

# Strategies to facilitate the growth of female well-being tourism consistent with the creative industries policy

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## Abstract

The aim of this study was to explore a set of strategies to facilitate the growth of female well-being in tourism industry that is consistent with the Thai government's creative industries policy.

Firstly, the authors reviewed the standardize well-being services, and this services have the potential to impact on the Thailand tourism markets. Various strategies which the policy and legal framework for the development of female well-being tourism, diversity of female well-being tourism products and source markets, marketing of female well-being products and facilities, female well-being tourism standards and facilities, safety and security of tourists, financial resources, human resource development and management, female well-being resource conflict, information management and research capacity, promoting environmentally sustainable female well-being tourism and technological readiness/systems and technology were explored.

It was concluded that the strategies were related largely to the need to standardize the industry for the benefit of customers as well as the benefit of the industry itself. The policies were developed mainly from feedback which focused on industry and policy rather than market perspectives, along with integration of perspectives from the spa and well-being industry in Thailand and elsewhere.

**Keyword:** Strategies, Female well-being, Well-being tourism, Creative industries.

## Introduction

The well-being tourism sector is an economic sector that is both well-suited to Thailand's current cultural and creative offerings, and situates to grow rapidly. The well-being tourism industry is estimated to be growing rapidly. The sector is projected to reach \$678.5 billion in sales by 2017, with much of this growth occurring in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, rather than the larger but already somewhat saturated European and North American

markets (Global Wellness Institute, 2013). Furthermore, Thailand is one of the places where much of the Asian growth is expected to occur. Due to Thailand's spas have many of factors that may draw well-being tourists to spas and other sites, including mineral waters, traditional spiritual and medical practices, specialist massage techniques, traditional and advanced beauty and pampering techniques and scenic natural beauty (Alonso-Álvarez, 2010; Azman & Chan, 2010; Boulay, Hritz, & Ashton, 2013; Chen, 2007; Cohen, 2008; Gold, 2007; Heung & Kucukusta, 2013; Laing & Weiler, 2008; Loh, 2010; Sayili, Akca, et al., 2007). These features mean that the well-being industry could potentially be a significant draw for the Thai economy, particularly in terms of international interest. The Thai spa industry is primarily domestic which is consistent with well-being tourism in other countries (Global Wellness Institute, 2013). However, it is worth considering how the industry could draw more international visitors and expand its visibility on the world stage. The obvious target market for well-being tourism in Thailand is the female well-being tourist sector. Women already predominate in spa visits in Thailand as well as in other countries, in most cases making up 70 per cent or more of visitors to spas and other well-being sites (Azman & Chan, 2010; Boulay, Hritz, & Ashton, 2013; Chen, 2007). In addition to the relaxation aspect of the spa, women may also be more interested in the spiritual and mental aspects of well-being and spa tourism, and place a particular value on beauty and aesthetic treatments (Laing & Weiler, 2008).

While the well-being tourism sector is potentially significant for Thailand (particularly since it is related to both the medical sector and it is already established and growing rapidly (Cohen E., 2008), but there is still a lack of publicity surrounding the activities and benefits that are available. The Tourist Authority of Thailand (TAT) has begun to publicize the availability of health and wellness spas around Thailand, promoting the beauty treatments, massage, and relaxation offerings available (TAT News, 2013). The campaign highlights the central role of Thai massage, as well as specialist Ayurvedic herbal treatments and other unusual and common treatments that are available (TAT News, 2013). However, this promotional campaign still has a relatively low profile, particularly compared to other informational campaigns that focus on areas like medical tourism, sea and sand tourism, or cultural tourism. The well-being tourism in Thailand is also heavily sponsored and supported by the medical tourism industry, which predominantly promotes health care (Cohen, 2008). This association has so far helped to develop the sector, although the majority of those participating are primarily medical tourists. Over time, however, it could reduce the well-being tourism sector's viability because many well-being tourists are more interested in emotional and spiritual well-being and physical health than in Western medical practices (Laing & Weiler, 2008). Thus, even though the Thai government has offered some support for

the well-being tourism industry, more support is needed in order to distinguish it from the medical tourism industry. There is also more action needed to establish Thailand as a major international well-being tourism destination. The spas and massage traditions are already in place, but government support and industry development assistance will be needed in the long run to develop the industry fully. The problem that this research will examine is how female well-being tourism in Thailand can be established, particularly through the use of its existing (and potentially new) spa and massage facilities. This problem will take into account the particular needs of female well-being tourists, including domestic and international tourists. This is necessary in order to understand what this group of tourists need, as well as how well the characteristics of Thai spas match their needs currently (or how they can be modified to meet their needs). It will also take into account the importance of spa and massage to well-being tourists and the role played by the creative industries policy and organization in developing the tourism sector.

### Objective

to explore a set of strategies which can be used to facilitate the growth of female well-being tourism in Thailand that is consistent with the Thai government creative industry policies.

