire to collect the valuable responses from various employees working in restaurant sector of Thailand. Table 1 provides the details about the key variables of their items and measurements in the present study.

Table 1 Description of the Green Practices and Items with Measurement Scale

Variable Title	Abbreviation	Items	Description	Measurement on the Scale
Green Satisfaction	GS	5	GS1-GS5	Strongly disagree = 1; Strongly agree = 5
Green Guesting	GGUEST	5	GGUEST1- GGUEST5	
Green Energy	GENERGY	5	GENERGY1- GENERGY5	
Green Certification	GCER	5	GCER1-GCER5	
Green Quality	GQ	5	GQ1-GQ5	

After the measurement of green practices under various titles, social welfare is considered and measured. For this purpose, seven items are added to the questionnaire. These are under the title of charitable and trust funds (CTF), childcare services (CSS), family life education (FLED), integrated family services (IFS), short-term food assistance service (STFOOD), and inter country social service (ICSS). All these items are measured on the same Likert scale. In addition, demographic factors like education, age, experience, and restaurant class are also observed through questionnaire. After the development of the questionnaire, an online survey was conducted and employees in the restaurant industry are requested to provide their valuable opinion. Over a time of 4 weeks, total 341 responses were finally collected from which 288 were found to be valid for the analysis. For examining the data trends, descriptive findings like mean, standard deviation, minimum, maximum, kurtosis, and skewness are calculated and presented. In addition, regression analysis is also applied, and findings are provided with the significant discussion regarding the relationship between public policy in terms of green practices and its impact on social welfare by restaurant sector.

Research Results

For the analysis purpose, three major categories have been defined. Under the first stage, demographic factors like age and educational background, experience and restaurant classes are presented through cross tabulation. In the next step, descriptive output for green practices and social welfare indicators is presented. In the third stage, regression analysis is conducted, and findings are presented. Table 2 provides the facts for the age distribution and educational cross tabulation. It is found that for the age categories having 20-25 years of range, 7 respondents have done their 14 years of education, 1 have completed its 16 years, and 4 are enrolled in higher education. For the age distribution of 26-30 years, 6 respondents have completed their 16 years of education plus diploma qualification, 5 are enrolled in higher education, and 4 have done their Ph.D. in a related field. Similarly, for those who are 40 years and above has shown the fact that 53 respondents have done with a Ph.D. in a related field of the restaurant industry. Table 3 provides the output for the cross tabulation between experience and restaurant class of the employees. It is observed that for the normal class of the restaurant total 13 respondents, for above average are 20, good class are 58, high class 100, and finally for those restaurant having ratings, the total number of selected respondents are 97 with their relevant class of experience as well.

Table 2 Tabulation of age education

AGE-Education	14 Years	16 Years	16 Years + Diploma	Enrolled in higher education	PhD in related field	Total
20-25 Years	7	1	0	4	0	12
26-30 Years	3	7	6	5	4	25
31-35 Years	2	8	19	20	3	52
36-40 Years	1	6	19	63	15	104
Above 40	5	0	18	19	53	95
Total	**18**	**22**	**62**	**109**	**77**	**288**

Table 3 Tabulation of Experience Res

Experience	1-2 years	2-4 Years	5-7 years	7-10 years	Above 10 Years	Total
Normal	5	0	2	5	1	13
Above average	1	5	6	5	3	20
Good	3	8	23	16	8	58
High class	15	18	19	31	17	100
Having ratings	19	13	12	15	38	97
Total	**43**	**44**	**62**	**72**	**67**	**288**

Table 4 provides the outcome for the descriptive score of various items under the title of green practices in terms of green satisfaction, green guesting, green energy usage, green certificates and finally the green quality. It is observed that for the various items of green satisfaction, the highest mean score is observed for green satisfaction one or GS1; 4.944 with the deviation from the mean value of 1.35 respectively. For green guesting highest score is related to green guesting one or GGUEST1. For green energy, the highest average value belongs to green energy two or GENERGY2 which is 1.327 respectively. Similarly, the factors of green certificates and green quality also show their average trends with the deviation from the mean, minimum, maximum, percentiles, skewness, and kurtosis as well.

