



The Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy and Its Influence on the Development of Hospitality Industry in Thailand

Pipatpong Fakfare^{1*} and Metha Dechthaisong²

School of Humanities and Tourism Management, Bangkok University, Pathumthani, Thailand

*Corresponding author, E-mail: metha.d@bu.ac.th

Abstract

This study aims to investigate the influences of the philosophy of sufficiency economy on the overall development of hospitality in Thailand. Documentary analysis approach is employed in this investigation because existing data from various sources, including: corporate websites, public organisation websites, social media, online newspapers, e-Journals, government media releases, and academic articles can be examined to attain the study's objective. The findings revealed that the hospitality establishments in the country have increasingly adopted the concept of sufficiency economy as parts of their business conducts. The middle path approach or balanced way of living was also found to be related with the hospitality sector. Evidently, several hotels have tried to moderate their businesses considering the multidimensional aspects of sufficiency economy: moderation, reasonableness, self-immunity, knowledge, and morality. Regarding the research implication, this study demonstrates that the Philosophy of SE could be employed by the hospitality sector.

Keywords: *Philosophy of sufficiency economy, Sustainability, Tourism development, Thailand*

1. Introduction

The philosophy of Sufficiency Economy (SE) had been initially introduced by His Majesty the King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand since 1981. After the concept was formulated, it has been largely emphasised by individuals and groups from either the public or private sectors in the country. Even though the philosophy of SE is seen to be opposed to the Western way of trading practice, it inserts Eastern values, which go beyond Western thinking mode providing guidance on appropriate conduct for people in various aspects of life (Salyakamthorn, 2012). As modern business administration has amplified its concentration on sustainability, balances, and security, the philosophy of SE has increasingly become an important element for conducting business in the present day (Taulananda, 2011).

Being seen from the current practice of business firms in various industries, including hospitality and tourism, the philosophy of SE has progressively turned out to be an integral part of running hospitality and tourism businesses in Thailand. Despite the strong growth of tourism (Bank of Thailand, 2018; WTTC, 2015), Thailand's hospitality sector has also faced several critical periods, for examples, economic downturn in 1997, tsunami attack in 2004, and political unrest in 2009. Besides the aforementioned uncertainties, some touristic destinations in Thailand, such as Maya Bay are also facing overcrowding issues (The Guardian, 2018). As such, hospitality firms nowadays have increasingly applied the philosophy of SE order to sustain their businesses in the long run. Thus, the aim of this study is to:

- Investigate the influences of the SE principles on the overall development of hospitality in Thailand.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy

SE is the philosophy that has been developed and applied by various groups of people in both micro and macro levels. Recently, individuals, families, communities, business establishments, and governments have increasingly utilised and applied the principle of SE. While the idea of sufficiency-life can be concentrated by people in the community, the governments can apply the SE principles on city developments. Arguably, simplicity and flexibility are considered to be the important elements that cause the SE philosophy to be extensively applied to all levels (Ubonsri & Pannun, 2013).



The SE philosophy is considered a new paradigm for development. Unlike the trade economy, which trading is generally emphasised, the SE philosophy aims to improve human well-being as well as providing a balanced way of living to people (Mongsawad, 2010). During the time of economic crisis in 1997, His Majesty the King Bhumibol emphasised in the Royal Speech that;

“It is not important whether we become an economic tiger or not, what is important is our economy is sufficient in ourselves which means that people can look after themselves. Sufficiency economy does not mean that every household has to produce their own food, weave their own clothes. This is too much. It’s important that each village, each district has to be moderately self-sufficient. Any surplus from the production, then we can trade in the market nearby so that the transportation will not be too costly. Many economists could criticise that this way of carrying out our economy is old-fashioned and outdated; they prefer trade economy, but Thailand is fortunate that we have the ability to produce enough food to feed us all”.

Even though trading is not the key focus of the SE philosophy, it is not prohibited. People are still encouraged to trade based on the solid foundation of self-sufficiency. Economic development is suggested to be built in stages. Once a basic economic foundation is strong, embarking further steps of economic development is possible (Salyakamthorn, 2012).

