



Sufficiency Economy philosophy and Practical Application of Residents in Dusit District, Bangkok

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to study and compare a livelihood of 400 residents, in Bangkok, living on the Sufficiency Economy philosophy. The research instrument comprised questionnaires classified by general information and the data gained was analyzed by a data processing method so as to gain a result of statistical values including percentage, average, standard deviation, t-test and one way analysis of variance (One Way ANOVA). The results of the study were as follows: 1) the residents living in Bangkok were mainly aged between 31-40 years old with their education level of secondary school/vocational school or equivalent, average income/month of Baht 10,001-20,000 and working as civil servants. 2) An overview of their livelihood on the sufficiency economy philosophy in 4 aspects is at a high level; ranking in order as ethics, knowledge, moderation, reasonableness and good self-immunity respectively. 3) Both male and female residents have lived on their different knowledge backgrounds of the Sufficiency Economy philosophy and the data indicates statistical significance at a 0.5 level and the females' knowledge on the Sufficiency Economy philosophy is generally higher. 4) At least one couple of the residents at the different ages have a different knowledge and understanding on the Sufficiency Economy philosophy with statistical significance at 0.5 level and the knowledge of the residents at ages between 41-50 years old is higher than those at the lower age/or equivalent to 30 and 31-40 years old. 5) In terms of reasonableness and knowledge, the residents earning different monthly incomes amount, at to at least one couple, living differently thus showing a statistical significance at 0.5 level and the value of those earning 10,001-20,000 Baht/month is lower than other groups, classified by income range. 6) In terms of knowledge on the Sufficiency Economy philosophy, those with different occupation, and at least one couple, reflect their different level of statistical significance at 0.5 and those in entrepreneurship roles have more knowledge than those in state enterprises/private sectors of employment. The impact of materialism and a consumerist mindset invariably impacts negatively in aspects such as tourism and hospitality.

Keywords: Sufficiency Economy philosophy, practical application, Bangkok.

Introduction

Sufficiency Economy is a philosophy stressing the importance of adopting the middle path in life tending towards a frugal existence and moderation. It is the recommended Thai guideline of living practices for residents, on a middle path and at all levels of the social strata. People are urged to live with moderation and readiness to forge a built-in resilience against the risks which arise from internal and external changes within a global environment. Knowledge, caution and awareness are required for planning and implementing a strategy at every stage. The sufficiency economy is sustainable and balances the living of residents by developing them to be able to cope appropriately with the many challenges posed by globalization in which there is a high competitiveness and consumerist drive for materialism.



Thailand has determined the 20-year National Strategy (B.E 2561-2580) for driving its stability, prosperity and sustainability as a developed country through launching development based on the Sufficiency Economy philosophy. Due to changes in population structure in which the proportion of working and youth numbers is continually lower than elders' and will ultimately cause a negative impact against Thailand's development. This flies in the face of the vision of "to become the developed country based on the Sufficiency Economy philosophy with stability, prosperity and sustainability" with the national motto of "Stability, Prosperity and Sustainability". Furthermore, according to the principle of the 12th National Economic and Social Development Plan (B.E 2560-2564), the Sufficiency Economy philosophy places an importance on people as a focal point of development under the vision of the 20-year national strategy and goal of Thailand's future in the year of 2579 (B.E). This requires an effective economic and social system in which people live with enhanced intelligence, and economic growth minimizing inequality whereas increasing productivity is vital by applying wisdom and innovation. It also focuses on driving a practical application to be seriously effective within 5 years and further built upon for long-term sustainability and ultimate successful growth.

In the Sufficiency Economy system, people can carry on their occupations sustainably and spend their earned income sufficiently on an economical basis and without getting into debt. In cases where income is not spent, it should be partly maintained as savings and partly portioned out to others or spent for their additional requisites. The reason why the sufficiency economy concept has been widely recognized is the peoples way of living under the current capitalistic dispensation which has caused them to face problems due to inadequate incomes affected by their dissipation through spending on unnecessary items inter alia diversified self-entertaining methods, beauty, in-trend dressing, gambling or games. Once stuck in a bad state of negative equilibrium, an individual invariably needs to acquire more loans to finance their excesses in expenditure and they finally become trapped under an inevitable negative downward spiraling cycle unless they adapt the way they live and become thrifty and careful in what they spend their hard earned incomes on.

