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An investigation of quality assurance in the Thai therapeutic massage industry for critical competency and quality standards

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AN INVESTIGATION OF QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE THAI THERAPEUTIC MASSAGE INDUSTRY FOR CRITICAL COMPETENCY AND QUALITY STANDARDS

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DOCTOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

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ABSTRACT

The traditional Thai massage industry contributes significant revenue to Thailand’s economy. Despite its economic importance, Thai therapeutic massage establishments lack quality control to ensure adequate levels of practitioner expertise and effective service delivery. This, in turn, has negative consequences for customer health and satisfaction. While the quality of spa (including massage) services has been investigated in some mature economies, such as the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia, little research has been conducted in Thailand.

To address the problem, this exploratory research investigates current and desirable competency standards in Thai therapeutic massage and how the latter may be implemented. From a review of service quality and competency standards literature a framework to guide Thai therapeutic massage competencies is developed.

To further inform the research, a qualitative research methodology is used to gather insights from multiple stakeholders in Thai therapeutic massage: 30 individual, face-to-face, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted in the Thai language with ten managers and ten masseuses from ten Thai massage shops in Bangkok (Thailand), five government officials from the Thailand Ministry of Public Heath, and five health specialists from Thai massage schools in Bangkok.

The findings of this research provide a set of critical competency standards required for Thai therapeutic massage, as well as the quality standards of Thai massage therapists working in Thai massage services.
The research results point to four key areas for improving quality standards in the Thai massage services: (1) The performance of Thai massage therapists; (2) the operational management of Thai massage services; (3) the courses and practice management for Thai massage training and (4) policy and support by the Thai government.

Overall, the research yields a suite of frameworks and tools to improve service quality in Thai therapeutic massage establishments in Thailand, notably:

- Critical competencies required for Thai therapeutic massage therapists
- Key features required for improving the quality standards of Thai therapeutic massage
- Model for national Thai therapeutic massage curriculum in Thai massage institutions.

These outcomes are expected to inform Thai government policy and regulation of the Thai therapeutic massage industry and will help ensure the quality standards of Thai therapeutic massage as an export industry for tourists to Thailand.

Key words: Thai massage industry; Thai therapeutic massage; Thai massage services; masseurs; competency standards; quality standards; quality assurance; Thai spa industry.
DECLARATION

I certify that the substance of this Thesis has not been already submitted for any degree and is not currently being submitted for any other degree or degrees. I certify that to the best of my knowledge any help received in preparing this work, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in this Thesis.

Anuchit Sangthong
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GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

ATMS = Australian Traditional Medicine Society
AEC = ASEAN Economic Community
AFTA = ASEAN Free Trade Area
ASEAN = Association of Southeast Asia Nations
BOI = Board of Investment of Thailand
DOH = Department of Health
EFQM = European Foundation for Quality Management
EU = European Union
GDP = Gross Domestic Product
ISO = International Organization for Standardization
ITD = International Institute for Trade and Development
MBNQA = Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award
MOPH = Ministry of Public Health
NESDB = National Economic and Social Development Board
QA = Quality Assurance
QAP = Quality Assurance Project
SMEs = Small and Medium Enterprises
TAT = Tourism Authority of Thailand
TTM = Thai Therapeutic Massage
TQM = Total Quality Management
UK = United Kingdom
WTO = World Trade Organization
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

This chapter sets out the direction of this thesis and introduces key concepts and terms. The chapter consists of eight sections as shown in Figure 1.1.

1.1 Background to the Research

There are many kinds of natural healing therapies, which are alternatives for anyone who does not like chemical treatments (CBS Interactive Inc 2009). One of these is traditional Thai therapeutic massage (TTM), also known as Thai massage therapy. It involves stretching and bending of the human body in order to obtain healing benefits. During a two-hour TTM session, customers wear loose-fitting cotton
pyjamas and engage in stretching muscles in a rhythmic and rocking motion. Other techniques involve pressing tendons and twisting and flipping the body sideways, backwards and forwards (Wat Po Thai Traditional Massage School 2015). The healing methods found at many Thai spas combine folk remedial methods with modern remedial ones. These are greatly appreciated by customers who want to stay healthy or improve their health. TTM gives benefits to the people being treated, by providing relief from stress, sore muscles, and stiff joints; promoting deep relaxation, and greater flexibility; increasing energy flow; preventing injury; or even detoxification, and creating a feeling of confidence and well-being.

TTM is delivered by the Thai spa industry. It can be found in many types of Thai spa centres, such as independent spas, resorts and hotel spas, medical spas and day spas. Thai spa services are recognized around the world as forming the one of the world’s top five services for delivery to individual clients (Fernquest 2011). However, the development of the Thai spa industry as a whole is facing major problems such as the need to raise the standards for treatments and employ qualified personnel, which reflects the increasing demand for certified TTM and Thai spa services in the domestic and international markets (Fernquest 2011).