2.2 The Three Principles of Sufficiency Economy

The SE philosophy is based on three pillars: moderation, reasonableness and self-immunity (Mongsawad, 2010), see Figure 1. The three pillars embody the guidance for people to live their lives by adopting the middle path approach. For the first pillar, moderation explains the idea of sufficiency, which one should produce or consume things at a moderate level, neither extreme nor too little (The Chaipattana Foundation, 2016). It delivers the idea of people living their lives in the middle path or the balanced way. Arguably, moderation is considered to be an Eastern philosophical thinking reflecting a simple way of people living in the East. However, His Majesty the King Bhumibol stated during a Royal Speech in 1998 that, *“being moderate does not mean being too strictly frugal; consumption of luxury items is permitted... but should be moderate according to one’s means”*. According to the first SE principle, people can live moderately and be self-reliant based on an economic level they feel comfortable with (MFA, 2014).

The second pillar is reasonableness. This principle perpetuates the idea of how people should live their lives in the present, while considering the long-term impacts. Even though to be successful in the future is not always the outcome of the present behaviour, making a plan involving long run impacts could help anticipate a consequence of the current action. The philosophy of SE gives attention to the future outcomes, which are rationally produced from the factors concerning with the present behaviour. Arguably, the awareness should also be given to the consequences relating to the others, not only for ourselves (Thongpakde, 2005).

The third pillar concerns with self-immunity. This element of SE suggests that self-immunity should be contemplated in order to deal with unexpected or uncontrollable situations that may happen in the future. The idea highlights the importance of how people could manage risks utilising social safety net mechanism. Principally, this SE principle emphasises the risks of dynamic changes from either external or internal environments (The Chaipattana Foundation, 2016; Thongpakde, 2005).

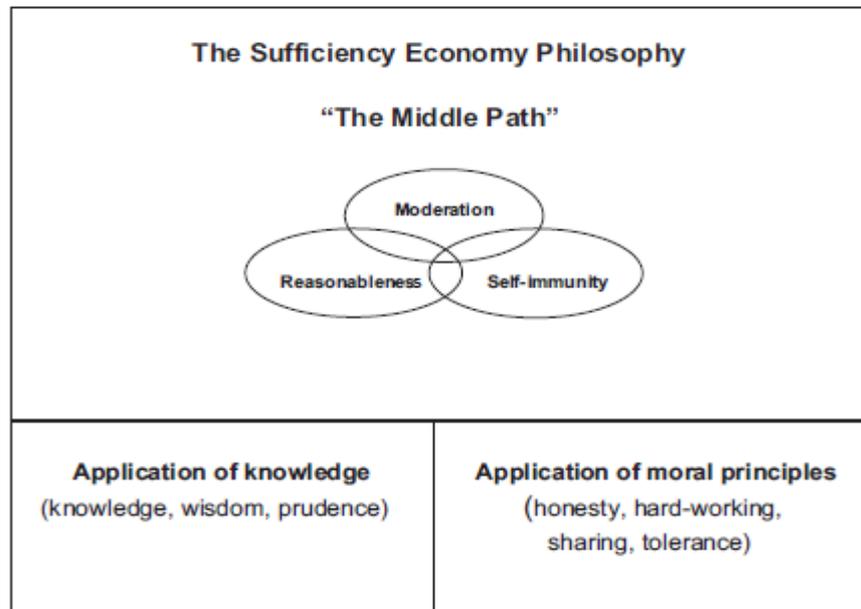


Figure 1 The sufficiency economy philosophy framework (adjusted from Mongsawad, 2010, p. 129)

Apart from the three key principles of SE: moderation, reasonableness, and self-immunity, two additional elements that are recognised to be fundamental in the development of SE are knowledge and morality. While knowledge is required to gain insight in implementing plans, morality encompasses honesty, integrity, ethical behaviour, and a readiness to work hard (Mongsawad, 2010). When people possess these two fundamental principles, it is argued that they will securely conduct their lives in harmony and in sustainable environment (NESDB, 2003).