### Methods

This study employs the key elements derived from the literature review, a comprehensive analysis of the theoretical and empirical literature surrounding this study is offered in order to develop a path to exploring this set of strategy. The key elements can be summarized as follows:

1. Well-being tourism that is the literature contends that the well-being culture is embedded in Thai holistic medicines, therapeutic treatments and healing practices this should be integrated with the authenticity as a tourist destination (Phenphak Wongkot, 2016). Strategies, including quality assurance, quality targets, and quality development, have been effective in other tourism industries, although local trends need to be taken into account (Smith, M., & Puczkó, L., 2014)

2. Quality standards which are many studies conducted in regard to the need for quality standards in tourist destinations. Applying quality in tourism is a complex phenomenon because of the rapid changes in preferences and customer needs (Smith, M., & Puczkó, L., 2014). The quality management strategy has also been adopted by tourist destinations in order to ensure that they remain competitive in all market segments in which they operate. This involves three fundamental factors, according to quality assurance, quality targets and

quality development (Smith, M., & Puczkó, L., 2014)

3. Customer assurance which is service assurance systems are essential in addressing quality in customer service because customers have become more demanding according to Smith, M., & Puczkó, L., 2014. An organisation has to offer customer assurance in order to stay competitive in an increasingly competitive environment. Cai et al. (2004) stated that most tourist destinations have quality assurance strategies. The current tourist is more informed and savvy and requires assurance that the place they are planning to visit has the highest possible standards. In the case of wellness tourism, customers have to be assured that all the therapists and masseurs are trained, certified and licensed. intelligence to identify the needs of tourists (Howkins, 2002).

4. Industry registration that is a registration system is essential in regulating the sector because it allows the Tourist Authority of Thailand (TAT) to monitor market trends. A special purpose registration system is the best way to document and manage female well-being tourism in Thailand (Laudon et al., 2011). It is an organisation tool that allows visitors to register for specific well-being services depending on their needs. Manning (2009) argued that professional quality online registration creates convenience and allows the system to track visitors as a quality assurance strategy.

5. Social and economic benefits that is the development of tourism will be a collaborative effort which will empower local people. In addition, the increased economic activities will increase income levels and enable local people to generate wealth and to overcome their personal challenges (Cohen, 2008).

6. The holistic approach which is studies contend that well-being supports positive well-being and enables people to realise their full potential by allowing them to manage their work-related and family related stress, as stated by McGillivray (2007). Other a studies by Smith, M., & Puczkó, L. (2014) argue that well-being also involves the integration of states of physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. It is largely concerned with promoting positive outcomes of a quality life. Given the need for an effective holistic approach, this study seeks to provide guidelines about services or products targeting the physical, emotional and mental well-being of tourists.

7. Uniqueness of well-being tourism in Thailand that is the well-being uniqueness of Thailand relies on its traditional meditation and massage therapy techniques (Phenphak Wongkot, 2016). Thai holistic practices enable people to achieve their sense of well-being and should be marketed as such, according to Marks and Thompson (2008). Given the need for uniqueness in Thai well-being tourism strategies, this research seeks to distinguish the aspects of well-being tourism strategies that are not available elsewhere in the world.

8. Creativity that is the concept of creative industries is used to describe those

economic activities that are aimed at generating or exploiting knowledge and information (Thai Government Public Relations Department, 2010). In essence the literature indicates that the Thai creative industry is also referred to as the cultural industry according to Howkins (2001). Although the sector has a wide range of economic activities, this study is concerned with the cultural information and knowledge to create products and services that have value to female well-being visitors (Padure et al., 2010). The creative industries have a significant importance to the economic well-being of an economy like that of Thailand which is heavily reliant on tourism, as described by Van Heur (2010). This is the fundamental reason why the collaborative approach is the most suitable in advertising and promoting female well-being tourism in Thailand. This study seeks to develop insights into the creative (innovation) industry in Thailand in order to devise a strategy to develop new approaches to delivering well-being services and products to tourists, and build upon existing strategies within the industry to enhance customer experience

The key issues synthesised from the study conclusions are presented as relevant to those eight aspects. This study specifically focuses on providing a solution to facilitate the growth of female well-being tourism in Thailand that is consistent with the Thai Government's creative industries policy. The analysis arises from the following eleven key issues to guide what strategy might facilitate the growth of female well-being tourism in Thailand consistent with the Thai Government creative industries policies are the policy and legal framework for the development of female well-being tourism, diversity of female well-being tourism products and source markets, marketing of female well-being products and facilities, female well-being tourism standards and facilities, safety and security of tourists, financial resources, human resource development and management, female well-being resource conflict, information management and research capacity, promoting environmentally sustainable female well-being tourism and technological readiness/systems and technology.

## Details

One of the most important gaps in this study is that the Thai government does not recognize the spa and well-being industry as a creative or innovative industry (ITD, 2008; K.I. Asia/FPI, 2009). This does not mean that it could not be recognized as such, since the general definition of the creative industries is broad enough that it could be included (UNCTAD, 2010). However, in general the spa and well-being industry is regulated through a combination of the Tourism Industry of Thailand (TAT) and Ministry of Public Health (MPH) (Johnston, Puczkó, Smith, & Ellis, 2011), rather than through the Creative Economy Promotion Agency, which is the peak body for creative industries promotion in Thailand (Therepat, 2012). This means that the spa and well-being tourism industry does not receive funding or support

intended to develop the creative and innovative industries (Therepat, 2012). Another government failure in the spa and well-being tourism industry is failure to standardize or closely regulate the industry and its products and services (Ministry of Public Health, 2008). Although spas are required to register with the MPH as a service, independent massage operators are exempt, and it is known that there is a high rate of non-compliance with registration rules (Manning, 2009). The regulatory approach emphasizes self-regulation, with no careful monitoring and standardization of product or service offerings, quality assurance and control, or other factors (Thareja & Thareja, 2007). This is commonplace for TAT, which uses self-regulation and does not standardize tourist services in any category. There also is no inclusion of the spa and well-being tourism industries (or any tourism sector) in the creative industries policy in use by the Thai government. This makes it essential for spas and other service providers in the well-being industry to standardize on a given service. It could also be a significant negative impact for the Thai market, given that it is competing against highly standardized, regulated and controlled European spa markets (Global Wellness Institute, 2013). Although Thailand is unlikely to lose any domestic advantage, it could lose its international competitive advantage if such standardization is not pursued. In a more pragmatic sense, standardization and regulation of the industry is needed in order to understand its contribution to the Thai economy (ITD., 2008). Although this study can only be developed through a system of registration and standardization, which will make it possible to collect statistics and contextualize them.