Table 4 Descriptive Findings for Public Policy as Reflected in Green Practices

Variables	Obs	Mean	Std.Dev	Min	Max	p1	p99	Skew.	Kurt.
Green Satisfaction									
GS1	288	4.944	1.355	1	5	1	5	.067	1.867
GS2	288	4.375	1.203	1	5	1	5	-.318	2.125
GS3	288	4.024	1.316	1	5	1	5	-.054	1.828
GS4	288	4.141	1.206	1	5	1	5	-.515	2.467
GS5	288	3.479	1.132	1	5	1	5	-.381	2.634
Green Guesting									
GGUEST1	288	4.684	1.405	1	5	1	5	.271	1.808
GGUEST2	288	3.021	1.29	1	5	1	5	-.088	1.984
GGUEST3	288	4.136	1.275	1	5	1	5	-.23	1.965
GGUEST4	288	4.309	1.229	1	5	1	5	-.277	2.091
GGUEST5	288	4.097	1.262	1	5	1	5	-.152	2.017
Green Energy									
GENERGY1	288	3.267	1.225	1	5	1	5	-.361	2.226
GENERGY2	288	4.292	1.327	1	5	1	5	-.34	1.942
GENERGY3	288	4.983	1.36	1	5	1	5	.023	1.879
GENERGY4	288	4.906	1.39	1	5	1	5	.098	1.746
GENERGY5	288	3.882	1.092	1	5	1	5	-.972	3.404

Green Certificates								
GCER1	288	4.865	1.088	1	5	1	5	-.868	3.069
GCER2	288	4.708	1.2	1	5	1	5	-.6	2.362
GCER3	288	4.889	1.043	1	5	1	5	-.754	2.914
GCER4	288	4.719	1.086	1	5	1	5	-.636	2.674
GCER5	288	3.625	1.197	1	5	1	5	-.492	2.286
Green Quality								
GQ1	288	3.667	1.088	1	5	1	5	-.594	2.704
GQ2	288	4.799	1.108	1	5	1	5	-.813	3.032
GQ3	288	4.719	1.114	1	5	1	5	-.596	2.566
GQ4	288	4.715	1.08	1	5	1	5	-.631	2.701
GQ5	288	3.691	1.011	1	5	1	5	-.589	2.871

Table 5 provides the trends in descriptive findings for the various factors of social indicators. It was found that the mean score for CTF is 4.62 with the deviation of 1.021 respectively. Meanwhile FAS has a mean value of 4.77 and standard deviation of 1.014. For FLED, the average trend is 4.74 and standard deviation of 1.148 as well. Similarly, all other factors of social welfare have shown their average trend with the deviation from their average values.

Table 5 Descriptive Findings for Social Welfare

Variables	**Obs**	**Mean**	**Std.Dev**	**Min**	**Max**	**P1**	**P99**	**Skew.**	**Kurt.**
Social Welfare									
CTF	288	4.628	1.021	1	5	1	5	-.468	2.604
FAS	288	4.771	1.014	1	5	1	5	-.717	2.207
CCS	288	3.701	.856	1	5	1	5	-.585	1.447
FLED	288	4.747	1.148	1	5	1	5	-.669	2.588
IFS	288	4.802	1.052	1	5	1	5	-.732	2.015
STFOOD	288	4.507	1.198	1	5	1	5	-.455	2.298
ICSS	288	3.222	1.192	1	5	1	5	-.175	2.127

Table 6 provides the findings for the impact of green satisfaction and green guesting on social welfare indicators. For GS1, it is found that the effect of GS1 on charitable and truest funds or CTF. It means that more the work on green practices like GS will provide a positive outcome on social welfare factors like CTF. Meanwhile, the effect of family aid service or FAS, the effect of GS1 is .0837, significant at 10 percent with the standard error of .0462. For GS1, impact on remaining indicators of social welfare is insignificant. For GS2, the effect on FLED is significantly positive with the coefficient of .130. It means that more the green satisfaction in terms of GS2, more the constructive influence on FLED by restaurant business in the local community of Thailand. The rest of the indicators of GS except GS5 have shown their insignificant influence on the value of social welfare. However, it is observed that all first six dimensions of social welfares are positively and significantly determined by the value of GS5. It explains that green satisfaction for the betterment of the community (GS5) can significantly and positively influence CTF, FAS, CCS, FLED, IFS, and STFOOD respectively. Whereas the factor of ICSS is found to be insignificant as defined by GS5.