Tourism as vehicle for economic growth alongside the Sufficiency Economy system

The tourism industry is the world largest and most varied business sector because it is a chief source for generating revenue, employment, private sector growth, and much needed infrastructure development. When tourism is developed it kindles growth in industry, and correspondingly activates general economic growth (Lee and Chang, 2008), thus giving people more spending power. The Thai economy and the economic growth of the nation and citizens depends profoundly on the performance of tourism as an industrial sector. Tourism accounts for millions of job and a considerable portion of export earnings, and a wide range of other industries are directly or indirectly interdependent upon it. Tourism can thus inspire overall economic growth and this is why the Thai government should pay more attention to it in tandem with the Sufficiency Economy philosophy. Tourism can undoubtedly expand economic growth.

Tourism in Thailand is drawing in great opportunities such as growing jobs, a developing medical field and cultural awareness. However, there are some points of contention with prostitution, the waste problem and an increasing awareness of the marginalized in Thai society. Curbing environmental problems and working toward a more equal society will create a stronger Thailand and, ultimately, a stronger world. (Komen, 2018)

By 2028, Travel and Tourism is predicted to support 8,572,000 jobs totaling some 22.3% of total employment. This represents an increase of 3.4% pa over the period (TRAVEL & TOURISM



ECONOMIC IMPACT, 2018). Visitor exports are also a key component of the direct contribution of Travel and Tourism. In 2017, Thailand produced THB2,027.2bn in visitor exports. In 2018, this is expected to grow by at least 8.9%, and the country is expected to attract a whopping 37,654,000 international tourist arrivals. Enhancing economic growth by endorsing the tourism industry is thus a very important economic development strategy in Thailand and elsewhere (Chen and Chiou-Wei, 2009).

Objectives

1. To study the residents' way of living on the Sufficiency Economy philosophy in Dusit District, Bangkok.
2. To compare the abovementioned residents' way of living classified by general information.

Research Methodology

This research was conducted in a form of survey research among 95,852 residents living in Dusit District, Bangkok. The sample size of this research was calculated by the Taro Yamane formula (Taro Yamane, 1970) at a significance level of 0.05 resulting in 400 respondents as the required sample size. A cluster random sampling approach was undertaken with the research variable - independent variable; general information such as gender, age, educational level, monthly income and occupation, and the dependent variable - the way of living on the Sufficiency Economy philosophy.

The research instrument applied for this study was a questionnaire consisting of 2 parts as follows:

Part 1: General Information – gender, age, educational level, monthly income and occupation which was in a form of check-list questionnaire, totaling 5 items.

Part 2 : The way of living on the Sufficiency Economy philosophy – in a form of a 5-rating-scale questionnaire as per Likert' s scale, totaling 25 items.

The quality control for the research instrument focused on content validity assessed by 3 specialists and reliability through trying-out towards the group of 30 residents having similar qualifications to the sample group and the confidence level equals to .9862.

The analysis was undertaken via data processing and was divided as follows:

1. Descriptive Statistics: to explain the respondents' general information by using the statistics of frequency and percentage, whereas for the analysis of living on the Sufficiency Economy philosophy, mean and standard deviation were applied.

2. Inferential Statistics for Hypothesis Testing: The comparison between 2 sample groups of respondents living on the Sufficiency Economy philosophy was made to analyze the difference of average value between two sampling groups by an independent t-test and also the difference of average value between 2 groups by one way analysis variance (One Way ANOVA). In the event of the differences between the sample groups appearing after analysis, the Least Significant Difference (LSD) was applied for pairwise comparison.



