



The Application of Lanna Wisdom for Spa Business in the Upper Northern Thailand

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Abstract

This paper aims to study the application of Lanna wisdom for spa business in the Upper Northern of Thailand. Mixed methods, including observation, participatory and non-participatory, and focus group, are utilised by a questionnaire with interviews the spa entrepreneurs in eight provinces in the Northern region. The results show that the spa businesses applied various types of Lanna wisdom have a unique Lanna image of both herbal and health rehabilitation services, including traditional and alternative medicine services. Currently, spa businesses have adopted cultural and traditional Lanna identities, including 1) Traditional Lanna therapy 2) the use of herbs for local Lanna products 3) application of Lanna architecture 4) packaging development of spa appliances 5) the use of Lanna music during services, and 6) an integration services of the legendary traditional medicine and alternative medicine. In addition, the application of Lanna style, which is unique and distinctive, can be reflected "identity Lanna spa", including the identity of five areas: form, taste, aromatherapy, sound, and touch, with the application of wisdom, arts, culture and Lanna heritage. From concept to design, decoration materials, appliances, clothing, music, sound, natural plants, herbal massage rituals, beliefs, legends and folk tales could distinctly explain the origin and meaning. Moreover, many spas put more effort to bring out these identities of Lanna spa from the development of products and services. The identity Lanna spa through form, taste, aromatherapy, sound, and touch thus should be applied throughout the Northern provinces to the application of Lanna wisdom spa for value-added products/services. This could also distribute income to communities as well as promote tourism in the Northern provinces.

Keywords: Lanna wisdom, Lanna spa, Upper Northern Region

Introduction

Spa or treatments under the supervision of therapists, doctor or specialist is a place to relax for getting a good holistic health (Napaphan Srilaphan, 2006) Spa is also a place where stream with water or mineral water pool, massage, herbal steam room, silage with mud, and water exercise (Ministry of Public Health, 2004). The purpose of spa has been changed from being a place of healing and recreation place for relaxation. As business tries to look for patterns in services and structurally administrate these services as known "spa" and is prevalent in many countries around the world. For Thai spas are known and have been received recognition very well. The lifestyle has changed and amidst the hustle and tension which affect the health and fitness of occupation and livelihood increases an opportunity for businessmen to offer an alternative to consumers, who are looking to relax, with the launch of several health facilities in both urban and tourism attractions. This leads to an expansion spa in leading hotels. To make a difference by bringing the use of Thai wisdom in conjunction with different service formats, the spa industry could be continuous growing.

The Northern provinces, including Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Phayao, Phrae, Nan, Lampang, Lamphun, and Mae Hong Son, have applied the identity of the Thai spa with the wisdom of a particular body of Lanna knowledge and a way of life in health care. The traditional doctors, who can explain Lanna lifestyle from birth to death, the elements of individual morale and mental, are linked to the dimension of faith other aspects of society, whether administrative or cultural. It has also procedures to protect and maintain the health by four Lanna ways, including healing rituals, herbal therapy, physical therapy, and nutritional therapy (Kunyanuch Thaoprasert, 2008). The Lanna spa is a business that has been the focus

of both large and small enterprises. There are also quite a number of consumers, as shown in the revenue of health tourism and spa of the Northern provinces with the value in Chiang Mai of 40.93 million Baht per year. In addition, the proportion of value added of hiring staffs of 89,620 Baht per person per year (or 7,468 Baht per person per month). It can be seen that spas could create jobs and income to the community as well as result in economic growth and balanced growth (Office of Strategy Management Upper Northern Provincial Cluster 1, 2013).

Therefore, application of health of medical knowledge in the Lanna spa businesses is the use of community knowledge to further increase business value by making it known to the public at large as well as creating value to its heritage. This can be made by adopting a form of treatment, developing spa products/services, using local ingredients, the use of Lanna architecture. There is also a little knowledge about Lanna wisdom for spa. For this reason, this paper is interested in studying the application of Lanna wisdom for spa business in the Upper Northern of Thailand. It also finds out the identity of Lanna spa in the real business. As a result, it will be a guideline for spa entrepreneurs to meet the needs of spa services. Lanna spa is also a prominent than in other areas. The Lanna spa consumers can be absorbed through taste, smell, sound and touch. The Lanna applications could also serve these services to satisfy consumers and they will use these services again. (Eakkavit Na Thalung, 2001 and Thedchai Choibamroong, 2011).

