



The Customer Satisfaction of Co-Working Space by Service Marketing Mix: A Case Study of Dummy Co-Working Space Provider at Nakhon Ratchasima Province, Thailand

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With the advent of the internet and virtual computing, co-working space has become a buzz word of our time. The objective of this study is to find out the parameters of customers' satisfaction of co-working spaces, using the service marketing mix model. The researchers set up a dummy co-working space in Nakhonratchasima (Korat), Thailand, to test consumer reactions firsthand. We followed the service marketing mix model and studied product perspective, price perspective, place perspective, promotion perspective, people perspective, physical evidence perspective and process perspective of a modern co-working space that follows the switch to the digital economy in which companies leverage new forms of employment and social structure. Merchants and consumers become more digital at the same time and new solutions for creative workspaces have to be conceptualised. The four hundred participants provided valuable insights into the needs and wants of customers and their level of customer satisfaction. It is hoped to replicate this study at other co-working spaces in Thailand and around the world.

Key words: *Co-working space, Service marketing mix, Digital economy*

Introduction

This paper discusses the co-working space in Thailand. A dummy co-working space was created in the city of Nakhon Ratchasima, also known as Korat. Due to developments in the information and communication age the concept of the workplace has changed. With mobile computing one can work anywhere, any time. Printers and fax machines in the early stages were still a requirement, as well as a fast-wired internet connection. Also, Skype eliminated a lot of business travel requirements and face to face meetings could take place online. For Skype, someone may have wanted not only a fast internet connection but an appealing professional background. While those early days still demanded a location outside one's home, such as a hotel like Sheraton (which was on the forefront of the alternate meeting place), the location was not yet called a workspace. At the same time Starbucks coffee shops took on a new meaning and the franchise grew not only across the USA but worldwide, providing a respectable meeting and co-working space with fast wifi. In addition, the coffee and refreshments generated revenue for the provider of the space, and additional services such as printing, copying, binding and mail services turned it into a one-stop service centre for business people and professionals alike. Our study looked at customer satisfaction with the components of the service marketing model that include:

- Product Perspective
- Price Perspective
- Place Perspective
- Promotion Perspective
- People Perspective
- Physical Evidence Perspective
- Process Perspective

Literature Review

The literature review looks at the various aspects of co-working spaces. This also provided a model for analysing the buying behaviour of workspace users and assisted us in the development of the research hypothesis. The co-working space literature can be analysed from a number of aspects, including the special and the business aspect. The special aspect is addressed by the body of literature in architecture and interior design. But before we analyse co-working space we look to the Finnish study by Inka Sankari and Nenonen, Suvi (2016), who created typologies for co-working spaces in Finland that became the frequently cited industry standard published in Facilities magazine (Sankari & Suvi, 2016). They defined six co-working



space typologies: public offices, third places, collaboration hubs, co-working hotels, incubators and shared studios. In their categorisation they distinguished between non-profit and for-profit business forms. They also categorised the co-working space based on privacy levels, from public to private rooms. In a way, co-working space can be looked at as collaborative consumption (Botsman & Rogers, 2011), and it is changing the way we work and live. It not only changes how we work but it also reclassifies work, according to Cappelli and Keller (2013). But it also has a sociological aspect, as described by Cremin (2003), who looked at self-starters, can-doers and mobile phones. Osnowitz (2010) describes the freelancing expertise of contract professionals in the new economy. Hot jobs in cool places sums up the co-working experience, according to Pratt (2002). Fost (2018) made an interesting point about professionals working on their own, yet side by side. This goes back to Spinuzzi (2012), who coined the phrase “working alone together”; he looked at coworking as an emergent collaborative activity. Gandi (2014) also looked at these creative labour and freelance networks that were made possible through the co-working spaces. Fuchs (2014) called them digital labour and focuses on the cultural-materialist perspective. Gill and Pratt (2008) refer to co-working spaces as social factories. For Grugulis and Stoyanova (2011), the co-working space became the missing middleman for communities of practice in a freelance labour market, while Johns and Gratton (2013) describe a third wave of virtual work. McRobbie (2004) named artists as pioneers of the new economy, and Moriset (2014) sees co-working spaces as the buildings and new places of the creative economy, which lead to competitive cities like London, New York and Berlin, according to Musterd and Murie (eds.) (2011). Pratt (2008) goes one step further on creative cities, when discussing the cultural industries and the creative class. There is also a body of literature that explores the design aspects of co-working spaces. Our article focuses on the marketing aspects of the co-working space and therefore refers to the four Ps of the marketing (product, price, place, promotion) model, (Kotler, 1972), which was expanded to the service marketing model to include the people perspective, the physical evidence perspective and the process perspective, according to Kotler, Philip and Lane Keller (2012).