Results

The research findings revealed that

1. The respondents, in Dusit District, Bangkok, were mostly females, aged between 31-40 years old with their educational level in secondary school/high vocational school, an average monthly income of Baht 10,001-20,000 and in the occupation of general labourers.
2. An overview of living on the Sufficiency Economy philosophy in 4 aspects was at a high level, ranking in order as ethics, knowledge, moderation, reasonableness and proper self-immunity, respectively as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Moving average and SD values of living on the Sufficiency Economy philosophy in knowledge aspect and overview.

Living on the Sufficiency Economy philosophy	Practical Level		
	\bar{x}	SD.	Result
1. Moderation	4.20	.606	high
2. Reasonableness	4.19	.572	high
3. Proper Self-Immunity	4.19	.582	high
4. Knowledge	4.25	.616	high
5. Ethics	4.26	.579	high
Overview	4.22	.490	high

3. In term of knowledge aspects of male and female respondents' way of living on the Sufficiency Economy philosophy, the comparing results revealed the difference of knowledge at the statistically significant level of 0.5 and female ones' were higher as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Comparison of respondents' living on the Sufficiency Economy philosophy classified by gender

Living on the Sufficiency Economy philosophy	Gender	\bar{x}	S.D.	t	df	p-value
1. Moderation	Male	4.15	.660	1.635	398	.103
	Female	4.25	.556			
2. Reasonableness	Male	4.18	.546	.156	398	.897
	Female	4.19	.594			
3. Proper self0immunity	Male	4.13	.526	1.773	398	.077
	Female	4.23	.620			
4. Knowledge	Male	4.17	.580	-2.427*	398	.016
	Female	4.32	.637			
5. Ethics	Male	4.31	.418	1.615	398	.107
	Female	4.22	.681			
Overview	Male	4.19	.463	1.085	398	.278
	Female	4.24	.511			

4. At the different age, the knowledge aspect of living on the Sufficiency Economy philosophy was different, at least one pair, at the statistically significant level of 0.5 and the ones' whose ages were between 41-50 years old were higher than the lower age of 30 and between 31-40 years old as shown in the Table 3 and 4 below.



Table 3 Comparison of respondents' living on the Sufficiency Economy philosophy classified by age

Living on the Sufficiency Economy philosophy	Source of Variation	df	SS	MS	F	p-value
1. Moderation	Intergroup	3	16.480	5.493	1.706	.123
	Ingroup	396	130.220	.329		
	Total	399	146.700			
2. Reasonableness	Intergroup	3	1.075	.358	1.096	.350
	Ingroup	396	129.409	.327		
	Total	399	130.484			
3. Proper self-immunity	Intergroup	3	4.219	1.406	4.259	.106
	Ingroup	396	130.760	.330		
	Total	399	134.979			
4. Knowledge	Intergroup	3	4.133	1.378	3.704*	.012
	Ingroup	396	147.297	.372		
	Total	399	151.430			
5. Ethics	Intergroup	3	7.745	2.582	8.111	.201
	Ingroup	396	126.041	.318		
	Total	399	133.786			
Overview	Intergroup	3	4.913	1.638	7.129	.222
	Ingroup	396	90.970	.230		
	Total	399	95.883			

* at the statistical significance level of 0.05

Table 4. An average pairwise comparison of living on the Sufficiency Economy philosophy in term of knowledge classified by age

Age	\bar{x}	Lower than or equivalent to 30 yrs.	31 – 40 yrs.	41 – 50 yrs.	higher than 51 yrs. up
lower than of equivalent to 30 years old	4.17	4.17	4.18	4.41	4.24
31 – 40 years	4.18	-	4.18	4.41	4.24
41 – 50 years	4.41	-	-	4.41	4.24
higher than 51 years up	4.24	-	-	-	4.24

* at the statistical significance level of 0.05

5. In view of reasonableness and knowledge aspects, respondents earning different monthly income amounts, it was found that, at least one pair, living on the Sufficiency Economy philosophy, the level of the captioned aspects revealed their differences with statistical significance level of 0.5 and those earning Baht 10,001-20,000 per month were lower than other ones' classified by monthly income gained as shown in the Tables 6 and 8.