Objective

This paper studies the application of Lanna wisdom for spa business in the upper Northern of Thailand.

Research Methodology

This paper uses mixed method with a questionnaire to interviews spa entrepreneurs with purposive sampling to gather local knowledge in the eight Northern provinces, including Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Phayao, Phrae, Nan, Lampang, Lamphun, and Mae Hong Son.

Results

1. Spa with traditional Lanna style

Lanna region is the oldest civilization and has unique cultural, arts, valuable lifestyle for a long time, a unique architecture, friendly atmosphere and a warm welcome to visitors. These make it possible to combine the unique Lanna spa as exceptional spas in other countries. There are also traditional herbs knowledge and how to treat various healths. Traditional medicine and alternative medicine services could be applied in the spa. There is also a variety of combined wisdom to achieve the spa service; therefore, it will be a unique and distinctive service of Lanna. Current cultural identity and traditional Lanna could be used in combination in spa amenities, including

- 1) Therapy traditional Lanna style. The rams smack into the tread Thai spa massage and hydrotherapy.
- 2) The use of local Lanna herbs for development spa products.
- 3) Application of Lanna architecture with a touch of decoration of the Lanna architecture.
- 4) Development of packaging spa treatment for decorative Lanna spa.
- 5) Application of Lanna music in the spa service.
- 6) The legendary traditional medicine, beliefs and alternative medicine use in Thai Lanna spa massage.

Currently, a development of unique massage spa in each region is clear difference. It combines several wisdoms to create a signature menu, such as Thai Lanna spa with a unique identity. This applies a traditional Lanna lifestyle from the beliefs, traditions, culture, lifestyle, architecture and art. This application reflects through a form, taste, aromatherapy, sound, and touch, which is the Lanna uniqueness. Spa businesses currently use raw materials and develop products from various Lanna wisdoms. This leads to spa and closely linked businesses are mutually beneficial. This development of products is the use of herbal medicinal products. These products are shampoo, shower cream with herbs, herbal hair tonic, powder and powder herbal soap, herbal foot soak, herbal bath, herbal foot care, herbal oil, and heat herbal bag.

2. Application of Lanna wisdom for spa business in the Northern region

Lanna spa is a business with high growth, due to the readiness of tourism and transportation that can accommodate most tourists. The growth of tourism industry in the North as well as the health concern are driven spa business. To meet the needs of consumers, spa businesses have adopted the traditional Lanna style, which is unique and distinctive, to reflect "Identity of Lanna spa". It has been shown or characterized in the identity of five senses, including form, taste, aromatherapy, sound, and touch, by the application of wisdom, arts, culture, and Thai heritage. These could be recognized by the concept to design, decoration materials, appliances, clothing, music, sound, natural plants, herbal massage rituals, beliefs, legends and folk tales. This definition of Lanna spa identity is clear by using the five human senses to tell the story of Lanna identity is generally known. A key component of identity spa comprises of form, taste, aromatherapy, sound, and touch, as detailed below:

Form is what we perceive to be seen. Lanna spa identity is created from and presented in the form of architecture, decoration, dress of employees, and products used in the spa. These have been applied from a Lanna lifestyle and art, which reflect in the style of architecture, both interior and exterior of appliances, such as the use of wood carvings and the Lanna art painting to decorate the interior along with atmosphere, hill tribes dress for employees' uniform. These will lead to recognition of Lanna perception.