The strategies below are related largely to the need to standardize the industry for the benefit of customers as well as the benefit of the industry itself. The policies were developed mainly from feedback which focused on industry and policy rather than market perspectives, along with integration of perspectives from the academic literature and other analyses of the spa and well-being industry in Thailand and elsewhere. These policies do require the Thai government to take a more active role than previously, which may be a struggle given the current political environment and priorities. For example, some of the policies require that the spa and well-being industry should be recognized as a creative industry (Ministry of Public Health, 2008), which it currently is not. It would also require the Thai government to implement standards for regulation, registration, and monitoring of the industry which are not currently in place. As a result, it is not expected that all of these policies will be implemented in Thailand or elsewhere within the industry. However, even if some of them were implemented this would help protect Thailand's competitive position for the spa and well-being industry within the region, helping it move beyond being simply the cheapest destination and towards being one of the most desirable destinations. The following eleven key issues to guide what strategies might facilitate the growth of female

well-being tourism in Thailand consistent with the Thai Government creative industries policy as the followings.

### **1. Implementing policy and legal framework for the development of female well-being tourism**

A significant aspect of the policy should be formulated in consultation with stakeholders (Kannapa Pongponrat, 2011). This is important in ensuring cooperation by the stakeholders. The policy framework should also be subject to review and reform. When there is a change in circumstances, it is important to adjust or amend policies so that they can fit into the new reality (Cohen, E., 2008). Outdated policies can create conflict and interfere with service delivery. In addition, the policies will establish the relations between the tourists and the locals. The tourist police will also seek to protect the culture, behavior and other important aspects of the culture (Kannapa Pongponrat, 2011). This is because tourism can have a negative influence on the local culture and traditions. Furthermore, policies will be designed to promote sustainability, which is essential for the long term growth of the female well-being tourism strategy in Thailand. The law is an instrument which is essential in making Thailand a destination with international standards (Ministry of Public Health, 2008). The legal framework entrenches tourism into the policies of government and ensures that the destinations get the necessary government support (Brickshawana, Auggaphol, 2003). There is no doubt that the new strategy will require an enhanced communication and transport network, which means that government support is critical. Tourists also need to be assured that they will enjoy the same quality of human rights as that of their home country. The right to self-expression and the freedom of movement will be guaranteed. In addition, the law will protect the religious rights of all tourists. In addition, it should prohibit sex tourism in order to protect the values of Thailand. It is important for the law and policies to work in tandem (Manat Chaisawat, 2007). Any confusion can cause problems in managing the industry and focusing on strategic development. It is also very important to have clear policies that are not divisive. In addition, the policies should be helpful in terms of management and not bureaucratic.

The researcher proposes that a comprehensive tourism policy should be developed before anything else is done at the destination. This policy will include a strategic plan which will spell out the details of the development of the strategy. In addition, this plan will set out the goals and procedures of the Thailand female well-being tourism strategy. The strategies begin with policies because they will set everything in motion. For instance, the policies will provide the legal framework and how it will impact the destination (Manat Chaisawat, 2007). Even more importantly, the tourism policy should be integrated into the overall government policy in Thailand. The policy should set what the resources required in

developing the destination, what will have used and where they shall come from (Phenphak Wongkot} 2016). The law will be used to provide assurance to tourists and to ensure that the code of ethics which is set out in the policy framework is followed (Murray & Kriwoken (2012); Brickshawana & Auggaphol (2003). As such, the law will be used as an enforcement mechanism in the case of non-compliance of policies (Allen & Swanson (2008); Dredge & Jenkins (2007); Johnson & Kriwoken (2007).

## **2. Supporting the targeting of diversity of female well-being tourism product and source markets**

The diversity in source markets is a strategy that should be applied to the destination. This is because having multiple source markets helps to increase the number of visitors to the destination (Cohen, .E, 2008). It is essential that the tourism stakeholders identify those markets where women are liberated and would therefore require the kind of services offered in Thailand. In this respect, there should be a geographical segmentation of the markets in a way which fits into the female well-being strategy in Thailand. Hence, the strategy should be provided for the development of a wide range of well-being products (Smith & Kelly, 2006). This includes remedies, therapies, tours, mud baths, beauty products and body oils. The government and tourist authorities should encourage research into more products and provide the regulations of safety. However, the development of diverse products should be left to the private sector, which will be motivated by competition and market realities to increase the range of products (Phenphak Wongkot, 2016) . Consequently, the country's standards agency should verify the safety of each product in order to develop safety. Also, the tourist authorities should carry out research in the preferences of different source markets. This will help to have a plan on how to meet the needs of diverse well-being visitors.