Table 5. Comparison of respondents' living on the Sufficiency Economy philosophy classified by age

Living on the Sufficiency Economy philosophy	Source of Variation	df	SS	MS	F	p-value
1. Moderation	Intergroup	3	20.231	6.744	1.116	.442
	Ingroup	396	126.469	.319		
	Total	399	146.700			
2. Reasonableness	Intergroup	3	2.666	.889	2.753*	.042
	Ingroup	396	127.818	.323		
	Total	399	130.484			
3. Proper self-immunity	Intergroup	3	6.104	2.035	6.252	.284
	Ingroup	396	128.875	.325		
	Total	399	134.979			
4. Knowledge	Intergroup	3	3.087	1.029	2.747*	.043
	Ingroup	396	148.343	.375		
	Total	399	151.430			
5. Ethics	Intergroup	3	6.487	2.162	6.727	.129
	Ingroup	396	127.299	.321		
	Total	399	133.786			
Overview	Intergroup	3	5.989	1.996	8.795	.245
	Ingroup	396	89.893	.277		
	Total	399	95.883			

* at the statistical significance level of 0.05

Table 6. An average pairwise comparison of living on Sufficiency Economy philosophy in reasonableness aspect classified by monthly income gain

Monthly income gain	\bar{x}	Lower than or equivalent to Baht 10,000	Baht 10,001 – 20,000	Baht 20,001 – 30,000	Higher than Baht 30,001 up
		4.18	4.09	4.22	4.32
Lower than or equivalent to Baht 10,000	4.18	-	.086 (.283)	-.039 (.636)	-.143 (.115)
Baht 10,001 – 20,000	4.09	-	-	-.126 (.086)	-.230* (.005)
Baht 20,001 – 30,000	4.22	-	-	-	-.104 (.217)
Higher than Baht 30,001 up	4.32	-	-	-	-

* at the statistical significance level of 0.05

Table 7. An average pairwise comparison of living on Sufficiency Economy philosophy in knowledge aspect classified by monthly income gain

Monthly income gain	\bar{x}	Lower than or equivalent to Baht 10,000	Baht 10,001 – 20,000	Baht 20,001 – 30,000	Higher than Baht 30,001 up



	4.21	4.18	4.39	4.23
Lower than or equivalent to Baht 10,000	4.21	-	.031 (.720)	-.182* (.042) (.861)
Baht 10,001 – 20,000	4.18	-	-	-.213* (.007) (.586)
Baht 20,001 – 30,000	4.39	-	-	-.165 (.071)
Higher than Baht 30,001 up	4.23	-	-	-

* at the statistical significance level of 0.05

6. Comparing the respondents' occupation, in term of knowledge, it was found that at least 1 pair of different occupations, living on the Sufficiency Economy philosophy, had a different level of knowledge on the Sufficiency Economy philosophy at statistically significant level of 0.5. The group of entrepreneur/self-employed respondents were higher than those in state enterprise/private sector employment as shown Tables 8 and 9.

Table 8. Comparison of living on the Sufficiency Economy philosophy classified by occupation

Living on the Sufficiency Economy philosophy	Source of Variation	df	SS	MS	F	p-value
1. Moderation	Intergroup	4	14.705	3.676	1.001	.359
	Ingroup	395	131.995	.334		
	Total	399	146.700			
2. Reasonableness	Intergroup	4	.652	.163	.496	.739
	Ingroup	395	129.831	.329		
	Total	399	130.484			
3. Proper self-immunity	Intergroup	4	11.808	2.952	9.467	.442
	Ingroup	395	123.171	.312		
	Total	399	134.979			
4. Knowledge	Intergroup	4	5.101	1.275	3.443**	.000
	Ingroup	395	146.329	.370		
	Total	399	151.430			
5. Ethics	Intergroup	4	12.634	3.158	1.297	.268
	Ingroup	395	121.153	.307		
	Total	399	133.786			
Overview	Intergroup	4	6.161	1.540	6.781	.157
	Ingroup	395	89.722	.227		
	Total	399	95.883			