For green guesting, the effect of GUEST3 is .113 and significant at 5 percent on FAS, while GUEST4 has shown their positive and highly significant influence on FAS too. Meanwhile, GUEST4 have a positive and significant impact on STFODD and ICSS respectively. In terms of GUEST5, the effect on CTF, IFS and STFOOD is significantly positive, showing their direct association. As per the explained variation, the highest value of R2 is observed under Model2, followed by Model3 respectively.

Table 6 Regression findings for the impact of Green Satisfaction and Green Guesting on Social Welfare

VARIABLES	(CTF) Model 1	(FAS) Model 2	(CCS) Model 3	(FLED) Model 4	(IFS) Model 5	(STFOOD) Model 6	(ICSS) Model 7
Green Satisfaction							
GS1	0.0977**	0.0837*	0.0650	0.0677	-0.0621	0.00899	-0.0340
	(0.0480)	(0.0462)	(0.0397)	(0.0551)	(0.0492)	(0.0567)	(0.0563)
GS2	-0.00169	0.0244	0.0295	0.130**	0.0715	0.00417	0.0969
	(0.0544)	(0.0525)	(0.0450)	(0.0625)	(0.0558)	(0.0643)	(0.0639)
GS3	-0.0128	-0.00264	0.00833	-0.0488	-0.0949	-0.0302	0.0664
	(0.0489)	(0.0471)	(0.0404)	(0.0561)	(0.5010)	(0.0578)	(0.0573)
GS4	0.0358	0.118**	0.0704	0.0708	0.113**	0.0542	0.0758
	(0.0545)	(0.0526)	(0.0451)	(0.0626)	(0.0559)	(0.0645)	(0.0640)
GS5	0.218***	0.209***	0.184***	0.171***	0.189***	0.280***	0.0621
	(0.0543)	(0.0523)	(0.0449)	(0.0623)	(0.0557)	(0.0642)	(0.0637)
Green Guesting							
GGUEST1	0.0393	0.0229	0.0399	0.000165	0.0882**	-0.0505	-0.0111
	(0.0436)	(0.0420)	(0.0361)	(0.0500)	(0.0447)	(0.0515)	(0.0511)
GGUEST2	-0.0521	-0.000655	-0.00931	0.0331	-0.0203	0.0790	0.00502
	(0.0543)	(0.0523)	(0.0449)	(0.0623)	(0.0556)	(0.0641)	(0.0637)
GGUEST3	-0.0270	0.113**	-0.0127	0.0921	0.0709	0.0738	-0.00657
	(0.0558)	(0.0538)	(0.0462)	(0.0640)	(0.0572)	(0.0659)	(0.0655)
GGUEST4	0.0529	0.133**	0.00200	-0.0840	-0.0480	0.157**	0.228***
	(0.0577)	(0.0556)	(0.0477)	(0.0662)	(0.0591)	(0.0681)	(0.0677)
GGUEST5	0.0932*	0.0435	0.0601	-0.0676	0.0909*	0.106*	0.00282
	(0.0530)	(0.0511)	(0.0439)	(0.0608)	(0.0544)	(0.0627)	(0.0622)
Constant	2.178***	2.044***	2.273***	2.515***	2.467***	2.250***	1.591***
	(0.262)	(0.253)	(0.217)	(0.301)	(0.269)	(0.310)	(0.308)
Observations	288	288	288	288	288	288	288
R-squared	0.136	0.185	0.158	0.100	0.144	0.123	0.127

