

<b>Title</b>	Boutique Hotels in Chiangmai: Criteria and Image Management Reflecting Lanna Culture
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### ABSTRACT

The objectives of this study were to: 1) investigate, analyze, and determine criteria for classifying residence for tourism (boutique hotel); 2) assess and classify boutique hotels in Chiangmai; 3) explore process of image management of boutique hotels which reflect Lanna Culture in Chiangmai; and 4) propose a guideline for the management of image showing Lanna Culture of boutique hotels in Chiangmai.

The methodology adopted for this research was a mixed methodology of qualitative and quantitative research. Data collection was done through: 1) review of related literature; 2) in-depth interviews and questionnaires with entrepreneurs, academicians concerned personnel in tourism industry, and tourists; 3) observation on services of boutique hotels in Muang district, Chiangmai; and 4) small group discussion with entrepreneurs and academicians. Results of the study revealed the following:

The criteria used for classifying boutique hotels consisted of the following seven components: 1) services – focused on knowledge/understanding and skills of boutique hotels' employees; 2) design – unique and predominant architectural style; 3) convenience facilities – consistent with concepts and new experience of boutique hotels provided to guests; 4) price – based on quality of services and components; 5) location – in town or business centre and having a story; 6) size of boutique hotels – not more than 100 rooms; and 7) boutique hotel management system – only one owner and familiarity. All of these components could be used for the consideration on the presentation of Lanna Culture in order to determine the criteria for an assessment of boutique hotels in Chiangmai. This was based on the following five aspects: 1) design, architectural style, and stories of Lanna culture; 2) services, knowledge/understanding of boutique hotel's employees about Lanna culture which they could be transferred; 3) convenience

facilities, e.g. services on spa, local food, and activities showing Lanna lifestyle; 4) location which should be located in areas showing unique stories of Lanna culture; and 5) management system which executives closely monitored services showing Lanna culture and tradition.

Out of 233 hotels in Chiangmai, 44 hotels were in compliance with the criteria of boutique hotel. In this amount, 29 boutique hotels were assessed by the criteria of boutique hotel which reflect the Lanna culture.

The boutique hotels that have met the assessment had a clear presentation of Lanna culture. There was a process of image management as well as concept determination based on the need for the presentation of Lanna culture. Identity of these boutique hotels was determined, e.g. logo, architectural design, Lanna style decoration, structure design, creation of brand image, reputation of quality service, participation in hotel contest, and tourist recognition. All of the boutique hotels had an idea to develop its employees by in-house training. Due to a small number of employees, formal training could not be done so in-house training is an appropriate. Besides, public relations were done through the internet of hotels' web site. Some of the boutique hotels did some public relations by joining community activities, and taking on a supporting educational role by being a learning resource center.

Based on group discussion, a guideline for the image management and communication presenting Lanna Culture should begin with a clear unique design and architectural style that is related and conveying to Lanna. The place of the boutique hotels must have a historical story. The boutique hotels should have a library or a book corner presenting Lanna historical background and culture as well as spa services. The service staffs should demonstrate empathy and interest to the customers, and place the importance on nice services with great attention. Also, the front staff should always greet guests by saying "Sawasdee Chao" and be able to give information about Lanna culture and tradition. The boutique hotels should use web site (either agent or a hotel web site) as an advertisement channel; and the boutique hotels should perform public relations by means of local product purchasing and community or social activities participating. Lastly, the boutique hotels must constantly present themselves with concept of a Green Hotel.