* at the statistical significance level of 0.05



Table 9. An average pairwise comparison of living on Sufficiency Economy philosophy in knowledge aspect classified by occupation

Occupation	\bar{x}	Employee of state enterprises/private sector	Entrepreneur/self-employed	General labor	Agriculturist/agriculture
Government Service	4.32	4.10	4.42	4.25	4.13
Employee of state enterprises/private sector	4.10	-	-0.099 (.304)	.078 (.357)	.200 (.191)
Entrepreneur/self-employed	4.42	-	-	-0.324* (.001)	-0.147 (.100)
General labor	4.25	-	-	-	.177 (.092)
Agriculturist / agriculture	4.13	-	-	-	.299 (.070)
					.122 (.441)
					-

* at the statistical significance level of 0.05

Conclusion and Discussion

Further to the findings from this research, the significant issues were raised for discussion as follows:

As per the findings it was revealed that living on the Sufficiency Economy philosophy idea, in an overview of 4 aspects, this was at a high level. Items ranked in order were respectively ethics, knowledge, moderation, reasonableness and proper self-immunity. This demonstrated that people have placed a great importance on encouragement and support towards the social aspect contributing activities which are arranged for their community and society in general. The consideration of what is considered to be worthwhile spending of money for every purchase of goods or services as well as the awareness for needed economic change have also been recognized to be a planned cautionary way of living. This is in line with a study by Kwankamol Don-khwa (2014) stating that the sufficiency economy means a 'livelihood with adequacy' enabling one to go on living appropriately and in line with one's necessary basic and higher order requirements. However, it did not imply that every family needed to produce food or weave clothes, on the contrary, it meant that every community should live with appropriate sufficiency. As per Kanyamon In-whang (2010), the Sufficiency Economy philosophy is the basis for the definition of the 3 pillars and 2 conditions that the Steering Sub-Committee on Sufficiency Economy has currently deployed for its campaign publicizing the Sufficiency Economy philosophy through various channels. The described 3 pillars consist of moderation, reasonableness and immunity on the condition of knowledge and ethics. As stated by Sumet Tantivejkul (2007), the sufficiency economy is a philosophy that stresses a 'middle-path' economy linking with and also related to the kinship, community, culture and environment. In addition, it is an integrated economy of life, mind, society, environment and civil society. Consequently, this philosophy can also be called a philosophy of a basic economy, balanced economy, integrated economy or moral economy comprising of at least 7 sufficiency components including the following:

- 1) Sufficiency for every individual and family without negligent use of resources
- 2) Mindful sufficiency or generosity towards others.
- 3) Environmental sufficiency, conservation and enlargement of the environment for being a fundamental aspect of all occupations.



- 4) Stability and sufficiency of community through cooperation to solve problems faced such as social problems, poverty and environmental degradation.
- 5) Intelligence sufficiency through collaborative learning to cope appropriately with the globalization challenges posed.
- 6) Adhering to cultural sufficiency since the economy grows from within a cultural foundation or a way of living, in relation to the environment that will stabilize the economy and
- 7) Stable sufficiency which does not fluctuate rapidly beyond human needs and accepted levels.

As per the findings, the respondents at the different areas of gender, age ranking, monthly income and occupation, living on the Sufficiency Economy philosophy, showed a different result in knowledge aspects at the statistical significance level of 0.5. This therefore reflected that they emphasized on exploring information thoroughly and scrutinizing it prior to decision-making when making goods and service purchases. This finding concurred with Sumet Tantivechakul (2007) and concluded that the main principle of the Sufficiency Economy philosophy is that it was the philosophy used as a guideline in living. It is also used by the population at all levels of society starting from the individual, to the community and then the nation in terms of both development and administration on the middle path basis. This is key to economic development so as to modernize the nation to cope with globalization.