Research Methods

The study is qualitative in nature as it tries to capture the co-working space users' perceptions of the co-working space based on various dimensions. But the research instrument developed by the primary investigator (PI) is a quantitative measurement. A paper-based survey instrument was developed by the PI and pre-tested following the ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies described by Decrop (2004). The visitors to the co-working space were

interviewed by the researchers and the results were captured with paper-based instruments in the form of a questionnaire.

Population

This study is limited to the local phenomena of the dummy co-working space in Nakhonrachsamia. As other co-working spaces in Thailand, in particular the Bangkok metropolitan area, are very similar, it is hoped that generalisations can be made from this study. The dummy co-working space was designed in a way that it represents the actual co-working environment that is typically found by customers in Thailand.

Sample

The study focused on the dummy Nakhonrachsasima co-working space and the survey was conducted during the week with no great variance in regards to the visitors on Saturdays and Sundays, except that on weekends students also use the co-working space to study. They were not the focus of the study and therefore were not included. The majority of the visitors were female (51.5%) and under 30 years old with an undergraduate university education or below. The sample size is 400 participants, the sample was a random convenience sample and the sample demographics represent the demographics of co-working space visitor population in Thailand.

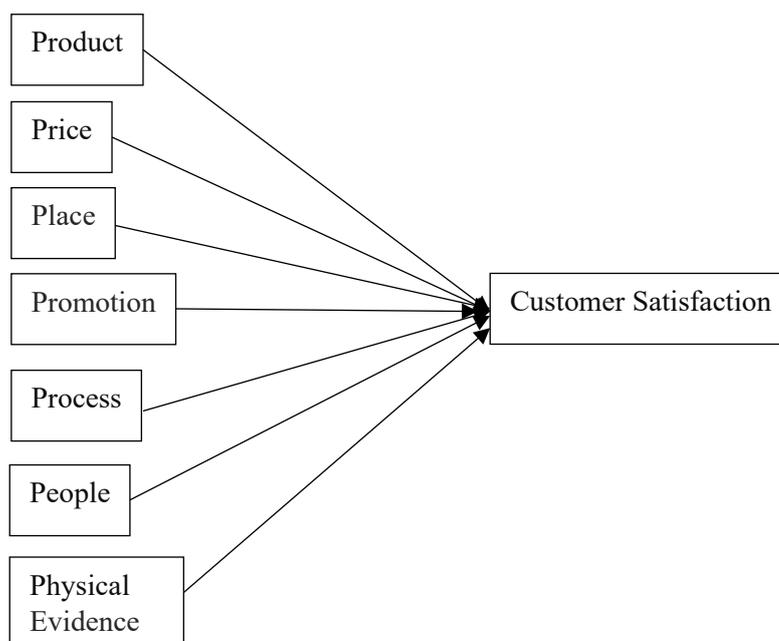


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

Research Findings

Table 1. Demographics

Participants Co-Working Space Study	Respondents (Count)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	194	48.5
Female	206	51.5
TOTAL	400	100%
Age		
<20 years	69	17.2
21-30 years	296	74.0
31-40 years	31	7.8
41-50 years	4	1.0
>51 years	0	0.0
TOTAL	400	100%

The majority of the participants in the study were employed and earned fewer than 1,200 USD per month. The vast majority came from Korat and the surrounding area of Korat, with some visitors from Bangkok and other parts of Thailand also represented, but no foreign tourists were surveyed. The sample surveyed both first-time visitors as well as frequent visitors to this co-working space.