Standard errors in parentheses, *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Table 7 provides the regression outcome for the impact of green energy and green certification on the social welfare by restaurant industry in Thailand. Through green energy or GENERGY1, the effect on IFS under Model 5 is .105, significant and 5 percent. It means that more the usage of green energy or energy efficient policy have their direct influence on social welfare by the restaurant sector. Similar effect on ICSS is observed with the coefficient of .227 and standard error of .0605 respectively. The effect of GNERGY5 is significantly positive on FAS, CCS and FLED respectively. A similar trend is observed for the FAS, CCS, and FLED too. As per green certification, GCER2 has shown its significant and direct impact on all indicators of social welfare except for the ICSS. Similarly, GCER3 has shown its direct and significant influence on CTF, FAS and CSS with the coefficient of .226, .200, and .217. Besides, GCER5 has also shown its direct effect on the value of CTF, CSS, FLED, and STFOOD.

Table 7 Regression findings for the impact of Green Energy and Green Certification on Social Welfare

VARIABLES	(CTF) Model 1	(FAS) Model 2	(CCS) Model 3	(FLED) Model 4	(IFS) Model 5	(STFOOD) Model 6	(ICSS) Model 7
Green Energy							
GENERGY1	-0.0379	0.00527	-0.0357	-0.0126	0.105**	0.0434	0.227***
	(0.0417)	(0.0411)	(0.0269)	(0.0513)	(0.0485)	(0.0584)	(0.0605)
GENERGY2	-0.0522	-0.00816	-0.0193	0.0593	0.108**	-0.00367	0.0546
	(0.0377)	(0.0371)	(0.0243)	(0.0463)	(0.0437)	(0.0527)	(0.0546)
GENERGY3	-0.0658	0.0519	-0.0225	0.0476	-0.0483	0.0144	0.0618
	(0.0404)	(0.0397)	(0.0260)	(0.0496)	(0.0469)	(0.0565)	(0.0585)
GENERGY4	0.0569	0.0262	0.0324	0.0464	-0.0492	0.0361	0.0156
	(0.0386)	(0.0380)	(0.0249)	(0.0475)	(0.0448)	(0.0541)	(0.0560)
GENERGY5	0.0794	0.254***	0.206***	0.156*	0.0796	-0.0161	-0.0781
	(0.0665)	(0.0654)	(0.0428)	(0.0817)	(0.0772)	(0.0931)	(0.0964)
Green Certification							
GCER1	0.154**	0.0668	0.0829*	0.0577	0.192**	0.0405	0.0941
	(0.0695)	(0.0683)	(0.0447)	(0.0853)	(0.0806)	(0.0972)	(0.101)
GCER2	0.550**	0.113**	0.0976***	0.167**	0.0585	0.173**	0.0942
	(0.0578)	(0.0569)	(0.0373)	(0.0711)	(0.0672)	(0.0810)	(0.0839)
GCER3	0.226***	0.200***	0.217***	-0.104	0.0152	0.0998	-0.0814
	(0.0655)	(0.0645)	(0.0422)	(0.0805)	(0.0761)	(0.0917)	(0.0950)
GCER4	0.0961	0.0435	0.133***	0.193***	0.111	0.00500	0.0458
	(0.0586)	(0.0577)	(0.0378)	(0.0720)	(0.0681)	(0.0820)	(0.0850)
GCER5	0.161***	0.0501	0.0552*	0.200***	0.0778	0.229***	0.0230
	(0.0446)	(0.0439)	(0.0287)	(0.0548)	(0.0518)	(0.0624)	(0.0647)
Constant	1.029***	0.768***	0.837***	0.827***	1.369***	1.259***	1.723***
	(0.256)	(0.252)	(0.165)	(0.315)	(0.298)	(0.359)	(0.372)
Observations	288	288	288	288	288	288	288
R-squared	0.420	0.431	0.658	0.308	0.264	0.175	0.106

Standard errors in parentheses, *** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1