The authors propose that the diversity strategy should be applied on two fronts. Firstly, it should support the targeting of diverse markets. This is essential for the sustainability of the destination. Diverse source markets will help to turn female well-being tourism in Thailand into a whole year activity. Seasonal tourism is not supportive of a destination in terms of growth and also employment. Hence, the strategy should involve the marketing of the destination in several source markets, which have the capability of fully supporting the new tourism strategy in Thailand. Secondly, the strategy of diversity should be applied to the products. This means that when tourists visit the destination, they have a wide variety of products to choose from. Therefore, the strategy of female well-being tourism will encompass more diverse tourists. The destination should have products that are competitive in order to help in the achievement of tourism objectives. The entrepreneurs in the city should be allowed to develop a wide variety of commercial products which will be certified and offered



to tourists (Cohen (2004); Smith and Kelly (2006).

### **3. Sustainable and responsible tourism products and facilities**

The facilities should be marketed as modern state of the art establishments which have adopted international standards (Morgan et al., 2002, P. 12). In addition, they should also be marketed as safe and comfortable facilities where one can enjoy the traditional Thai relaxation techniques (Brooke Schedneck, 2014). The hotels should be rated so as to provide the tourists with a clear picture of the quality of facilities in Thailand. The products should be marketed as authentic traditional remedies with potent healing capabilities (TAT, N., 2013). They should also be marketed as natural products without any cosmetic additives. The strategy is to position them as sustainable and responsible tourism products. As such, the main idea is to offer a more authentic experience. Trends in tourism indicate consumers are becoming more assertive and demand authentic experiences which add value to their lives (Chhabra, 2010, P. 42). Also, the products will have certification which indicates that they are safe. They should be perceived as a better alternative to chemical laden cosmetics. Even more importantly, the products should be associated with the destination and should be seen as an extension of the local brand. This is because there is a tendency to select brands because they are more trusted.

It is proposed that tourists should be assured that there is first class accommodation, hotels, restaurants and travel services. Equally important is the fact the destination will be marketed as having a first class massage and spa facilities. Secondary tourist facilities, entertainment venues, shopping, recreation and information services should be of high quality. The marketing strategy should also include medical facilities, emergency care, personal services and financial services (chhabra (2010); Morgan, Pritchard and Pride (2002).

### **4. Management system which improves the coordination of standards and facilities**

Female well-being standards should also be guided by policies which influence the quality of services. All well-being employees should be professionals who are certified by a professional body which assesses their skills and knowledge (Phenphak Wongkot, 2016). The standards should also be certified in order to maintain the quality expected by the industry. Female well-being standards and facilities should be managed through policies and enforced by certifications. They should be improved depending on the need in order to keep up with global standards (Goeldner & Ritchie 2009, P. 80). Well-being innovation should also be encouraged in order to identify the value added to the services and products offered by the destination. In addition, there should be training on how to treat and engage customers. The regulation of behavior and interaction provides a fundamental basis of promoting high standards in the destination. The quality of standards should be identical in all the facilities.

The facilities should be also put through sustainability criteria in order to access their impact on the environment (Smith, M., & Puczkó, L., 2014). As a matter of fact, every facility should have an environmental impact assessment. All facilities adhere should be laid down international standards. The strategy should include a local tourism association which certifies facilities which meet the required standards. Also, the destination should seek ISO certification.

Then the authors propose that the facilities in Thailand should seek ISO certification. This ISO certification is critical in establishing a culture of quality in the destination. There should be a female well-being management system which improves the coordination of standards. The establishment of a tourism professional body is essential in certifying facilities and employees. The management of standards can only be done through policies and regulations. The industry should be left to manage its standards through bodies where stakeholders are represented. Standards are maintained through certification standards. There should also be an evaluative strategy which ensures that all the standards are met. In this respect, the tourism authorities should set up an inspection unit which makes surprise visits to the establishments. In addition, all employees should wear name tags so that they can be more accountable. Finally, all the stakeholders in the destination should be allowed to contribute to the standards through policies and procedures according to Smith, M., and Puczkó, L. (2014); Goeldner & Ritchie (2009).

### **5. Establishing a security and safety committee**

An employment strategy should help to reduce normal crime such as robberies and burglaries (Phenphak Wongkot, 2016). This should be done in order to reduce the threat of crime to tourists. Tourists should also be informed on what they can do to improve their security. For instance, they should be discouraged from wearing expensive jewelry while roaming the streets. In addition, the carrying of large amounts of cash attracts the attention of criminals. It is important to assure safety as part of the marketing strategy because people are usually apprehensive about the security of places with which they are not familiar. Also, the option is for the industry to install close circuit television-CCTV in all the establishments and streets that are used by tourists (Phenphak Wongkot, 2016). All this should be managed through policy. The transport system is especially vulnerable to acts of terrorism. Thailand should put in technological and manpower resources that can be used to detect and arrest potential terrorists. Emergency services and a disaster management strategy should be developed and tested. This should be part of safety for tourism policy of Thailand. The safety and security of tourists should be done through planning and the use of technology and skilled manpower (Mansfeld & Pizam, 2006, P. 78). All health care facilities should be established and upgraded as emergency response units. Visitors with serious health conditions should be encouraged to disclose this management so that they can take all the necessary

steps to keep the tourist safe.