Table 2. Demographics

Participants Co-Working Space Study	Respondents (Count)	Percentage (%)
Income (Monthly)		
<600 USD	149	37.2
601-1,200 USD	180	45
1,201-1,800 USD	41	10.2
1,801-2,400 USD	23	5.8

>2,401 USD	7	1.7
TOTAL	400	100%
Education level		
Lower than bachelor degree	17	4.2
Bachelor degree	334	83.5
Masters degree	41	10.2
Doctor degree	8	2.0
TOTAL	400	100%

The research findings can be grouped into the following broad categories: Product Perspective, Price Perspective, Place Perspective, Promotion Perspective, People Perspective, Physical Evidence Perspective and Process Perspective, as per the research hypothesis and research instrument. The data was summarised in the following tables and their findings were briefly explained in the research context. The results include both mean and standard deviation (SD) as well as correlation coefficients for the relationship between customer satisfaction and:

- Product Perspective
- Price Perspective
- Place Perspective
- Promotion Perspective
- People Perspective
- Physical Evidence Perspective
- Process Perspective

Product Matching Perspective

Table 3 shows that the respondent with a mean of 3.99 and an SD of 1.67 agreed with the coffee and drink assortment offered in the co-working space. This question was followed by the bakery items available for consumption in the co-working space (mean 3.87 and SD 2.14) and the taste of the food on sale (mean 3.84 and SD 0.71). The variety of drinks and food available for sale ranked slightly lower with a mean of 3.83 and SD 0.72. The consumer found that the packing was beautiful with a mean of 3.80 and SD 0.73. The lowest ranked was the number of seats available with a mean of 3.78 and SD 0.72. Overall, the participants of the study agreed that the products match the needs of the customers (mean 3.85 and SD 1.11).

Table 3. Product matching perspective

Variable	Mean	S.D.	Results
Product			
1. Coffee and drink assortment	3.99	1.67	Agreed
2. Bakery items	3.87	2.14	Agreed
3. Food taste	3.84	0.71	Agreed
4. Variety of drinks and food	3.83	0.72	Agreed
5. The packaging is beautiful	3.80	0.73	Agreed
6. The number of seats is sufficient	3.78	0.72	Agreed
Average	3.85	1.11	Agreed

Price Perspective

In regard to the price perspective, shown in Table 4, the respondents found that the price was according to the packaging of the food and drinks offered (mean 3.62 and SD 0.73). The buyers also found that the prices were clearly marked on the packing of the products (mean 3.61 and SD 0.71), and that the prices for food and beverages were reasonable when compared with the product offering (mean 3.46 and SD 0.75). Overall, the customers agreed with the prices being offered (Mean 3.56 and SD 0.73).

Table 4. Product price perspective

Variable	Mean	S.D.	Results
Price			
1. There is a price to choose according to the packaging	3.62	0.73	Agreed
2. Price tagging is clear	3.61	0.71	Agreed
3. Reasonable food and beverage prices	3.46	0.75	Agreed
Average	3.56	0.73	Agreed

Place Perspective

Table 5 shows the patrons of the co-working space agreed with the location of the co-working space in the community it serves (Mean 4.20 and SD 0.83). It was found that the location was easily reached by car and public transportation (Mean 4.03 and SD 0.92). The location provided a less hectic leisure environment (Mean 3.59 and SD 1.23). The participants also found that the signage of the co-working space stands out (Mean 3.54 and SD 1.26). Overall, the participants agreed with the choice of location for the co-working space with a Mean 3.84 and SD 1.06.

Location is very important for co-working spaces, as always in real-estate, it is location, location, location.

Table 5. Place perspective

Variable	Mean	S.D.	Results
Place			
1. Located in the community	4.20	0.86	Agreed
2. Easy to reach	4.03	0.92	Agreed
3. Leisure environmental location	3.59	1.23	Agreed
4. Shop signage stands out	3.54	1.26	Agreed
Average	3.84	1.06	Agreed

Promotion Perspective

Table 6 shows the participants found that word-of-mouth promotions and recommendations from the employees were most helpful in terms of promotions, with a mean of 3.23 and SD of 1.15. They also found that the co-working space offered a number of promotions on a regular basis (mean 2.73 and SD 1.08). The promotions through social applications received a mean of 2.22 and SD of 1.01, and the participants found them less useful than word of mouth from employees. This was one of the categories the customers were not very happy with and disagreed. In addition to this, the information received through traditional media (TV, radio, newspaper) did not totally meet the needs of the customers (mean 2.14 and SD 1.05). Overall however, the promotional activities of the co-working space were found sufficient for the customers, with an overall mean of 2.58 and an SD of 1.07, which was very low compared to the previous variables measured in the study.