2.3 The Application of the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy to the Industry

After the SE philosophy was first introduced, many people had perceptions that the concept might not be relevant to business. The applicability of the SE philosophy was not initially perceived as essential by groups of entrepreneurs. This is because the nature of the principles was seen to be contrary to the nature of how a typical business conducts. People still perceived that business needs to be continually expanded without the limited growth. In this sense, the SE principles might not be matched with how business had been performed in the old days. However, the trend concerning sustainability has increasingly changed the way people manage their organisations. Modern business administration has given more and more attentions on sustainable practices (Taulananda, 2011). While the concept of sustainability is being more emphasised by both private and public sectors in Western countries, the Philosophy of SE progressively becomes an essential part for conducting businesses in Thailand. Arguably, the insertion of SE philosophy into business conduct will become inseparable for business management in the future (Salyakamthorn, 2012).

Presently, the SE philosophy has gained its reputation and been increasingly applied by the industry sector. The uncertainty of global economic climate makes the application of the SE philosophy to be even more crucial for business establishments. In order to respond to the environmental changes, Salyakamthorn (2012) translated the philosophy of SE to be more applicable to the industry sector. Based on the aforementioned three fundamental principles and two other conditions of SE, nine core principles, consisting of 4 Knows, 2 Loves, and 3 Unites were proposed to achieve the industrial SE, see Table 1.

**Table 1** Nine principles to achieve industrial sufficiency economy (Salyakamthorn, 2012, p.1)

| | |
|----------|--------------------|
| 4 Knows | - Know your root |
| | - Know your work |
| | - Know people |
| | - Know the world |
| 3 Loves | - Love your people |
| | - Love resources |
| | - Love the culture |
| 2 Unites | - Unite within |
| | - Unite without |

The first component of 4 knows is Know your root. The root in this context can be extracted into 3 categories consisting of; organisation's root, country's root, and the SE Philosophy's root. As being an employee or entrepreneur of an organisation, it is vitally important to clearly understand the origin of the organisation, including vision, mission, goal, and objectives. Understanding the organisation's history helps; bring out the view of where the organisation is in the present; and give a direction for how the organisation should move to in the future. Knowing the root of the country is also important. Today, we exist because of the sacrifice of people in the past. Thus, learning to respect the country and community we belong to could be the way to show our appreciation of who we are and to the place we stand for. Another root that we should have a full understanding is the root of the SE philosophy. It is the root that His Majesty the King has tried to implant for his people in the country. During his reign, he had travelled across the country and seen the hardship of people facing the industrialisation and the socio-economic problems. Thus, his willingness for people to pursue happiness and live in an appropriate path has been reflected through the contribution of the SE philosophy.

Know your work is the second component of the 4 knows. Knowing every detail and understanding the true nature of the job that we account for could be the key to the future success. Another important aspect is Knowing people. An employee is not just a human resource or living resource, they have their societies, communities, families, friends, and feelings. Thus, finding out what their true capabilities are and what they are willing to do more for the organisation can help create a happy workplace. The last component of the 4 knows is Know the world. An entrepreneur and employee should realise that their organisation is not standing alone. There are still people outside the organisation interacting and competing each other in the dynamic environment. Thus, being prepared and getting ready for the rapid changing environment that might affect the organisation can be considered as the shield from the external shock (Salyakamthorn, 2012).

Love your people, Love resources, and Love the culture are the main components of 3 Loves.

The first component is concerned with loving people who we have to relate to, for example: co-workers, friends, and family. We should learn how to give while receive some benefits from the others. The second component involves loving natural resources. We should realise that every material we use for the industry is from our natural systems. Thus, when the natural materials are used for the industry, we should be aware of the effects that may occur on the well-being of the earth and the community. Love the culture is the final component of the 3 Loves. As our presence reflects our origin, the past history, and the locality; thus, businesses should nurture the local culture in order to uplift the spirit of people who work in the organisation as well as people who live in the community (Taulananda, 2011).