The researcher proposes that tourism authorities should establish a security and safety committee that is mandated with calming the fears of tourists. In addition, it will develop policies which help to improve specific areas of wellness such as border security. There is also a need to develop a strategy that can be used in cases of emergency. The responsibility of safety and the security of tourists lies with all the stakeholders including the Thai government, Thailand authorities, establishments and all the employees. This is because of the increasing capabilities of terrorists and the sophistication of the average criminal. Therefore, a strategy of providing security should be supported by all stakeholders (Timothy, 2006, P. 24). The destination should use a combination of technology and skilled personnel to provide security to the tourists. All facilities should be built with safety and security as a major consideration (Phenphak Wongkot, 2016). Safety should be promoted by improving health services and emergency response services. The destination should enhance its ability to provide optimal health care. Hotels should also have their own security and safety strategy. They should have electronic key cards for doors to every room. In addition, they should have CCTV in every place except in the rooms. It is important for hotel security to control people who come into the premises. Hotels should make sure that the property of their guests is safe. The staff should subtly advise their guests about security without alarming them. They should warn them against leaving with their key cards or leaving their doors open. They should also be advised not to let people they just met into their rooms. Such meetings should take place in the lobby or in a public place. In addition, laptops, mobile phones and cameras should not be left unattended.

Training all staff about security is one of the best measures a hotel can take (Hall et al., 2012, P. 14). Employees should be taught about observing unusual behavior and reporting it to the relevant authorities. This strategy ensures that every employee provides security since the hotel cannot employ security guards for every floor without scaring the guests. Only registered guests should be allowed to roam around the hotel. Contractors who come to repair or install various equipment and machinery should be escorted at all times. Suspicious guests should be reported to the police. Every hotel should train its staff in first aid. In addition, it should also have a safety code which is followed by both employees and guests (Hall et al., (2012); Mansfield and Pizam (eds.) (2006); Timothy (2006).

## **6. Generating financial resources**

The implementation of scarce financial resources requires an elimination of wastage and increased accountability (Brigham & Houston, 2011, P. 54). Audits should be carried out as frequently as possible in order to establish how taxpayer's money is used. Investments in the tourism industry should be aimed at generating sustainable economic

returns. Therefore, all the policies and regulations are aimed at ensuring that resources are used effectively and those priorities are determined through consensus. Financial resources will be critical in developing the destination. The most important thing is having this resource before the implementation of any plan (Chandra, 2011, P. 34). The Thai government creative industries policy provides financial assistance for the plan to engage in female well-being in Thailand. The ability of the stakeholders and tourism authorities to use financial resources prudently will have an impact on the development of the destination. Therefore, the government should establish an implementation committee whose main job is to set a budget that can be used to make the strategy a reality. The financial resources for this strategy will be provided by the national and local government. The money will be used to create an infrastructure and to establish training schools. Private investors will have their way of getting the financial resources required to establish facilities of high quality. In addition, the government should provide the financial resources necessary to help SMEs to take advantage of this great opportunity (David H. Brown & Laddawan Kaewkitipong, 2009)

The study proposes that the government should use its influence to encourage micro-finance institutions in Chiang Mai. This will help to ensure that financial resources are available to small business enterprises through micro-finance institutions. The availability of cheap loans will provide locals with the opportunity to benefit from the new tourism strategy in Thailand. It is very important that the locals get the resources they require in order to engage in tourist-based business because they are the primary stakeholders. It is also important to provide training to local businesses so that they can effectively manage financial resources (Nathan J. B., & Philip D., 2014). Secondary, there should be a budget detailing how the tourist authorities will use funds to develop the facilities and infrastructure. It is very important for the government to provide all the resources required to ensure that the destination acquires international standards. In addition, cooperation with the private sector will provide the resources necessary to develop accommodation and well-being facilities (Brigham and Houston (2011); chandra (2011); David H. Brown & Laddawan Kaewkitipong (2009).

## **7. Human resource development and management policies**

Tourism authorities in Thailand should evaluate the number and quality of human resources required to meet the needs of the destination. There should be clear guidelines which determine the need for expatriates. This is because multinationals tend to come with expatriates who are employed in jobs that can be done by locals (Phenphak Wongkot, 2016). This can be avoided by having clear employment policies. The managers should understand all labor laws and should know if employees are unionized. This makes it easier to manage employees and it reduces conflict with the employees, unions and the government. The development of human resources should be accomplished before the implementation of

the strategy so that the local people can be the first to get professional employment (Phenphak Wongkot, 2016). In the past, local people were only employed in the lowest job levels because they did not have the skills required to get good jobs. This strategy has the concept of sustainability as a core principle. This means that the local community will derive maximum economic benefits from the exploitation of their culture. Therefore, education and training should be emphasized. The management should understand the culture of the local people in order to effectively coordinate and organize them (Price 2007, P. 68). The management should develop incentives that motivate people towards excellence. This will help to improve the quality of human resources and the services. The human resource development should be aimed at adding value. For example, they should promote the learning of languages used by source markets. This will improve communication and the quality of services provided to the tourists.

The authors propose that the strategy should include human resource development and management policies in its policy agenda. This means that everything is done according in a planned and logical order. Human resource development should be carried out through training, promotions and the provision of opportunities (Phenphak Wongkot, 2016). This also includes exposure to hospitality establishments in places like Bangkok so as to provide the necessary experience. Employees should be allowed to pursue any studies that improve their knowledge. Those who show diligence and commitment should be promoted so that others can try to emulate them. The management should be concerned with skill development and the capabilities of the employees in relation to customer service. All the relevant human resource management strategies should be applied. This includes motivation, delegation, perceptive management and continuous learning. Furthermore, the management should provide employees with the opportunities to grow. It should also be result oriented in order to help the new tourism strategy to achieve its objectives. Motivation is a critical aspect of human resource development. Employees who are motivated soon become interested in increasing their knowledge and skills. They also become innovative and result oriented. Furthermore, motivated employees become self-managed and require little supervision, thereby freeing up managers to do other equally important things. Employees who show initiative and dedication should be rewarded with recognition and financial incentives. Therefore, it is imperative that all organizations apply a motivational strategy which helps to inspire their employees to engage in personal development (Storey, 2007, P. 38).

