

# นวัตกรรมการศึกษา : การดำเนินอยู่ของโฮสเทลในสังคมไทย

## Innovation Study on the Existence of Hostel in Thailand

## ជុំវិជ្ជី សុខិព្យ សេវាខិតាន៉ន់<sup>1</sup>

Suddhiborn Setthitanand  
Suddhiborn.s@gmail.com  
Chatwarun Angasinha

## ฉบับรวมัญช์ องค์สิงห์

## บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัย “นวัตกรรมการศึกษา: การดำรงอยู่ของโysisเหลในสังคมไทย” นี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อ ศึกษาการปรับตัวทางธุรกิจเพื่อการดำรงอยู่ของโysisเหล เพื่อศึกษาแนวโน้มและความคิดสร้างสรรค์ในการดำเนินการของโysisเหล และเพื่อ ศึกษาแนวทางการดำเนินการเพื่อส่งเสริมให้ชุมชนรอบข้างของโysisเหลเกิดความยั่งยืน

การวิจัยครั้งนี้ใช้เทคนิคการเก็บรวบรวมเชิงคุณภาพ โดยข้อมูลที่รวบรวมมาจากสองวิธี วิธีแรกคือข้อมูลปฐมภูมิ จะมีลักษณะเป็นการสัมภาษณ์เชิงโครงสร้างเชิงลึก โดยมีการวางแผนโครงสร้างค้ำมั่นไว้อย่างหลวง ๆ เพื่อให้ได้ข้อมูลที่สมบูรณ์ ลดความคล้องกับปรากฏการณ์ และพร้อม ๆ กับการสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึก ผู้วิจัยใช้วิธีการสังเกตแบบมีส่วนร่วม โดยผู้วิจัยพากتابตัวเอง เข้าไปเป็นนักท่องเที่ยว และเข้าไปใช้บริการของโไฮสเทลทั้ง 3 แห่ง วิธีที่สองคือการใช้ข้อมูลทุยภูมิ คือการรวบรวมจากการวิจัยที่เกี่ยวข้องกับอุตสาหกรรมการท่องเที่ยวและการบริการ

**คำสำคัญ:** ไฮสเทล นวัตกรรม การปรับตัว ความยั่งยืนของชุมชน

\*นักศึกษาสาระดับปริญญาเอก สาขาวิชาผู้นำทางสังคม ธุรกิจ และการเมือง มหาวิทยาลัยรังสิต

## Abstract

The purpose of this research paper is to study how Thai hostels adapt in the hostel business while supporting the surrounding community through innovation, creation and sustainability. The research utilized a qualitative method as it was more applicable for gathering information from a smaller group of samples. As for data collecting, the primary data was collected by using two methods. The first method was a structure, one-on-one interview. The aim of this approach is to ensure that each interview is presented with exactly the same questions in the same order. This ensures that answers can be reliably aggregated and that comparisons can be made with confidence between sample groups. The second method was by observation. This will enable the researcher to gather information needed to describe the aspect of a variable being studied which cannot be described accurately without observation. The secondary data was collected through desk research on tourism and hospitality management. The research showed that innovation, creativity and sustainability are the keys to the success for hostels in Thailand. The hostels showed their responsibilities to the environment and the surrounding communities by using recycled products and created an added value for the guests. The uniqueness of hostels attracted a lot of tourists, particularly the backpackers who had strong interest in the life of a local culture and eco-activities. Economics, society and environment were to be balanced out among each other in order to become a sustainable community. Hostel was as an example of using reused resources innovatively and creatively while giving importance to the needs and wants of tourists, even though the adaptation was being performed under legal and regulatory constraints. Hostels should not only focus on the environmental conservation but should also show concerns about the way of life of the community.

**Keywords:** hostel, innovation, adaptability, sustainability

## Introduction

Today there is a lot of competition among the hostels in Thailand. Hostels have become one of the fastest growing lodging sectors. This provides a great deal of advantage for the needs and demands of travelers, especially those who are budget conscious. Due to the heavy competitive forces, the hostels must differentiate themselves to secure a place in the hostel business by designing and delivering products and services that meet social and environmental needs, while driving for innovation.

The purposes of this research are (1) to study the innovation management of hostel in Thailand (2) to study the adaptability of hostel in Thailand in response to the research question what is the

style of operation in hostel and what kind of hotel innovation does hostel have.

The following definitions are related to this study:

**Hostel** is a budget-oriented, shared-room ("dormitory") accommodation that accepts individual travelers (typically backpackers) or groups for short-term stays, and that provides common areas and communal facilities. The word "dormitory" refers to a room where travelers independently book individual beds in a shared room as opposed to booking entire rooms like in a hotel or guesthouse.

**Innovation** may be defined as exploiting new ideas leading to the creation of a new product, process or service. It is not just the invention of a new idea that is important, but it is actually "bringing it to

market”, putting into practice and exploiting it in a manner that leads to new products, services or systems that add value or improve quality. It possibly involves technological transformation and management restructuring. Innovation also means exploiting new technology and employing out-of-the-box thinking to generate new value and to bring about significant changes in society.

