Sufficiency Economy for Sustainable Human Resource Development in Tourism Business

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The purpose of this paper is to suggest the concept of sufficiency economy philosophy to be used in tourism business, especially in human resource development (HRD). This paper covers the analysis and synthesis from literature review, the meaning of sufficiency economy philosophy, sustainable development and human resource. The result has shown that the sufficiency economy philosophy is a measure of well-being (Nothing can be developed sustainably like HRD. Tourism business is a service product that depends on human resources). That is the reason why the sufficiency economy philosophy should be implemented for sustainable HRD in tourism business.

Keywords: sufficiency economy, sustainable, human resource development (HRD), tourism business

Introduction

The “sufficiency economy” is a new philosophy that was introduced by His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand who can be considered to act as a source of human resource development (HRD) for all Thai people. The sufficiency economy can be used anywhere and anytime. Dr. Jamnean Joungtrakul claimed that: “Nothing can be developed sustainably like human resource development”. HRD is represented as one approach to strategic planning, which has an effect on the organization. Every meaning depends upon others. This study focused on HRD’s role and the sufficiency economy philosophy being adapted to an organization.

From the National Social and Economic Development Plan No. 11, which applied the economy philosophy and people-centered development to develop a plan for tourism development holistically, the National Tourism Development Plan of 2012-2015 was launched for preventing and dealing with some side effects of tourism, and its strategic plan comprised of five areas which are as follows: (1) the development of infrastructures and facilities for tourism such as logistics, tourism facilities, tourism hubs and networks; (2) the development of sustainable tourist attractions through three main parts: quality, regeneration, and standard improvement; (3) the development of products and services, and supported factors for tourism through creative activities, value-added tourism, product and service standards, security, and personnel skills; (4) the development of confidence and tourism support through re-branding and publishing, and development of tourism marketing support; and (5) the development of participation of the public and local sectors in the management of tourism resources (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 2015).

It is obvious that the plan is related to people which are key resource in the service industry, especially

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business travelers who need tour guides. The majority of Thai and the world revenues were from the service industry (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011). It could be stated that the revenue from the tourism is a national economic indicator which can forecast any phenomena in any periods of time such as national growth, the cost of living, and industrial condition (Keawjunkarn, 2006). Service product was one of the service industries, which influenced both positively and negatively on the growth of GDP (Gross Domestic Product), employment, export and tax increase. More than that, a large amount of money from tourism business could lead to investment and the development of various facilities.

Economics was concerned with the management of limited resources for the best results to meet the unlimited needs of human (Wirunsiri Chaima, 2012). Service was products that users required to take themselves to the attractions to get self satisfaction (Rakpong Wongsaroj, 2015). So, every chance of selection was another chance for other resources to be chosen, and the opportunity cost would be the result of the selection (Tatirangsansuk, 2009). The management or allocation of the resources should be used for the best result. It means that the resources must be used for sustainability and enough needs, not for using it out.

To ensure maximum benefit and value, the development for sustainability should be considered in these three factors which were stable economy, well-being society, and management. If the resource is not over used, it must be sufficient in resource allocation and must be managed in order to achieve sustainable resource use throughout the development. Sustainability is composed of three parts: an economic development which requires stable development, the social well-being, and non-polluted environment (Strange & Bayley, 2008).

**Research Objectives/Methodology**

The objective and methodology of this research were analyzed and synthesized from the related literature. The literature was in an area of sufficiency economy, sustainable, human resource development, and tourism business.

**Results**

**Sufficiency Economy Philosophy**

What was sufficiency economy? The “sufficiency economy” was a philosophy which stressed the importance of economic life, known as the middle path, which consists of three factors: (1) economic life, which was important. We must keep in mind every time when we think, talk, do, and assess ourselves. It could be starting from the level of family, then, community, and nation, respectively, for development and administration so as to modernize in line with the forces of globalization. Sufficiency meant moderation; (2) reasonableness; and (3) the need of self-immunity for sufficient protection from the impacts arising from both internal and external changes. To achieve this, an application of knowledge due to consideration and prudence was essential. In particular, the great care was needed for utilization of those theories and methodologies in planning and implementation on every step. At the same time, it was essential to strengthen the morality of the nation, so that everyone, particularly public officials, academics, businessmen at all levels, adheres first and foremost to the principles of honesty and integrity. In addition, a way of life based on patience, perseverance, exertion, wisdom, and prudence was indispensable to create balance and be able to cope appropriately with critical challenges arising from extensive and rapid socioeconomic, environmental, and cultural changes in the world (unofficial translation of working definitions compiled from remarks delivered by His Majesty the King on various occasions).
Sufficiency is moving forward and its objective is to change the way human think and practice on development. Sustainable development was a gradual process, which proceeds by stages and was driven largely, but not exclusively, by internal dynamics. There are three main principles in assessing opportunities and taking a decision.

A sufficiency economy was an approach to life and conduct which was applicable at every level from individuals to families, and communities in the management and development of the nation. Economists believed that the change in institutional structures would solve the problems, occurred when working with the people, from the families in the communities.