The sufficiency economy was neither the economy for the underprivileged in society nor a too strictly frugal economy. His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej ' s statement taught that prosperity should be gained with conservation and sustainability by adhering to the 3 pillars and 2 conditions as a guideline to go on living and develop the nation that could be also applied by any organization as follows: Firstly, using the notion of reasonableness as a guide for living whereas avoiding passion and lust, and not following social trends and having courage enough to select the way of virtuous living intelligently. Secondly, conducting anything at a moderate level that included the preliminary examination of one's self and competency and strength prior to proceeding with the self-development within one's own limits and adhering to the desired middle path, equating to needed moderation and balance. Thirdly, doing anything with an immunity at all times since the future could not be foreseen, the current situation has been changed rapidly and it was difficult to plan the needed development due to constant factors of risk. The immunity was thus the risk management tool. From the aforementioned, His Majesty the King recommended 2 conditions that one should live by ethically and with sound governance and go on in one's life with knowledge and carefulness and always updating oneself to be able to cope appropriately with the challenges posed by globalization.

According to a study by Thongtippha Viriyaphant (2007), it was stated that the sufficiency economy required recognition of its significant principles including 1) following the middle path by living in neither a hurried nor too slow a manner but at a moderate level and within capacity, on one's own ability, and not being misled by materialism, while remaining independent to create stable life foundation for self-reliance. 2) Emphasizing on the moderation based approach of reasonableness and care with thorough consideration of what one does. 3) Placing an importance on building up the mental foundation of the populace to go on living sufficiently in term of both mental and material aspects. In other words, it was enhancing the awareness of ethics, virtues and honesty to recognize the level of sufficiency for life, and eliminating greed and being happy both physically and mentally, and not exploitation and causing any disturbance for others.

The objectives of the abovementioned were to enable people to rely on themselves as much as they can, recognize the sufficiency of living and also render their assistance for common interest in various terms as follows: 1) Mental aspect – to adhere to the principle of “Self-reliance” with



the positive awareness towards the nation, generosity, compromise, public interest recognition and realization on cooperative basis. 2) Social aspect – to encourage each community to live by a sharing concept with a strong network for increasing more income and solving problems that arise in all respects. 3) Natural resource and environment aspect – to recognize an effective utilization and management of natural resources with value adding efforts based on sustainability. 4) Integration of technology and modern technology and rural wisdom aspects, and 5) Economic aspect – to focus on economic concepts, thus minimizing all types of unnecessary expenses, decreasing dissipation and adhering to the principle of sufficiency and avoiding a non-performing debt situation. Moreover, as per the 8th National Economic and Social Plan (B.E 2540-2544), it is stipulated that Thailand had faced the economic crisis and the situation during such a period also reflecting the result of the unbalanced and unsustainable national development in progress due to mainly putting an emphasis on economic growth while there are a myriad of social problems including the rapid deterioration and depletion of the limited natural resources.

Currently, the Sufficiency Economy philosophy has been widely applied as guidance for the national development strategy and policy so as to finally lead Thailand to the desired levels of stable and sustainable development. In all this, the role of tourism has an important role to play in economic growth. All sectors of Thai society have adopted this guideline in living on, and deploying it at all levels from individual, family, community to nation. This also has contributed to immunity and risk management enabling Thai society to be better recover from crises and disasters than was previously the case. Nevertheless, for Thailand's future development, the structural problems still exist and are a weak point and significant obstacle, especially the social inequality and weak government administration. In addition, due to the dramatically rapid changes of globalization which are both an advantage and limitation, it is required that the country be able to cope appropriately with the various challenges and changes by applying in practical terms, lessons learned and also by continually adopting the Sufficiency Economy philosophy with the core purpose of building up the needed immunity and proper risk management based on the establishment of knowledge, technology and a strong innovation base as well as self-creativity on a constant basis, with requisite serious implementation and good governance.

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