Table 6. Promotion Perspective

Variable	Mean	S.D.	Results
Promotion			
1. Recommended promotions by employees	3.23	1.15	Agreed
2. There are regular promotions	2.73	1.08	Agreed
3. Promotion offers through social applications	2.22	1.01	Disagreed
4. Get information through the media	2.14	1.05	Disagreed
Average	2.58	1.07	Agreed

People Perspective

Table 7 shows the visitors of the co-working space agreed that the staff provided helpful information (mean 3.92 and SD 0.87). It was found that the staff was very efficient in assisting customers (mean 3.90 and SD 0.86). The location had sufficient security officers on staff (mean 3.83 and SD 0.86). The participants also found that the staff in the co-working space solved any problems quickly (mean 3.82 and SD 0.92). Overall, the participants agreed with the people/staff component of the co-working space service marketing mix with a mean of 3.86 and SD of 0.87.

Table 7. People perspective

Variable	Mean	S.D.	Results
People			
1. Staff provides helpful information	3.92	0.87	Agreed
2. Assistive staff efficiency	3.90	0.86	Agreed
3. Sufficient security officers	3.83	0.86	Agreed
4. Solved the problem quickly	3.82	0.92	Agreed
Average	3.86	0.87	Agreed

Physical Evidence Perspective

Table 8 shows the participants of the study agreed that the co-working space had enough CCTV cameras to cover the store (mean 4.16 and SD 0.74). It was also found that the fire escape signs could be easily located and were clearly readable (mean 4.15 and SD 0.77). The fire protection system also received high marks, with a mean of 4.14 and SD 0.78. The participants also found that the co-working space was clean (mean 4.13 and SD 0.78). The respondents also agreed with the available wifi offering (mean 4.14 and SD 0.76). Overall, the participants agreed with the physical evidence of the service marketing offering, with a mean of 4.14 and SD 0.76.

Table 8. Physical evidence perspective

Variable	Mean	S.D.	Results
Physical Evidence			
1. Has enough CCTV	4.16	0.74	Agreed
2. Clear fire escape signs	4.15	0.77	Agreed
3. Has fire protection system	4.14	0.78	Agreed
4. Cleanliness of the room	4.13	0.78	Agreed
5. The shop has WI-FI	4.14	0.76	Agreed
Average	4.14	0.76	Agreed

Process Perspective

Table 9 shows the customer of the dummy co-working space agreed with the operating hours of the store and found the opening and closing times appropriate (mean 3.81 and SD 0.72). They also felt that the payment process was accurate and fast (mean 3.81 and SD 0.87). The same held true for the ordering process, with a mean of 3.80 and SD 0.91. The participants also found that the co-working space owners were quick to solve any problems (mean 3.73 and SD 1.01). Overall, the respondents agreed with the existing business process and found it adequate, with a mean of 3.78 and SD 0.87.

Table 9. Process perspective

Variable	Mean	S.D.	Results
Process			
1.The opening and closing hours are appropriate	3.81	0.72	Agreed
2. Accurate and fast in payment process	3.81	0.87	Agreed
3. Accurate and quick in ordering	3.80	0.91	Agreed
4.Quick to solve problems	3.72	1.01	Agreed
Average	3.78	0.87	Agreed

Correlation Coefficient Analysis – Customer Satisfaction

We also performed a correlation coefficient analysis, which looked at the co-working space customer satisfaction factors, including the following:

- Product Perspective
- Price Perspective
- Place Perspective
- Promotion Perspective
- People Perspective
- Physical Evidence Perspective
- Process Perspective

Product Perspective

Table 10 shows the correlation coefficient for coffee and drinks offering and flavour was 0.215, followed by bakery items with 0.275 and taste of food perceived by the customers being 0.562, which was a very high correlation, while the number of products in terms of variety of food

and drinks reached 0.509. Fewer respondents found the packaging of the items for sale in the co-working space beautiful, with 0.479. But the important parameter was number of seats available, receiving 0.556, which means the participants found the seats sufficient in the co-working space.

Table 10. Product perspective correlation coefficient analysis

Parameters	Correlation Coefficient
Product perspective	
1. Coffee and drink assortment	0.215**
2. Bakery items	0.275**
3. Food taste	0.562**
4. Variety of drinks and food	0.509**
5. The packaging is beautiful	0.479**
6. The number of seats is sufficient	0.556**

Price Perspective

In Table 11, in regards to the price perspective, the participants found that the price was related to the packaging and that there were various price categories to choose from, with a correlation coefficient of 0.707. The prices were clearly marked on the packaging and the price tags were readable – this had a coefficient of 0.767. The consumers also found that the food and beverage prices were reasonable, with a coefficient of 0.685. The wifi offering of the co-working space also reached a high correlation coefficient with 0.728. Overall, the customers appeared to be very happy with the prices offered at the co-working space. This is may also be one reason for coming to the co-working space.