The last two key factors in driving SE for business are the Unity within and the Unity without. A unity within is important because every member of an organisation should follow the same path in order to achieve an organisational goal. That means all members need to be ready for any changes. They should try to understand the positive effects and how change will benefit the overall performance of the organisation in the future. For the Unity without, it is important for an organisation to collaborate with the others who share similar values or objectives. This is because when a network is formed, it can be beneficial in terms of knowledge sharing, supplying resources, and gaining access to new technology (Salyakamthorn, 2012).



3. Research Methods

In achieving the study's objective, which is to investigate the influences of the SE principles on the overall development of hospitality in Thailand, a documentary analysis approach was adopted. According to Daymon and Holloway (2011), documentary analysis can also be called qualitative content analysis. In utilising this analytical procedure, either hard copy or electronic format of documents can be included to produce the research outcomes. In this study, the information was gathered during the data collection process through online documents from various sources, including, corporates websites and public organisation websites, social media sites, online newspaper, e-Journals, government media releases, and academic articles and industry documents based on travelers and entrepreneurs' perspectives. The data then were analysed using content analysis method, which they were prepared, analysed, and reported in a system of analytical procedure (Elo et al., 2014).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 The Influence of Sufficiency Economy Philosophy on the Overall Development of Hospitality Industry in Thailand

Despite positive development of the hospitality sector in Thailand during the past decades, several unexpected conditions in the country, such as economic crisis, natural disaster, and political unrest have periodically caused the industry to be stunned (Thongpakde, 2005). The effects of those circumstances were not only perceived by the entrepreneurs in the hospitality sector, they were also spread to hospitality workers, tourism-related suppliers, and local communities. In order to minimise the impacts of the unforeseen situations, some hospitality establishments in the country have started applying the ideas of SE into their business administration. One main reason being is that entrepreneurs have realized the potentials of the application of SE in developing and sustaining their businesses.

Arguably, while businesses are sustained, local culture, the way of living, and green environment can be simultaneously promoted through the SE practice (Oxford Business Group, 2016).

According to Sritanyarat (2016), one of the first hospitality establishments that have been successfully applied the concept of SE is Chumphon Cabana Resort. The property is located in the Southern part of Thailand, approximately 500 kilometres away from Bangkok on a famous beach of Thung Wua Laen. In 1997, the resort was heavily attacked by the financial crisis as the new foreign exchange system was implemented in the country. At that time, the resort had an expansion project using loans from overseas. As Thai Baht was devalued from 25 to 52 per U.S. dollar, the debt of the resort was accordingly doubled in just a few months. In addition, Chumphon Cabana Resort also suffered from typhoon hits which often happen during the rainy season. They had a very difficult time and were going into bankruptcy. Fortunately, one of the Royal Projects was planned to implant in Chumphon. Thus, there were opportunities for the owner of Chumphon Cabana Resort to discuss with the Head of the King's Personal Affairs Division's Team. As a result, the philosophy of SE was introduced and the resort has applied the concept of SE since then.

Chumphon Cabana Resort has overcome the crisis by applying the ideas of SE into their business administration. Interestingly, none of the resort's employees were laid off, while the resort was able to cut down their costs by 75 percent. One of the distinctive policies that was successfully implemented was being self-reliant. The resort's employees were intensively trained to understand the true concept of SE. Consequently, they were able to produce cleaning products, such as liquid soap, shampoo, and make detergent for use within the resort, apply organic farming techniques to rice farms, and fruit plantations for their own consumptions and trades, produce bio-diesel for resort's cars and vans and produce the fertiliser from the waste from kitchen. Presently, Chumphon Cabana Resort only buys fresh ingredients, such as vegetables, fruits, meats, rice, and egg from their employees. The practice helps the employees and community to earn more money, while the resort has fresh and organic materials for their guests in return. From these practices, Chumphon Cabana Resort has proven that the principles of SE are not only applicable for the non-profit organisations, but it works well with the profit organisations, including hospitality and tourism establishments. They have created a win-win situation for both resort management and people who live in the community. As a guarantee of success of the application of the SE philosophy, the resort has received many awards from either domestic or international organisations, for examples; Standard Green



Leaf Hotel in 2003, Green Globe Award in 2004, and ASEAN Green Hotel Standard in 2011 (Chumphon Cabana Resort, 2016; Oxford Business Group, 2016; Sritanyarat, 2016).