**Adaptability** is the ability to change (or to be changed) to fit altered circumstances. It is more than being flexible. Because things now change at a far greater speed and pace than ever before. It is important to be able to respond effectively to challenges and grab new opportunities.

**Sustainability** is about the future of the society. It takes into account how people might live in harmony with the natural world around them and protecting it from damage and destruction. This will mean designing and delivering products and services that meet social and environmental needs.

## Methodology

This is a qualitative research paper and a sample of three hostels was selected for the in-depth interview. The three hostels were (1) Oneday Hostel in Sukhumvit Soi 26 (2) Oldtown Hostel on Charoen Krung Soi 28 (3) Here Hostel on the Ratchadamnoen Intersection. The reasons for selecting these hostels were because of their specific locations, technological applications, creativeness and environmental and social awareness of the community. As for gathering primary data, a structure, one-on-one interview had been conducted with 3 hostel managers, 5 assistant staff, 3 housekeepers, 12 backpackers and 3 key informants. This kind of interview provided the interviewer with in-depth information because the same set of questions was used as guidelines during the interview. The interviewees also gave their views about hostel

life and its style of management. Observation was another method used for collecting the primary data. Observation allowed the researcher to learn about the people, place and its culture under study in the natural setting. The secondary data was collected through gathering and analyzing information, already available in print or published on the internet on tourism and hospitality.

## Findings

There is a great demand for hostels in Thailand because Thailand is considered as one of the popular attractions in the world. The majority of travelers who stay in hostels are backpackers who are low-cost, independent travelers and they are always looking for cheaper options. For this reason, backpackers prefer to stay in inexpensive lodging such as a hostel which is located in a major city area as well as within easy access to public transportation. When it comes to accommodation, hostels are known as the cheaper and more relaxed alternatives to hotels. Hostels are a hub for socialization. Hostels are a great way for backpackers to meet fellow like-minded backpackers and make new friends due to the fact of sharing the room with more than four people. Furthermore, staying in hostels give the backpackers the opportunity to meet the local people and experience their cultures.

Hostels are part of the informal sector. They are not in the formal economy. Within the informal sector, capital is invested, technology is used and income is generated. Workers in this sector are also employed. Anyone can join the sector and can find work which will result in cash earnings. Generally, hostels are known as small scale operations but they have higher set-up costs which might include complicated licensing regulations and irregular works of operation. Hostels play both important and controversial roles. On the one hand, hostels provide

jobs and reduce unemployment but on the other hand, the jobs are low-paid and the job security is poor. Hostels bolster entrepreneurial activity, but at the detriment of state regulations compliance, particularly regarding tax and labor. As a result, hostels are outside of the formal system because they have to.

The interests in experiencing the traditional way of life and culture along with the interests in improving the socio-economic status of local communities have led to the development and promotion of community-based tourism (CBT). In Thailand, several destinations included hostels as part of CBT. Hostels lured backpackers to the area because of the uniqueness which features cultural assets, the destination's traditions and the way of life that make the community unique.

With this form of sustainable tourism, local residents share the environment and their way of life with visitors, while increasing local income and building local economies. By sharing activities such as festivals, homestays and the production of artisan goods, community based tourism allows communities to participate in the modern global economy while cultivating a sustainable income and maintaining their way of life (Community Empowerment Network, 2017).

CBT emphasizes the development of local communities and allows for local residents to have substantial control over, and involvement in its development and management. CBT fosters sustainable use and collective responsibility, in addition to embracing individual initiatives within the community (Community Empowerment Network, 2017). To sum up, both community-based tourism and hostels recognize and promote community ownership of tourism, involve community members from the start in every aspect, promotes community pride, improves the quality of life and ensures

environmental sustainability.

Today, the hostel industry practice encompasses innovation and flexibility in respond to the dynamic market. Information technology (IT) can be seen as an important element in creating services that can meet the needs of individual tourist. Many hostels now place a great emphasis on service quality and often use information technology to serve the specific niche market group as it is quick, efficient and economical wise given the competitive circumstances. A hostel with better technological advancement will undoubtedly allow it to be in a better position to capture its business. Technology will provide hostels with business value-added and travelers' perceptions, and in return can help deliver and satisfy travelers' needs and hostel's goals.

The use of information technology has become one of the marketing tools and so the majority of hostels have a high quality website, preferably with an online booking system. Technology becomes a main source of sustainable competitive advantage and a strategic weapon, especially in the tourism and hospitality industries, owing to the very important role information plays in the description, promotion, distribution, combination, organization and delivery of tourism products.

Some of the trends which are already making an impact on hostel marketing are: (1) virtual reality (2) video marketing (3) influencer marketing (4) social media advertising (5) momentary marketing (6) wearable technology and (7) drone photography (<http://www.webrezpro.com/>). With appropriate information technology, hostels can create innovative services that would meet the demands of travelers and satisfy them in an unforgettable way, so as to create returned loyalty guests including higher sales level.

