

Abstract

Title Patterns of Marketing Potential Development for Health Tourism: Case Study of Spa Business in Nakhonratchasima Province

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This research aimed to 1) investigate the potential and limitations of health tourism - spa business, 2) suggest patterns of marketing potential development for health tourism - spa business, and 3) provide policy recommendation of health tourism - spa business.

In terms of research methodology, the population of this study consisted of 3 groups: 1) 3 types of the health tourism entrepreneurs: health spa, massage for health and massage spa beauty, 2) the government officials involving in supporting and developing health tourism – spa business selected by purposive sampling of at least 10 personals, and 3) the spa tourists selected by quota sampling consisting of 400 Thai and foreign tourists. The data collection was done through Participatory Action Research: PAR, quantitative and qualitative research. Data analysis tools included Frequency, Percentage, Mean, and Standard Deviation, Chi-square, One-Way ANOVAs, and Scheffe.

The results showed that the number of spa businesses in Nakhonratchasima increased and tended to have more popularity and competition. According to SWOT analysis, it revealed that: Strength – The staff have experience and expertise in massaging and places of business met the required standard and was certified by the Ministry of Public Health. Weakness – The businesses lacked of public relations and in some seasons they experienced staff shortage. Opportunity – The location of Nakhonratchasima was a doorway to the Northeastern region, having a big area and many tourist attractions. Threats – There were no clear measures of law enforcement to deal with illegal spa business and the lack of government support resulting in having unclear business direction.

Patterns of marketing potential development for health tourism – spa business were the supports for the entrepreneurs to efficiently practice Service Marketing Strategy (8Ps), the creation of uniqueness by presenting the local identity, and the study of customer behavior in order to maximize their satisfaction.

The policy recommendation for health tourism – spa businesses was the formation of cooperation between related units such as educational institutions, the Provincial Office of Tourism and Sports, Tourism Authority of Thailand, Provincial Health Office, and Department of Local Administration. In addition, the entrepreneurs had to participate in the policy formulation and earnestly support the development of these businesses.

Keywords: Marketing Potential, Health Tourism, Spa Business, Health Spa, Massage for Health, Massage spa beauty