

ABSTRACT

Globally, the provision of tourist accommodation is dominated by family run businesses (Getz and Carlsen, 2005). Family businesses in the tourism and hospitality industry are significant in terms of numbers and economic value. The visions and goals of the owners are different from those of other entrepreneurs in the tourism and hospitality industry (Carland, Hoy, Boulton and Carland, 1984). However, scant academic research on family run hotels has been published.

Since 1980 service quality has been a significant issue within tourism and hospitality, following the pattern set by the manufacturing industries (Johns, 1996). Hayes, Ninemeier and Miller (2011) argued that service quality is an important factor in customers' perceived experience of hotel operations; thus a better understanding of customer expectations within tourism and hospitality is potentially valuable for both practitioners and researchers. This is particularly true in Thailand where tourism is a primary source of national income.

Therefore, the overall aim of this research project is to develop a quality assurance model enabling Thai family run hotels to identify strengths and opportunities to improve their practices aligned with their motivations. Phase One of the research critically appraised the visions and goals of Chiangmai family run hotels. Phase Two examined the business environment of these hotels in terms of the implementation of quality assurance principles. In order to ascertain their customer expectations, Phase Three comprised of administering a modified SERVQUAL questionnaire to their international guests.

The results to the first phase revealed that family run businesses dominate the hotel sector in Chiangmai. These enterprises are motivated by three factors: lifestyle, concern for their descendants and keeping the business modest. Phase Two data

identified a low level of quality assurance engagement in these family run hotels. Based on their own perceptions of the quality required, these hotel operators employ an inside-out approach; they design and communicate service specification via social media without investigating customer expectations. The findings from Phase Three showed that the dimension of “Competitiveness” is the most important. The thesis findings enabled the researcher to develop a generic model of quality assurance for family run hotels contributing to the body of knowledge.