Chumphon Cabana Resort is considered to be a pioneer in applying the Philosophy of SE as a part of corporate sustainability. The resort adopted the principles not only to recover from a crisis, but for a strategic advantage (Sasin, 2010). The success of the application has inspired other hospitality firms to consider the SE approach to develop their organisations.

The Tong sai Bay, Ko Samui is another Thai hospitality firm that has offered environmentally friendly products and worked against the degradation of environments in the past decade. The practice of a “Greener Tong sai” has been in line with the principles of His Majesty the King’s SE. Garbage management, minimising chemical usage, and creating awareness to staff and local community on eco-friendly practices are the example activities that the management of the resort has been doing. As a consequence, The Tong sai Bay has received many awards from various organisations and one of the distinctive honour was the prize from Office of the Royal Development Projects Board – Sufficiency Economy in 2007 (Oxford Business Group, 2016; The Tong sai Bay, 2016).

Another example of hotel establishment that adopts the SE Philosophy as a part of a hotel operation is Comsaed River Kwai Resort. The resort is located in Kanchanabui, which is approximately 130 kilometres away from the Capital. During the first ten years of operation, the resort did not perform well. Then, they started realising that they should follow His Majesty the King’s initiative. A strong bond among the resort’s owner, employees, and local community helped the application of SE concept in the resort to be even easier. Initially, the management started with a few small projects in different parts of the resorts for approximate 2 years before the SE concept was fully integrated. Today, not only the business at Comsaed River Kwai grows very well, the resort becomes a model of SE establishment that other hospitality firms could visit to learn how to apply the concept of SE to the hotel operations (MGR Online, 2008; Seawthaibaan, 2010; ThaiPublica, 2011).

Moreover, Sungkhamanee’s (2013) study concerning management policy of hotels in Samut Songkram and Nakhon Pathom provinces shows the connection between the philosophy of SE and the sustainable development in both social and business senses. The findings also reveal that the number of visitors increases after the hotel adopts the philosophy of SE. In addition, people in the community become more aware and responsible for their community. Solid ground of perseverance can be created and eventually illustrated to publics.

In Nakhon Ratchasima, there are many hospitality firms that adopt the philosophy of SE through their management strategies. For example, Sanae Vineyard at Pakchong district, Suan Khao Din Glorify at Muang district, Busai Home Stay at Wangnamkeow district, Melientha suavis Pierre Garden at Chockhai district, and Integrated Farm at Khamsakaesaeng district. These hospitality establishments adopt the philosophy of SE in their own ways to match the nature of their selling products and services so that they are able to improve their sustainable life-span business and community. The adoption of the SE philosophy improves firms’ reputation for product quality, local people skills and environment conservation awareness to both local people and tourists (Tungprasert, 2014).

Based on these various studies of aforementioned hospitality firms, it is seen that the Philosophy of SE has created a positive change to all establishments. Every company could increase the level of self-reliance by involving their employees and local community as parts of the development. The success of these three hospitality enterprises also draws attentions of other hospitality business owners and responsible tourism organisations to give more focus on the application of the philosophy.

More evidence can be found from academic study. Chartrungruang (2012) studied whether the key principles of SE were applied by tourism businesses in the North of Thailand. The data were collected from 2,389 tourism and hospitality establishments. Interestingly, the findings revealed that reasonableness, self-immunity, and knowledge were most of the times applied by those companies. Moderation and morality were found to be all the time applied into business administration. Based on this study, it is seen that more and more hospitality establishments in the country have realised the importance of the application of SE.



4.2 The Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy: A Fundamental Concept for Sustainable Hospitality Business in Thailand

As stated by Khunon and Muangasame (2013), the philosophy of SE can be considered as a fundamental concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR). The SE philosophy can also apply the firms' corporate governance (Puntasen, 2003). In achieving the aims of the SE philosophy in either individual or business level, unity, balance, and sustainability are considered to be the important elements. For the hospitality establishments to sustain their businesses, applying the concept of SE could be one of the strategies to consider.