The organizations should strive to employ the most qualified and experienced personnel. The employees should also be encouraged to develop leadership skills. The tourist management authority should be composed of professionals and should be led by someone who understands strategic human resource management. Performance management

is an essential aspect of human resource development. It ensures that employees are meeting their goals effectively. It is important that employees be given strategic objectives so as to ensure their products and to measure their capabilities. The employees should have clearly defined jobs and their performance should be periodically monitored. Currently, there is organizational performance management software which makes it easier to determine those who meet these standards. This system is appropriate because it also enables management to find out who needs more training. Strategic human resource management should be applied by the tourism management authority and the hospitality industry. Strategic human resource management involves helping the organization to meet the needs of employees while at the same time it promotes company goals (Lengnick- Hall, 2009, P. 70). This approach helps the employees to concentrate on their responsibilities. It cultivates the commitment required to make an organization compete. Strategic human resource management was chosen because it is proactive management, which plans ahead and is more employee-oriented. It aligns the needs of the organization and those of the employees. It is also a strategy of employee retention (Price (2007); Lengnick-hall, et al. (2009); Storey (2007).

#### **8. Implementing female well-being resource conflict**

This kind of action can cause a division between the tourism strategy and the local community. It interferes with sustainable tourism because the ability of the local community to meet its own needs is affected (Phenphak Wongkot, 2016). As has been emphasized earlier, the tourist police should have strategies that can be used to reduce the competition of resources with the local community (Majanen, 2007, P. 480). The utilization and commercialization of traditional herbs, oils and therapeutic techniques can also create problems with the local people. This is because of the commercialization of their culture without providing them with the benefits. The upgrading of the infrastructure such as airports, roads and other facilities requires the use of land. In addition, the female well-being strategy may increase the cost of living, thereby driving some people into poverty. It can also increase the gap between the rich and the poor, thereby creating a class based conflict.

The study proposes that the tourism policy should have strategies which can be used to resolve resource based on conflicts. One of the ways to avoid conflict is to include local people in the decision making. This co-management approach ensures that the interests of the community are included and respected (Tazim&Tanase, 2005, P. 440). Providing opportunities for employment to the local people is important in reducing the chance of conflict. The first group of people who benefits should be the local people. In addition, the strategy should adopt sustainable tourist development which helps to reduce conflict with the local people. It is committed towards taking care of the local assets by ensuring that development becomes a positive experience for the people and they accept the new

intrusion into their lives (Phenphak Wongkot, 2016). Decisions should not be made at the national level because they would seem like an imposition. The tourism authorities should resettle all the displaced people. Furthermore, there should be conservation of the cultural heritage. It is important not to let the use of foreigners erode the local culture. There should be a culture committee, which works to preserve the traditional Thai culture and heritage. Finally, tourism authorities should engage in corporate social responsibility as a business model which raises the standards of living in the local community (Jamal and Tanase (2005); Majanen (2007); Porter and Salazar (2005).

### **9. Implementing an information management system and increase its research capacity**

Research capacity refers to the ability to carry out and use research (Hjalager, 2010, P. 4). This means that tourist authorities should encourage businesses and hospitality organizations to have a culture of researching in order to provide insight into their business. Those who produce well-being products should have research capabilities. In tourism, a lot of the research can be found online and it is up to the user to decide if it is relevant or if it can be modified to suit a specific situation. There is no need to repeat research that has been done elsewhere. In many instances, such as in the case of SMEs, it is not possible to build research capacity because of the resources required or because of its final value and relevance to the business. A small business selling traditional medicines used in therapy only requires understanding marketing and customer service (Phenphak Wongkot, 2016). Therefore, they will require understanding on how to use the internet as part of their capacity building. The data which is collected by the registration system will be effective in researching in trends and source markets. The information should be obtained from different sources so that the tourism management authority can understand the amount of revenue generated by the industry. The information should be managed by a computer based system which can control access to sensitive information (Laudon & Laudon, 2010, p. 74). Relevant information should be disseminated electronically and through print media. When communicating with the market, the internet and tourism magazines should be prioritized in the budget. Internal communication to hospitality establishments can be done by ordinary mail or e-mail (Tereza S. & Jitka N. V., 2016). The female well-being strategy in Thailand should establish a mechanism for collecting and managing information from one or more sources, and to communicate it within the tourism management authority.

The study proposes that the tourism management authority should implement an information management system and increase its research capacity. This system should incorporate to all information from registrations and the revenue generated by hospitality establishments. Every hospitality establishment should have an information management



policy. This will distinguish useful information and information which is not valuable. Useful information should be recorded, analyzed and disseminated to the right people (Applegate et al., 2007, P. 68). The private information for tourists should be protected by passwords and there should be restricted access to information. It is also critical for the establishment to collect visitor feedback on the destination. This information should be submitted to the tourism management authority. Additionally, the establishment should be obliged to provide all the necessary and relevant information that can help hospitality organizations to make better decisions and to devise more reliable strategies. Also, the tourism management authority should appoint a communication official to apply different strategies for reaching the relevant audience. It is important for the new tourism strategy in Chiang Mai to have an effective information management strategy. The information which is derived from social media should be managed by an expert who ensures that the right message is in circulation. Every organization in tourism sectors should have a social media strategy which manages information to be sent out via internet. Research capacity can be established through training. Larger organizations can afford to employ an expert while the tourism management authority can establish a research facility (Applegate, Austin and McFarlane (2007); Hjalager (2010); Laudon and Laudon (2011); Tereza S. & Jitka N. V. (2016).