The sufficiency economy used the middle path, especially in developing the economy. It had three important contents that were moderation, reasonableness, and self-immunity. Besides, these three contents and two other conditions were making the principle of knowledge and integrity. What do these three contents and two conditions mean?

Moderation was nearly linked to the idea of sufficiency (UNDP, 2007). Reasonableness meant both evaluating the reasons for any actions and understanding its full consequences which were not only on oneself, but on others, the society, and the environment; and not only in the short-term, but the long-term also (UNDP, 2007). Self-immunity meant having built-in resilience and the ability to withstand shocks, to adjust to external change, and to cope with events that were unpredictable or uncontrollable (UNDP, 2007). Besides these three components, it had two conditions; knowledge meant something close to wisdom or wise, and integrity meant not only merit, ethical behavior, honesty, and straightforwardness, but also endurance (UNDP, 2007).

![Figure 1](image_url). The principle of sufficiency economy. Source: UNDP (2007).

**Sufficiency economy in the organization.** Figure 1 above would describe the process and method of an organization which had applied the philosophy.
Sustainable

When we talk about sustainable we mean that there were three areas for considering to create sustainability, which are economy, society, and environment, for tourism business and also another three factors for succeeding which are quality, continuance, and balance: (1) quality; it is related to the experience of tourists, the quality of life of the community, and the environment; (2) continuation; it is related to the use of tourism resources and cultures; and (3) balance; it is related to the stakeholders and their commitments (Sustainable Tourism Development, 2015). From the definitions, we could conclude that sustainable tourism is about creating sustainability to economy, society, and environment for its quality, continuance, and balance of tourism in both the present and the future.

![Sustainable Tourism Diagram]

Figure 2. Sustainable tourism. Source: Adapted from the meaning and components of sustainable tourism.

HRD

HRD covers any process or activity that, either initially or over the long term, has a potential to develop work-based knowledge, expertise, productivity, and satisfaction, whether for the sake of personal or group/team gain, or for the benefit of an organization, community, nation, or ultimately, the whole of humanity (McLean, 2001).

HRD is a process of developing and unleashing human expertise through organization development (OD), personnel training and development (T&D) for the purpose of improving performance (Swanson & Holton, 2001).

Like human development, the sufficiency economy places humanity at the centre, focuses on well-being rather than wealth, makes sustainability the very core of the thinking, understands the need for human security, and concentrates on building people’s capabilities to develop their potential (UNDP, 2007).

How to Measure Well-Being?

We can measure well-being using the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) in Thailand (see Table 1).
Table 1
MDG in Thailand

| MDG targets                                                                 | Scorecard                        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people living in extreme poverty | Already achieved                  |
| 2. Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger | Already achieved                  |
| 3. Ensure that by 2015, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling | Already achieved                  |
| 4. Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015 | Already achieved                  |
| 5. Reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate | Not applicable                    |
| 6. Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio | Not applicable                    |
| 7. Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS          | Already achieved, but with warning signs of resurgence |
| 8. Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria, tuberculosis, and other major diseases | Already achieved for malaria; potentially for tuberculosis |
| 9. Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the losses of environmental resources | Achieved                          |
| 10. Halve by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation | Already achieved                  |
| 11. By 2020 to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of slum dwellers | Likely                           |

Note. Source: UNDP (2007).

**Development.** The definition of “development”, the Royal Institute Dictionary, 1982, was “made to develop” while the word “development” represented “an evolution or the act of making something better”, in general, such as community development in order to meet the needs of most individuals or it could be said that “development is a process of moving from the unsatisfactory to satisfactory condition. It is a gradual process of something” (Royal Institute Dictionary, 1983).

**Tourism business.** Tourism business is subset of service industry, the competition for tourists’ impression and satisfaction was important. Tourism business increases income to people which means that it is sustainable in economy. The economy and the growing medium were not concentrated in one place. But all sectors had both common interests directly and indirectly, and inducing the sufficiency economy concept was a part of the tourism development because developing countries were a part of the economy. When tourism was a tool for developing the economy, the economy was sustainable. It is a need to start from tourism development to be sustainable as well because tourism was sustainable when people come to tour and spend. The economy was creating jobs with sustainability. A part of sufficiency economy philosophy for a healthy economy was to strengthen the economy with self-dependence, immunity, adaptability, economic stability, and the distribution of equal and fair development.

**Conclusions**

This paper shows that sufficiency economy can be applied for human resource development work especially in tourism business. Tourism business is the one of service industry which comes to first GDP in the world and Thailand. For the country, its main income right now is from the service sector. If we can follow sufficiency economy in HRD exactly, sustainable will appear in three areas of economic sustainable, social sustainable, and environmental sustainable. When humans fill sufficiency and understand sufficiency economy, they will work and proceed every system properly. Development will occur when human resource knows the concept. Sustainable HRD can develop tourism business to grow continuously.
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