In supporting and promoting sustainable hospitality and tourism businesses, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has initiated a campaign called, "7 Greens". Based upon the ideas of SE, the 7 Greens Campaign was launched in 2008 with the aim of providing guidelines for hospitality and tourism establishments on how to develop sustainable and eco-friendly products and services (TAT News, 2014). The campaign consists of 7 different categories ranging from creating awareness for tourists on the impacts of tourism on the environment to encouraging CSR initiatives by hospitality and tourism firms. Green Heart, Green Logistics, Green Attraction, Green Activity, Green Community, Green Service, and Green Plus are the 7 campaigns that were introduced. Based on the recent information provided by TAT, the number of hospitality firms around the country participating in the campaign is demonstrated in Table 2.

Table 2 Participated hospitality establishments for the 7 greens campaign

| Type of Hospitality Business | Number of Participated Businesses |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Hotel | 347 |
| Restaurant | 53 |
| Total | 400 |

Source: TAT (2016)

As the ideas of SE always involve with a bundle of benefits toward the development of community, community-based tourism was found to be emerged and increasingly developed in many parts of Thailand. Based on the information provided by TAT (2016), it was found that there are currently 68 communities taking part in sustainable tourism development, as seen in Table 3. Because the ideas of SE are strongly attached to the development of community-based tourism, the negative impacts of tourism to the community, local culture, and environment tend to be minimised. At the same time, revenues earned from tourism can also be used as a part of community development. Thus, several local hospitality and tourism related businesses have emerged due to the development of community-based tourism.

Table 3 Community-based tourism found in each region of Thailand (TAT, 2016)

| Region | Number of Communities |
|------------|-----------------------|
| Central | 16 |
| East | 8 |
| North-east | 10 |
| North | 17 |
| South | 12 |
| West | 5 |

5. Discussion

5.1 The Sufficiency Economy Philosophy: The Extension of Sustainable Development for Thai Hospitality Industry

His Majesty the King Bhumibol's Philosophy of SE has proved to be robust in helping the country to overcome several crises during the past decades. Even though the philosophy of SE was reemphasised during the financial crisis in 1997, His Majesty the King had already acknowledged the difficulties of the country facing industrialisation and tried to implant the concept to people for some time. Recently, the philosophy has been increasingly applied by individuals and business establishments. It is also considered as a foundation of sustainable development for either profit or non-profit organisations in the country (Thongpakde, 2005).



Based on the research findings, the robustness of the SE principles is also found in hospitality businesses. Chumphon Cabana Resort, Comsaed River Kwai Resort, and The Tongsai Bay are the examples of hospitality firms that have successfully applied the concept. Evidently, more and more hospitality operators adopt the ideas of SE into their business administration. 7 Green Project was also launched by TAT to support the growing trend. Consequently, the number of hospitality firms from all over the country participating in TAT's 7 Green Campaign is now recording as 400 and approximately 70 communities are taking part of the project (TAT, 2016). Being seen that the trend of tourism sustainability is going upward, therefore, there are opportunities for responsible tourism organisations to continue extending the concept of SE to sustain the growth of the hospitality and tourism industries.

5.2 The Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy: The Multidimensional Aspects of the Development of Thai Hospitality Industry

Taking the SE philosophy into consideration concerning the extension of Thai hospitality industry development, the multidimensional aspects based on the core components of the philosophy can be discussed as follows:

Moderation. The idea of moderation providing the sense of not too much or too little might be in conflict with the Western economic perspective. However, this Eastern concept provides an idea for people to live within limited means to protect their long-term interests (Naipinit, Promsaka Na Sakolnakorn, & Kroeksaku, 2014). In conducting hospitality businesses, the concept of moderation can be employed by carefully utilising available resources (Sasin, 2010). This includes the firm's requirement to keep the scale of production to be below the demand of the market as well as to focus more on the profit in the long run while maintaining the quality of delivered products with the focus of efficient use of what is available. (Khunthongjan & Wiboonpongse, 2010). After the concept has been introduced to the hospitality sector, many firms started to grow their own organic vegetable and rice farms, raise chickens for eggs, produce cleaning supplies, and produce bio-diesel from used oil for their own usage. Some hotels like Chumphon Cabana Resort even stepped up to be a model of sustainable establishment, creating awareness of self-reliance to the others. In addition, Chumphon Cabana also created a project called, "Our Economy". The idea of Our Economy is to support the employees and local community. As Khun Varisorn, the owner of Chumphon Cabana Resort said during the interview with Chaopraya News that;