Within Thailand, the Thai government introduced the Amazing Thailand tourist local and international promotion in 2008 with a focus on TTM centres. Since then, luxury hotels frequently include TTM within holiday packages. This is found particularly in the Bangkok area, where five-Star hotels, such as the Bangkok Marriot and Spa Hotel, offer guests facial and body treatments, hand and foot therapy, foot massage, TTM lessons, plunge pools, steam rooms and waxing (Marriott 2009). These natural
healing therapies are promoted as alternatives to chemical treatments and also to western ointments and medicines (CBS Interactive Inc 2009).

The growth in TTM offerings in Thailand has been problematic. Meechaichaicharoen (2007) claims that TTM can be arbitrary or inconsistent, when responding to individual customer requirements, rather than aiming to meet an agreed quality standard. Prarinyalux (2008) further points out that Thai massage establishments lack quality controls, have management problems, lack proper training of masseurs, have limited human resource management practices, and have high staff turnover. Sangvichien (2009) also states that the Thai massage therapists still lack knowledge and skills in TTM.

In Thailand, TTM courses are certified by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Public Health. However, some TTM therapists have never formally studied TTM courses in TTM schools; rather they learn from their work colleagues. Furthermore, TTM certification is often not recognized as continuing education units (CEUs) in foreign countries and few international schools recognize these certificates (Thai Healing Massage 2011). The School of Integrated Body Therapy Lake Spa Healing Therapy and Education Centre (2006) contends that the curricula in such certificates provide inadequate expertise in the fields of management, therapeutic skills, knowledge-based educational massage therapy programs, customer care, and appropriate customer massage therapies. This includes inadequate communication skills, training hours, and certification. Without proper training, damage to patients and customers could occur, resulting in damage to the international reputation of Thai therapeutic massage with consequences for the Thai economy.
1.2 Research Problems

As outlined above, TTM businesses in Thailand lack quality control for ensuring adequate levels of practitioner expertise and effective service delivery. To date there has been limited scholarly and practical research into the issues concerning TTM in Thailand. Contemporary literature on relevant concepts will be presented in Chapter 2.

Hence, this research seeks to investigate the service quality and competence standard issues concerning TTM in Thailand. As explained further in Chapter 2, three research questions will be addressed:

RQ1: What is the current measure of competency for Thai therapeutic massage?
RQ2: What competency standards are appropriate to assure the quality of Thai therapeutic massage?
RQ3: How might competency standards for Thai therapeutic massage be implemented?

1.3 Justification for the Research

This research is important because it will help to develop quality standards for TTM, to be employed by the Thai spa industry across Thailand. The regulation of the TTM industry by way of regulated competency standards for practitioners to assure the outcomes of TTM – as envisaged in this thesis research – is imperative to secure the industry as a viable export factor for Thailand. It is expected that national TTM competency standards would position TTM securely in the international therapeutic tourism market, thereby enhancing the Thai economy.
1.4 Research Methodology

To explore the phenomenon of the TTM industry in Thailand, the qualitative methodology is adopted in this research. As described in more detail in Chapter 4, the qualitative methodology emphasises the phenomenal environment without control or experimental groups, and considers the meaning of the phenomena in terms of social and cultural contexts (Jumpon 2007). The qualitative methodology usage enables the researcher to gain information pertaining to human behaviour and phenomena in the Thai massage industry to more fully understand the multiple stakeholders’ interests and needs.

Empirical data was collected in the Bangkok area through face-to-face in-depth interviews with key stakeholders in the Thai massage services industry - namely TTM practitioners, TTM business managers, and government officials with responsibilities in overseeing TTM. Semi-structured interview questions were used to gather in-depth information in the Thai Language in relation to participant knowledge and experiences in Thai massage services.

1.5 Outline of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters: Chapter 1 is an introduction providing an overview of the research problems and the significance of the study. Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature in order to overview TTM and relevant areas of the research. Chapter 3, addressing an evaluation of the framework, involves research methods, data collection instruments, and modes of analysis. The process of the research allows the researcher to gain numerous data to evaluate and analyse, and to provide a practical model for the TTM industry. Chapter 4 illustrates the results
and provides an analysis of the data collected from 30 respondents representing stakeholders in the TTM industry. It also contains a discussion of the research findings. Finally, Chapter 5 provides conclusions and implications from the research.