#### **10. Adaptation established to sustainability principles**

Sustainability means the adoption of international standards that will make the destination more competitive (Weaver, D. B., 2006). This is because tourists are becoming more responsible on the issue of sustainability. Therefore, the issue of sustainability should be included in the marketing strategy. Responsible tourism means ensuring that the interests of all stakeholders are addressed. Tourists should be informed on the proper behavior in the destinations. This should include the respect for the culture and the environment. As such, tourism should be done in a way that manages and provides economic development, environmental conservation and social justice (Maythawin Polnyotee & Suwattana Thadaniti, 2015). In this context, Thailand's tourism policy should impose the responsibility of sustainability on every stakeholder. Non-government organizations should be included in the strategy to make the country an attractive destination.

The tourism management authority should control every aspect of investment. Its main agenda should be to promote socially responsible investments. Sustainable tourism also requires the effective use of resources. The female well-being tourism strategy should be locally driven and managed. Local investors should be encouraged to invest in this strategy because of the need to avoid an over reliance on foreigners and foreign investments. Sustainable tourism is a stakeholder concept which seeks a wide consensus on how a destination should be developed. It is also important to educate and train local people in



order to allow them to get training at the management level. This is because when the local are employed, they are usually given lower level jobs such as porters, waiters, cleaners and guards. The government of Thailand should be responsible for building the capacity of locals in order to enable them to derive maximum benefits from the new well-being strategy. It is to propose that the destination should adopt well established sustainability principles such as those provided by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC). One of the most important and effective ways of promoting sustainability is educating and training the local stakeholders about the concept (Masaru Yarime, et al. (2012). This means having workshops and inviting experts to advise the management of hospitality establishments. The concept of sustainable tourism should be integrated in the tourism policy for the whole country. This means that all activities and strategies are guided by the principle of sustainable tourism. The building of the infrastructure, the building of establishments and the recruitment of workers should be done in a way which promotes environmental integrity, social justice and economic development.

The tourism management authority should establish a sustainability committee, which should consult on every aspect of the development and management of resources. The committee should contain experts in the various disciplines such as engineering, tourism, environmental conservation and anthropology (cultural). The committee will be responsible for generating reports and then submitting them to the management. They can also provide advice to management and local investors. Sustainability requires enforcement in order to ensure compliance (Weaver, 2006, p. 112). Therefore, the local laws should contain legislation which punishes those who pollute the environment. Also, before investors are allowed to build in an area an environmental impact assessment should be required. The hotel owner association and the local business association should come up with a policy on garbage disposal. The local government should encourage the building of a recycling plant in order to increase employment and to reduce environmental pollution. Developing and increasing opportunities of employment for the local community is a critical aspect of sustainability. Tourism should be used as a vehicle which deals with poverty alleviation. Therefore, as many people as possible should have an opportunity to engage in a livelihood through job creation or entrepreneurship. This requires are the employment of the local as guides on nature walks, the government should ensure that locals are trained as cooks, drivers etc., construction contractors should only employ local people, the locals should have the exclusive rights to practice as masseurs, beauticians, and yoga and meditation instructors and community based tourism initiatives should be encouraged (Budeanu (2005); Miller, et al. (2010); Weaver (2006).

#### **11. Cooperating to develop an ICT infrastructure.**

The government and the private sector should also cooperate in order to provide

the required technological readiness (Apitop S. & Dolly S., 2011). In order to compete with international destinations, Thailand should embrace all the technological conveniences of the 21st century. Tourists want to travel to exotic places and have memorable experiences. However, they still want the familiarity and comfort like home. Therefore, technology is needed because it allows them to communicate with relatives and colleagues more effectively. We also live in an era of interactive social media and smart phones. Tourists have a habit of taking videos on a destination and posting it on the internet for their friends and relatives. Therefore, every establishment should have all the relevant internet technologies. Technological readiness also refers to the ability of a destination to acquire technologies which will help in management and enhanced customer delivery (Heesup H., et al, 2017). This means that the tourist management authority and all the hospitality establishments in Thailand should have the latest management information systems and human resources management systems which help to improve service delivery. It is also important for the hospitality industry to include technological systems which manage financial resources. Global competitiveness can only be achieved through technological readiness which brings sophistication to a destination. In addition, technological readiness provides for the leveraging of e-commerce. Tourists can use this platform to buy beauty and other well-being products while they are in their home country (Heesup H., et al, 2017). The mixture of technological readiness and well-being tourism will increase the capabilities of the destination. Technology will be instrumental in enabling research capacity and providing tourists with the comfort of connectivity (Heesup H., et al, 2017). The destination should have a comprehensive ICT strategy which sets the standards and eliminates disparities in technological readiness. The destination should embrace technology as a tool of convenience, which increases competence. Technology readiness also refers to the speed of adoption in the destination (Lin et al., 2007, p. 178). The tourism management authority should lead in the adoption of new technologies. This will motivate those organizations that are fearful or apprehensive about adopting new technologies.