"In the past, we bought a lot of food from the market, but the local community is not benefited from that. So, we come up with the idea of "our economy" to support our people in the community. We consider buying fresh ingredients from our employees and the local community first. In case they have something to sell, they will just write down what they have on the board in front of the hotel's kitchen. We adopted His Majesty the King's SE principles to moderate our business while supporting local people" (Srihong, 2012).

It is seen that applying the idea of moderation does not only help businesses to stably grow, it also helps improve the quality of life of people in the local community. The practice at Chumphon Cabana Resort also shows the balanced development path between a business firm and relevant stakeholders. The 9 principles for businesses to achieve SE proposed by Salyakamthorn (2012) are also reflected in this component.

Reasonableness. Considering reasonableness in relation to business conduct, business firms should ponder long-term aspects of development when making plans. Careful consideration when making business decisions, for example, the decision on supporting community development, providing employee remuneration and participating in environmental protection is important (Sasin, 2010). One of the hospitality firms that has successfully adopted the idea of reasonableness into corporate governance is Comsaed River Kwai Resort. The management of the resort learns from what they experienced in the past, especially during the economic crisis in the late 1990's. Thus, when business plans are formulated, they always have a clear vision and take the concept of SE into consideration. The examples can be seen from the efforts that they try to reduce costs and produce their own food. In addition, employees are always involved in brainstorming and developing process when new sustainable projects are planned. The management believes that the success of the resort principally comes from the strong collaboration between the employees, and local community (Seawthaibaan, 2010). They also think that the outcomes they have today are reflected what they did in the past and any actions they take now will affect the future



(Thongpakde, 2005). The management is also confident that they will have enough resources to take care of their employees in case of there is a crisis in the future. One main reason being that solid sustainable plans, which are inspired from the SE concept are already implemented (MGR Online, 2008). As Khun Laddawan, the Founder of Comsaed Resort said during the interview that:

“We do not treat our employees that they are human resources. We treat them like they are members of our family. We teach everything we know, for examples; how to grow organic farm, how to produce bio-diesel and how to produce the amenities that we use at the hotel. They can extend these ideas to do their own products in the future even when they do not work for us. We do not teach them how to be rich, but we encourage them to moderately live adopting the philosophy of sufficiency economy” (Comsaed Kanchanaburi, 2014).

Taking the concept of reasonableness into account, especially in the aspect of human resources, the hospitality firms could extend their corporate governance beyond salary packages and safe working environment. Involving employee's welfare either in work-related or non-work related parts should be considered. This is to ensure that employees are happy and have work-life balance. Arguably, when the employees are satisfied with their working conditions, they will contribute more to the organisations (Thongpakde, 2005). Moreover, the more frequent employees adopt reasonableness during their work, the more they will be able to expand their capability in developing critical skill on duty and off work (Indaratna, 2018).

Self-immunity. The idea of self-immunity can be comparable with the concept of risk management. Based on the findings of this study, some hospitality businesses have started to design their own tools to deal with the unexpected circumstances that may happen. Applying constructive changes based on the philosophy of SE by providing education to staff, building up relationship with the community, and implanting a self-reliant idea into corporate governance can be highlighted as the extension of the SE principles implementing the hospitality sector. Self-immunity can also be considered as a social safety mechanism. Even though profit-oriented organisations, including hospitality firms may perceive that implementing the concept is difficult, many hospitality firms have already successfully applied the concept and proved that it is possible to implement the concept.