Internet changes traditional pricing structures and offers alternative lower pricings that maximize more sales as business costs have been reduced. Web applications enable a personalized travel package that tourists become center of tourism planning as a result tourism products/services/pricing are more flexible than fixed or so called customer-oriented or customization. The use of internet can therefore be considered as a more affordable alternative marketing tool.

A well-organized and coordinated human resource management practices might help the hostel business to grow and prosper in the long run. The quality of human resources will act as a driving force for possible sustainable growth. Human resource management (HRM) in a hostel can be a very important task leading to success which relies to a significant extent on human labor. A hostel's survival may depend on its ability to recruit efficient, qualified people while providing them with incentives so that they work at full capacity to maximize the hostel's profits. Specifically, hostel must focus on improving the satisfaction of travelers and the quality of service through well-organized HR management. A hostel's survival may depend on its ability to recruit efficient, qualified people, while providing them with incentives so that they work at full capacity to maximize the hostel's profits.

Hostels are family business which operated under a patriarchal management style. The owners looked after their staff as if they were members of the same family. This then results in a low staff turnover rate. The most common method used for retaining staff is the informal communication due to the small number of staff involved and the size of hostel concerned. When the staff had any problems at work, they could communicate with the hostel owner or their supervisor directly, which apparently led to good relationships between both parties.

The fact is that the environment surrounding the society is rapidly changing, not to mention the climate change, aging population, energy problems, or food crisis, and due to the evolution of people's lifestyle, social structure and institutions are evolving. It is crucial that new knowledge and talent be deployed and developed as efficiently as possible in order to contemplate how to overcome social challenges by using knowledge and skills wisely. Social innovations can therefore be seen as dealing with the welfare of individuals and communities, both as consumers and producers. The elements of this welfare are linked with their quality of life and activity. Wherever social innovations appear, they always bring about new references or processes (Noya, 2011).

Social innovation seeks new answers to social problems by identifying and delivering new services that improve the quality of life of individuals and communities; identifying and implementing new labor, market integration processes, new competencies, new jobs, and new forms of participation, as diverse elements that each contribute to improving the position of individuals in the workforce (<https://iupe.files.wordpress.com/>) Hostels, for example, can be considered as social innovation because they provided distribution of income through jobs creation. The hostels would hire a local cook, buy locally made products and food from the market, hire local staff and so forth; leading to reducing unemployment as hostels are helping out the burdens of the community.

Overall, social innovations are innovative responses to unsolved social problems and needs, which have not been successfully tackled by the State or the market. Social innovation is needed because many social challenges are resistant to conventional approaches to solving them. They require novel approaches, inventive actors and new forms

of co-operation among them, thus bringing together different kinds of expertise, skills and tangible and intangible assets. The major aim is to tackle complex social challenges by providing innovative solutions.

Meanwhile, there is growing environmental degradation due to the growth of hostels. Thus, society is forced to become increasingly aware of the need of adopting and enforcing more effective measures of environmental protection. Sustainable development, including the development of a more sustainable built environment, has thus become a priority and a challenge for the hostels. Hostel owners have turned their focus to the importance of sustainability in hotels as they relate to development and operations, including the environmental, economic and social impacts.

In the pursuit of sustainable development, more and more hostels are making use of the old buildings and adapting them for new use, instead of demolishing and reconstructing them. The old building structures retained its historic integrity to make it attractive while providing guests with modern needs. For example, an old factory, a rundown shop house or the old wooden house may be transformed into a hostel. The emergence of hostel has brought the historic building back to life and helped out the local community by offering economic opportunity. Environmental benefits and the social advantage of repurposing a place with valued heritage, make adaptive reuse an essential component of sustainable development. Historic buildings provide a glimpse of the past while lending character and serving a new practical purpose in today's modern community. In terms of tourism, the grand character of an old building can also influence the feel of the place and is used for maximum potential to enhance the place's physical attractiveness to a tourist.

Hostel with old building structure often showcases the aesthetics that modern building

simply cannot afford. Adaptive reuse of such old building allows a building to retain much of its character and aesthetics by incorporating these elements into the new framework. In addition to the outside feature of the old building, new ideas can also be created from the old building. This is because old building can provide inexpensive incubator space of small businesses, start-up firms and bootstrap entrepreneurs. Old buildings also tend to be located closely to city centre, cultural attractions and within easy access by transportation. This is the main reason the hostels are often well-located in the popular tourist attraction and at the same time open up new economic opportunities (such as tourism development) and ensure continuity of traditions and traditional practices and way of life (social sustainability).

## Results

As a conclusion, hostels can help out the community with economic incomes but at the same time focus to the importance of sustainability by relating to development and operations, including the environmental, economic and social impacts. This is due to the fact that costs continue to rise, demand become increasingly sensitive and the pressure on being economically, socially and environmentally responsible grow. Hostel is the result of joint effort, creativity and a shared vision: that of a sustainable and people-oriented future. Furthermore, hostel attaches people to their community, provides a sense of place, connects them to their neighbors and encourages public participation. As for the image of being in the grey economy, this can be solved by lowering the barriers particularly tax and labor and legal rights guaranteed. When this happens, more jobs will be created to provide income and in the end assist in developing the country's economy.

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