The researcher proposes that the tourism management authority and the national government should cooperate to develop an ICT infrastructure. This should focus on having a fiber optic network. In addition, all the establishments should have WiFi technology and broadband internet services. The destination should have a reliable mobile phone network. The hotel owners' association should require members to have technological management systems (Walczuch, Lemmink&Streukens 2007, P. 210). These include human resource management systems, customer relations management system, financial resources systems and computerized registration systems. Technological readiness requires the application of the necessary resources which will be used to develop customized

software for the effective management of the establishments and their destination. In order to remain technologically savvy, the establishments should upgrade their technology whenever it is required (Lin, Shih and Sher (2007); Liljander, Gillberg, Gummerus and van Riel (2006); Walczuch, Lemmink and Streukens (2007).

## Conclusion

Based on studies exploring a set of strategies that can be used to facilitate the growth of tourism for the well-being of women in Thailand in line with the Thai government's creative industries policy, therefore it can be concluded that it should involve a differentiation scheme that will act as a source of competitive advantage for the Thailand's destination. The way for Thailand to be a competitive destination is to rely on its historical well-being cultural heritage. Therefore, this should be the driving force behind all the strategic policies because authenticity should be the core differentiator. The traditional products, styles and services offered in the destination should be marketed as a unique selling proposition that is premised on authenticity. The fundamental idea is to promote cultural tourism alongside the well-being tourism strategy. This is critical because the current trend in tourism focuses on enhancing visitor experiences and the raises in the issue of quality supporting with differentiation strategies. The highest possible standards should be applied in the well-being strategy in Thailand. Quality assurance should be used to meet the expectations of customers. It is important to apply international standards, and quality development should be a continuous process that ensures that the highest possible standards are maintained. After the implementation of quality management, the strategy should also be incorporated policies that promote physical, emotional and mental well-being outcomes. These policies are essential in meeting the expectations of customers. Indeed, the differentiation and quality management strategies should be guided by the need to improve the physical, emotional and mental outcomes of female well-being visitors. Overall, the strategy must be placed in context within the Thai creative industries policy to support community development, local employment and tourism development. Therefore, it can be concluded that strategies that relate to the need to establish industry standards for the benefit of the client, including the benefit of the industry itself which can be summarized as follows;

1. The strategy regarding to the policy and legal framework is necessary and critical for the establishment of a tourism strategy in Thailand. This is important as a quality assurance strategy which gives tourists recourse when their rights are violated or when they become victims of fraud.

2. The strategy includes the development of diverse products that can be used for diverse clients in the destination. The fundamental reason for this approach is that the

strategy will involve the targeting of multiple source markets.

3. The strategy about the improving market access for women entrepreneurs and wage earners in developing countries.

4. The strategy regarding to the quality control is critical in ensuring that the right products are used by the hospitality industry in Thailand.

5. The hotels should have a strategy of controlling who comes to the hotel property. Thailand should priorities safety and security in order to meet international standards.

6. The strategy about the financing to develop tourism facilities in Thailand will come from the private sector. The government creative industries policy should then involves creating infrastructure and supporting the destination.

7. The strategy regarding to the human resource development is one of the most important ways of ensuring quality in a destination. It is critical to develop the abilities of the locals because they are the primary stakeholders in the destination.

8. The strategy about the competition between tourism and the local community for scarce resources creates problems and challenges which must be addressed. For instance, tourism development may increase local taxes so that the local government can have the resources required for the upgrading of the infrastructure.

9. The strategy regarding to the market research should be essential in the development of promotional strategies and in planning services on the ground also is important in creating products for a market.

10. The strategy regarding to the sustainable tourism is a concept which aims at having a low impact on the environment and the culture. It also aims at creating employment for the local people, it is important to protect the destination from the negative consequences of tourism.

11. The strategy regarding the technology readiness means the ability to have the required degree of technology that allows the destination to compete effectively. The destination should embrace technologies as the driver of competition and development.

### **Limitation / Recommendation**

This study has limitations to the scope and applications of the findings based on the design of the study, as well as limitations resulting from the way the study was actually conducted (Veal, 2006). This study is no exception, as there were several limitations involved in the study. Some of these limitations were due to the study key issue. For example, the cross-sectional design means that results may only be valid for a certain time, depending on the rate of change in the industry (Churchill & Iacobucci, 2005). This study collected data from the literature review that is relevant documents to the key issues in Thailand, and only

during that time which at present may have already been rectified also did not collect data from other types of services, such as destination spas or standalone spas. While this was consistent with the evidence that a lot of well-being tourism is integrated into the hospitality industry through such installations, there are still many well-being tourism sites, such as standalone massage service providers, meditation centers, and so on, that were not included. Although, various government policies are constantly being revised in accordance with Thai society. Overall, the study was more effective at collecting data to understand the supply characteristics of the industry and the government approach rather than the demand characteristics. Results should only be applied with care, for use in analytical and theoretical research, rather than directly applied to pragmatic marketing activities.

One of the best ways to create value and to generate interest is to have a strategy which is driven by culture and innovation (Phenphak Wongkot, 2016). The well-being destination should be developed using knowledge (Phenphak Wongkot, 2016). This is consistent with the notion that this means that education and training will be essential in equipping all those who will participate in the promotion of the destination (Laudon et al., 2011). Access to information will also be an important aspect of managing the destination. Information should be readily available and accurate so as to manage the expectations of the well-being visitors. There should be information support systems which are suited to people from different aspects of the target market.

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