Table 11. Price perspective correlation coefficient analysis

Parameters	Correlation Coefficient
Price Perspective	
1. There is a price to choose according to the packaging	0.707**
2. Price tagging is clear	0.767**
3. Reasonable food and beverage prices	0.685**
5. The shop has the WI-FI offering	0.728**

Place Perspective

The place perspective is often misunderstood but in terms of the co-working space place, which means location, it is very important. Table 12 shows that there is a high correlation coefficient for the co-working space location in the community, at 0.664. The comfortable travel location

ranks lower, with 0.561, which correlates to the ease of reaching it by car and public transportation. But the leisure location of the co-working space ranked higher with 0.728 and the signage of the shop reached the highest correlation coefficient with 0.796. Again, this shows the importance of place for co-working spaces, where the same motto counts as for real-estate in general: location, location, location. This is important for local users as well as visitors who are looking for a co-working space.

Table 12. Place perspective correlation coefficient analysis

Parameters	Correlation Coefficient
Place Perspective	
1. Located in the community	0.664**
2. Comfortable travel location	0.561**
3. Leisure environmental location	0.728**
4. The shop sign is outstanding	0.796**

Promotion Perspective

Table 13 shows the correlation coefficients for promotions and customer satisfaction are somewhat in contradiction to the mean rankings. Promotions recommended by employees received a correlation coefficient of 0.738. A similarly high correlation coefficient of 0.740 is for the availability of regular promotions. Even higher are the promotions offered through social media, which weigh in with a slightly higher correlation coefficient of 0.763. The promotion through traditional media like newspaper, radio and TV reached only a correlation coefficient of 0.737.

Table 13. Promotion perspective correlation coefficient analysis

Parameters	Correlation Coefficient
Promotion Perspective	
1. Recommended promotions by employees	0.738**
2. There are regular promotions	0.740**
3. Promotion offers through social applications	0.763**
4. Get information through the media	0.737**

People Perspective

Table 14 shows people are probably the most important component in the service marketing mix, and the most difficult to manage, as the correlation coefficient for this parameter shows. People interact with people and have good and bad days and different personalities get along better with each other. The respondents found that the staff provided complete information and

this parameter reached a correlation coefficient of 0.561. Higher was the correlation coefficient for efficiency in assistance through the staff, which was 0.728. The security staff received a coefficient of 0.562. And the feedback on the staff and management solving problems quickly received a correlation coefficient of 0.509. Overall, the people coefficients are rather low in comparison to the other coefficients received.

Table 14. People perspective correlation coefficient analysis

Parameters	Correlation Coefficient
People Perspective	
1. Staff provide complete information	0.561**
2. Assistive staff efficiency	0.728**
3. Has enough security staff	0.562**
4. Solved the problem quickly	0.509**

Physical Evidence Perspective

Table 15 shows services are an intangible product but have a tangible side in the physical evidence. One of the things that can be seen and counted in the co-working space are the number of CCTV screens; the respondents gave it a relatively high correlation coefficient of 0.664. Clear fire escape signs are another interesting physical evidence, which came in at 0.561. And the fire protection system, which may mean fire extinguishers and sprinkler heads on the ceiling, reached a correlation coefficient of 0.509. The cleanliness of the co-working space had a lower correlation coefficient of 0.479 and the wi-fi offering of the shop reached a correlation coefficient of 0.728. The respondents looked at the physical evidence in the co-working space: the question may be, did they look at the right tangible items or were they just looking for something?

Table 15. Physical evidence perspective correlation coefficient analysis

Parameters	Correlation Coefficient
Physical Evidence Perspective	
1. Has enough CCTV	0.664**
2. Clear fire escape signs	0.561**
3. Has fire protection system	0.509**
4. Cleanliness of the room	0.479**
5. The shop has WI-FI offering	0.728**

Process Perspective

Table 16 shows the process may be the least understood component of the service marketing mix of co-working space, as in the case of the dummy labouratory environment set-up. People are not sure what is going on behind the scenes and focus more on the tangible products like food and drinks. The store hours received high correlation coefficient with 0.664, which means the store hours aligned with the working hours of the clients. They also considered the accurate and fast payment system in the store, which ranked 0.561, while the ordering system ranked a little lower with 0.509 and the problem solving of the owner received a correlation coefficient of 0.479.