Table 8 provides regression output for the relationship between green quality as public policy adopted by the restaurant industry in Thailand and its impact on the social welfare indicators. It is found that GQ1 has shown its positive and highly significant influence on FAS, CCS, FLED, and ICSS respectively. It shows that more the green quality and its implication in the restaurant industry of Thailand, more the positive and constructive influence on the value of social welfare. Similar cases are observed for the GQ2 which is showing its positive impact on FAS, CCS, FLED, IFS and STFOOD respectively. It means that there is a positive and significant influence on social welfare by the selected indicators of GQ like GQ1 and GQ2. However, for the GQ3, a significant and positive influence is observed for the FAS and CCS. Through GQ4 CTF, FAS and CCS have shown their direct influence with the coefficients of .275, .118, and .348. Additionally, the last indicator of GQ has shown its constructive influence on the value of CTF, FAS, CCS and FLED. As per the model explanatory power, Model 3 indicates the highest variation in social welfare in terms of CSS with the value of 88.6 percent, followed by the Model 2.

Table 8 Regression findings for the impact of Green Quality on Social Welfare

VARIABLES	(CTF) Model 1	(FAS) Model 2	(CCS) Model 3	(FLED) Model 4	(IFS) Model 5	(STFOOD) Model 6	(ICSS) Model 7
GQ1	0.0682	0.195***	0.0658***	0.159**	0.100	0.0777	0.284***
	(0.0569)	(0.0540)	(0.0213)	(0.0734)	(0.0692)	(0.0817)	(0.0850)
GQ2	0.0926	0.112**	0.0512**	0.243***	0.197***	0.271***	0.114
	(0.0564)	(0.0534)	(0.0211)	(0.0727)	(0.0685)	(0.0809)	(0.0842)
GQ3	0.0506	0.119**	0.0425*	-0.0623	0.0645	-0.0439	0.000686
	(0.0628)	(0.0596)	(0.0235)	(0.0810)	(0.0767)	(0.0902)	(0.0938)
GQ4	0.275***	0.118**	0.348***	0.0934	0.0799	0.0798	-0.187**
	(0.0605)	(0.0573)	(0.0226)	(0.0780)	(0.0735)	(0.0868)	(0.0903)
GQ5	0.270***	0.264***	0.383***	0.222***	0.0727	0.124	-0.0580
	(0.0663)	(0.0629)	(0.0248)	(0.0856)	(0.0809)	(0.0953)	(0.0991)
Constant	0.821***	0.774***	0.399***	1.303***	1.515***	1.599***	2.656***
	(0.203)	(0.193)	(0.0760)	(0.262)	(0.285)	(0.292)	(0.303)
Observations	288	288	288	288	288	288	288
R-squared	0.430	0.480	0.886	0.250	0.209	0.146	0.067

Standard errors in parentheses, *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Conclusion

This study has observed the empirical effect of green practices and their impact on the social welfare by the restaurant industry of Thailand. For better understanding, green practices are divided into green satisfaction, green guesting, green energy, green certification and finally the factor of green quality. To examine the factor of social welfare, seven indicators have been examined and added in the questionnaire including childcare services, integrated family services, and food serve assistance projects. For better findings, descriptive, correlation and finally the regression analyses were conducted, and detailed discussion was provided. It was found that in terms of demographic factors, all types of employees, in terms of age, qualification and working experience, were working in the different classes of the restaurant industry. Regression analysis provides the fact that there is a significant influence of public policy in terms of green practices as adopted by the restaurant industry in the region of Thailand which is impacting on the social welfare indicators. More specifically, green satisfaction, green energy, green certificates, and green quality are useful determinants to predict and define the level of social welfare as performed by restaurants of different classes. It is also recognized that study has several limitations. First, as per the public policy in terms of green practices, various attributes are observed, and responses are primarily collected from the employees in the restaurant industry. However, considering the customers of these restaurants and various members from the local community can provide different results in future research. Second, study has not observed the secondary measures of green practices and their impact on social welfare like total budget spent for such activities in Thailand by restaurant industry. Future research contribution can follow this limitation too. As per the implications, this research is a significant addition in the literature of public policy in terms of green practices and their impact on the social welfare indicators. Various policy makers at government level can significantly review the findings for the better effect of boosting the green practices among other sectors to get positive results for social welfare.

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