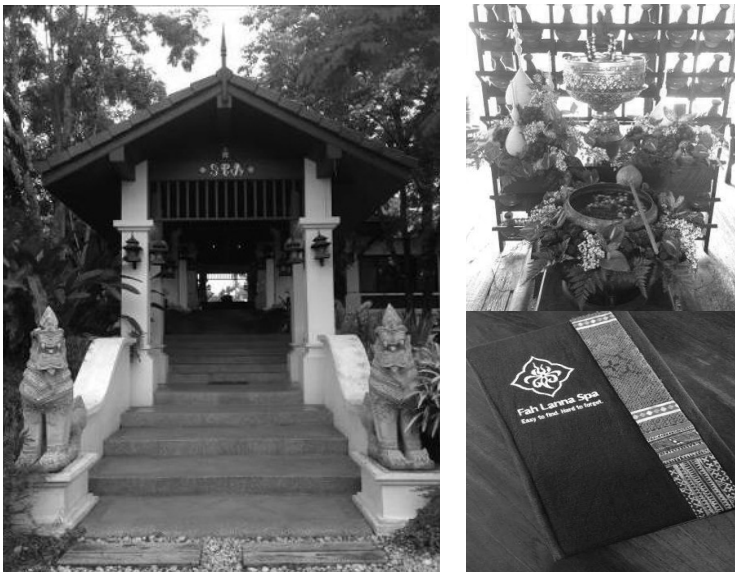


Figure 1 The local art and architecture that use in the spa

Taste is what we are perceived by drinking or eating. Identity of Lanna spa has chosen herbs and vegetables in the Northern region for preparing healthy drinks, such as Pandan juice, Butterfly pea juice, lavender, and hibiscus tea. Some of these have been provided before or after the spa service. In addition, some spas offer snacks such as fruit, rice crackers and cookies to their consumers. That's shown on Figure 2



Figure 2 The welcome drink that made from the local herbs product in northern of Thailand

Aromatherapy is recognized by inhalation. Identity of Lanna Spa is created by aromatic plants. This use flowers to decorate the building or float in the bath so that the natural scent and some can reduce odor. Some flowers, including Indian cork tree, Amomum biflorum Jack, and Vetiver grass, can be used to make incense aromatherapy candles in the spa. The natural aroma of these makes consumers feel pleasure and relaxation. That's shown on figure 3



Figure 3 The unique aroma in spa business

Sound is perceived through hearing. Identity Lanna spa is trying by bringing a mix Lanna voice instruments, as known of Salor Sor Sung. Upon entering the spa, consumers will feel relaxing and listen to music during a spa treatment.



Figure 4 The identity of Lanna spa through hearing by Lanna instruments

Touch: the identity of Lanna spa focuses on a massage or traditional Northern Lanna with elements of acoustic music, including smell and taste. There is also a Lanna Exotic massage comprising with Thai massage which focuses on the press, repeat, and squeeze. It begins with massaging the feet to the back of body, and an elegant style of Lanna massage, massage hammer line by a spine shoulder and massage oils. Ending services with the Lanna Exotic massage.



Figure 5 Toksen, the Lanna wisdom of massage

Lanna spa has adopted techniques or applied various massage, including traditional massage, aromatherapy massage, Swedish massage, Ayurvedic massage, Balinese massage, Iguazu, and massage hammer line. These are Lanna wisdom with another choice of massage by using a mallet to hammer a wedge, which is made of ivory or wood, nailed to the position of body to relieve pain as well as the treatment of bone and joints, muscles and tendons. It also uses Lanna wisdom to look for their medicinal or herbal elements to provide the required elements of its own. It can be further seen that the identities of Lanna spa could reflect through form, taste, smell, sound and touch. Many spas try to bring out the identities of Lanna Spa for the development of products/services. The identities of Lanna spa through form, taste, smell, sound, and touch should thus be applied throughout the Northern provinces for value-added products/services as well as to distribute income to the community and to promote tourism in the Northern provinces.

Conclusion

This paper aims to study the application of Lanna wisdom for spa business in the Upper Northern of Thailand. The results show that the identity of Lanna spa is the unique identity. A key component of identity spa comprises of form, taste, aromatherapy, sound, and touch. There is Thai Lanna Spa Association in Chiang Mai that represents the unique program called “Lanna Exotic” and the customers can enjoy the taste of Lanna through Lanna identity. Therefore, the identity of Lanna spa through form, taste, aromatherapy, sound, and touch should be applied throughout the Northern provinces to the application of Lanna wisdom spa for value-added products and services. This could distribute more income to the communities as well as promote the tourism in the Northern provinces.

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