Table 16. Process perspective correlation coefficient analysis

Parameters	Correlation Coefficient
Process Perspective	
1. The opening and closing hours are appropriate	0.664**
2. Accurate and fast in payment process	0.561**
3. Accurate and quick in ordering	0.509**
4. Quick to solve problems	0.479**

Conclusions

In conclusion, we can see that the users of the dummy co-working space in Nakhonrachasima are very happy with the products and services offered in this newly developed space. This research project focused on the customer satisfaction within the co-working space in Nakhonrachasima. It contained various parameters ranging from the actual location and space, to the furnishings and food and drinks for sale, as well the customer service aspect, which were all included in the service marketing mix. The service marketing mix included:

- Product Perspective
- Price Perspective
- Place Perspective
- Promotion Perspective
- People Perspective
- Physical Evidence Perspective
- Process Perspective

Under product we discussed the various food and beverage items for sale, their price, packaging, and taste and product variety. The number of seats also appeared to be sufficient



from the participant's standpoint and the prices appeared to be reasonable, with the price structure according to packaging and clearly labelled. Place is the most important factor in the co-working space industry. Place refers both to the location of the co-working space as well as the actual co-working interior. The participants found that the Nakonrachasima mock space was conveniently located and could be easily reached by car and public transportation. The customers were also happy with the leisure environment. They also noted that the store was easy to find due to the outstanding exterior signage. In terms of promotions, the word of mouth by employees was the best way to promote the products and services of the store, followed by promotional pricing, which was regularly available. The promotions offered through social applications were found less satisfactory, as well as promotion through traditional media like newspaper, radio and TV.

In the service industry such as the co-working space, the most important component of the service marketing mix model are people, as the services are provided through people and people are the variable that are the hardest to control. Employees, like customers, have emotions and good and bad days, and if both parties have a bad day at the same time the situation can become explosive. In our study, the staff was found to provide helpful and correct information. The staff were very efficient and assisted customers and solved their problems quickly. The interesting was the security concern; the respondents felt that adequate security staff was on hand, maybe because of the recent shopping centre shooting in Terminal 21, where thirty people were killed. Services by their very nature are intangible but they may have some physical evidence components. The physical evidences quoted by the participants included enough CCTV, which again reflects security concerns. One also has to remember that the majority of the participants were female, who may have an increased need for security. Another security and safety issue was clearly marked fire escapes with proper signage, followed by the existence of a fire protection system in the form of fire extinguishers and a sprinkler system.

The customers were also happy with the existing WIFI connection in the store. Physical evidence for customer satisfaction included the cleanliness of the co-working space and its rest rooms. However, the customers' least understood component of the service marketing mix is the process. The process includes the operating hours, which the customers were happy with: they found the opening and closing times reasonable. The customers also felt that the ordering process was accurate and quick, the staff got the right order to the correct customer. And, the payment process was accurate and fast, with various ways to pay. Clients also felt that the owners of the co-working place were quick to solve problems and keep the customers happy. Overall, the study has created good design guidelines for co-working spaces in Thailand, both



inside and outside of Bangkok, and for both profit and non-profit organisations. The digital revolution is happening, and often faster in Asia than in the Western World, as generations of IT are skipped and consumers become increasingly mobile in their lifestyles. The use of mobile phones and social media in Asia is higher than in the USA. People use their phones to pay, order food, shop online and even grab a taxi. At the same time merchants are becoming more digital and accept digital orders and payment forms. Companies leveraging technology; from this, new forms of employment are created that can be done from home or from a co-working space. The digital shift is going to continue and customer needs and wants are going to change in the digital economy and the digital workspace: co-working spaces of the future will offer more than food and beverages and printers and copiers. The conceptualisation is just beginning and one has to dream big to stay on top of the industry: innovation may well come out of the traditional roots of the various types of co-working space.

Recommendations

It is recommended to follow up this study over time with a larger sample over more co-working spaces. It would also be interesting to apply the same instruments to the other co-working spaces outside of Nakhornrachsasima, in Bangkok and surrounding areas as well as Chiangmai, Pattaya and Phuket. Another recommendation is to replicate this study with foreign tourists and expats, who may be grouped by country, to see how their impressions might vary from those of the Thai participants in this study. We may also expand the scope of the study and focus on different aspects of co-working space in Korat.



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