Knowledge. Knowledge is another essential element for the implementation of the SE concept. In order to improve the well-being of either individuals or organisations, one needs to acquire knowledge whether from real life experiences or formal education systems (Mongsawad, 2010). For example, at The Tongsai Bay Ko Samui, the management learns from the previous experiences that they should minimise the negative impacts to the local community and environment. The decision on implementing green policy is rationally-made based the knowledge they acquired in the past. As Khun Goya, the owner of the resort mentioned during the interview that,

“The origin is from learning from our mistakes. One of our neighbours complained about our waste management and we discovered that one of our staff had decided to dump and burn non-biodegradable waste on our land; however, it affected and upset our neighbours and community. After personally seeing what we were doing, we started researching and learning how to better waste manage to firstly minimize waste and then how to dispose of it in the way to best preserve our environment and that of the greater community. After this start point we naturally evolved into learning and practicing in the areas of Energy Consumption and Wildlife and Nature Preservation. One of the things I am really happy about is that area where the rubbish was originally burnt was converted into a fertilizer house that is part of our Organic Garden today” (The Tongsai Bay, 2016).

It is seen from the findings that it would be impossible for an organisation, including a hospitality firm to apply reasonableness and self-immunity principles without knowledge. This is because analytical skills, experiences and rational decisions, which are the basic components of knowledge are typically required for making business decisions.

Morality. The concept of SE leads individuals to conduct their lives in the middle path, while enforcing the conditions that they need to be honest, harmless, generous, and perseverant. (NESDB, 2003). Applying the idea to the business sector, morality is one important condition helping the organisation to seek sustainability. Morality can be embedded not only within organizations but the society as a whole. This is because morality would benefit social capital. More importantly, morality helps enable both economic and non-economic aspects (Mongsawad, 2010). For example, as Thai society has been facing



corruption in various institutional units for a long time (Warsta, 2004); thus, morality might help lift up of people's spirit. Even though being ethical may not directly result in creating organisation's economic values, the ethical norms help create trust and confidence of business behaviours through the customer's eyes. Arguably, the acceptable business behaviours will lead to positive impacts for an organisation. Without morality, business cannot operate sustainably. Below message was extracted from TripAdvisor reflecting what customer thinks of a hotel that morally conducts their business;

"Rain Forest Resort is developing its own farm to grow pesticide free crops and herbs, raise wild boar, chickens, rabbits, compost and recycle materials from the resort (including food wastes, cooking oils, and wood), and demonstrate sustainable farming and conservation measures to farmers. Ken, the resort owner, is head of the district tourism association and gives frequent talks and lectures at local schools and universities. He is a strong advocate for "The Kings Project" methods of self-sufficiency and environmental health. They even produce their own herb based body wash and shampoo and it is wonderful" (TripAdvisor, 2012).

Once the moral fibre of an organisation is strengthened, it is argued that business will sustainably grow in the long run. As stated by Kantabutra (2014), the moral commitment could enhance; brand reputation, customer's satisfaction, and company's values.

6. Conclusion

In this study, the philosophy of SE was found to create positive impacts on the development of hospitality businesses in Thailand. The evidence was gathered from secondary data utilising documentary analysis method. The findings revealed that the hospitality establishments in the country have increasingly adopted the concept of SE as parts of their business conducts. The middle path approach or balanced way of living was also found to be related with the hospitality sector. Evidently, several hotels have tried to moderate their businesses considering more on the multidimensional aspects of SE: moderation, reasonableness, self-immunity, knowledge, and morality.

Regarding the study implication, this study demonstrates that the philosophy of SE can be adopted to the hospitality sector. Apart from CSR, which is a Western concept of sustainability, the concept of SE could be extensively developed and become an integral part of the hospitality business administration not only in Thailand, but other Eastern countries in the future.

There are limitations associated with this exploratory study. Firstly, the results of this research were primarily analysed using online documentations. Some documents that might only be available in hard-copies were not included. Secondly, the hospitality operators included in this study were only filtered only for the hotel sector. Other types of hospitality establishment could be extensively studied if they practically adopt the ideas of SE as a part of their products or services development. Finally, this study draws conclusion only based on the perspectives of hospitality operators and responsible tourism organisations. Further study should be conducted concerning the influence of the SE philosophy adopted by hospitality establishments toward customers, employees and local communities, who are directly involved with the implementation of the ideas.

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