1.6 Definitions of Terms

The following terms, employed in this research, require definition:

1.6.1 Thai Spa Industry

The Thai spa industry is a collective term used for a range of products and services, which include TTM, and which are delivered in a range of establishments commonly referred to in Thailand as spas. The term collectively connotes relaxation, herbal therapies, massages, spa baths, health and well-being products and services to a range of standards across Thailand.
1.6.2 Thai Therapeutic Massage (TTM)

Thai therapeutic massage (*Nuat phaen boran*) is a therapy involving stretching and bending the human body (CBS Interactive Inc 2009), delivered by therapists working within the Thai spa industry. During a two-hour Thai therapeutic massage session, stretching muscles in a rhythmic and rocking motion for Thai massage performance thus clients are required to wear cotton pyjamas. Other techniques involve pressing tendons and twisting and flipping the body sideways, backwards and forwards (Wat Po Thai Traditional Massage School 2015). The benefits of Thai therapeutic massage include relief from stress, sore muscles, and stiff joints; relaxation, increasing energy flow; preventing injury; detoxification, and improving feelings of confidence and well-being.

1.6.3 Competency

Competency is the capability to complete the specific tasks and jobs to the quality standards expected in the organization, by constantly applying a set of related knowledge, skills and attitudes (International Labour Organization 2015). Li (2017) also states that competency can be identified as the quality of being proficient and having the capability to complete something. Competency is an idea that continues to stimulate debate and work discussion on training disciplines (Fernandez et. al 2012). The College of Occupational Therapist of British Columbia (2015) explains that competencies are related to the knowledge, skills and attitudes that occupational therapists need to perform safely, efficiently and morally in the workplace and practice settings. Thus, the competency of the people working in TTM refers to the knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable a member to successfully carry out their
practice in an appropriate manner, to meet public expectations regarding the capabilities of TTM therapists and organizational performance.

**1.6.4 Quality Assurance (QA) in TTM**

Quality assurance (QA) encompasses the entire system and the action plans required to provide sufficient confidence in the products or services, to satisfy all customers’ requirements for quality and to be suitable for use (WHO 2000). Thus, the quality assurance in TTM can be defined as an operational process involved the systematic and action plans which are essential to serve adequate confidence of TTM performance to satisfy the customers’ needs for quality in the Thai massage industry.

**1.6.5 Competency Standard**

The competency standard is a set of benchmarks chosen to evaluate the skills and knowledge that the employees have to present in the organization, in order to be regarded as competent. The competency standards include a structured format created by Industry Department. The component of structure is referred to as units, competencies, units of competency, and the specification of competencies (IBSA 2016).

**1.7 Delimitations of the Thesis**

The research is limited to investigating TTM in Bangkok, Thailand only. The reason for this focus is that Thailand is the home of TTM and understanding TTM in its original context is important.
Further, the thesis research will collect data from TTM in Bangkok only. This is because Bangkok city is well known as the capital of Thailand and also known as one of the world’s top tourist destinations. The four regions of Thailand that have been chosen for the “Wellness Capital of Asia” are Bangkok, Phuket, Samui, and Chiang Mai (Thai Spa Academy 2010). Thus, Bangkok is a suitable site for collecting data concerning TTM services.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter has presented and discussed an overview of this research. The background to the research and the research problems were introduced. The need for the research was justified and the research methodology was briefly explained. Next, the outline of the research and definitions of key terms were presented. Then the delimitation was described. Chapter 2 reviews related literature relevant to the research topic and research questions.
2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the key elements concerning the implementation of quality standards in TTM service delivery. The knowledge gaps are identified and research questions presented. A conceptual framework to address the research questions is proposed. The context of TTM is Thailand is also introduced.

The chapter is divided into eight sections, as shown in Figure 2.1. Section 2.2 explains parent discipline 1: The quality concepts and models including quality and service quality concepts, general quality models (TQM model, PDCA model, Joseph Juran model, Feigenbaum model, QA model, and Lean Six Sigma), and the SERVQUAL model. Section 2.3 explicates parent discipline 2: the competency and competency standards. Section 2.4 presents the quality and competency standards models consisting of global quality standards models, spa quality standards, and the competency standards for massage therapists. Section 2.5 discusses the Thai massage industry analysis, reflecting the significance of the Thai therapeutic massage industry; the quality standards in the Thai spa industry; and the practice and training of TTM in Thailand. Section 2.6 demonstrates an integrated model as a framework of Thai therapeutic massage competencies. Section 2.7 sets out and discusses the three underpinning research questions. The conclusion of Chapter 2 is contained in Section 2.8.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Parent discipline 1: Quality Concepts and Models

2.2.1 Significance of Quality

2.2.2 TTM as Service

2.2.3 Importance and Nature of Service Quality

2.2.4 General Quality Models (TQM, PDCA, JJ, Feigenbaum, QA, LSS)

2.2.5 SERVQUAL Model

2.3 Parent discipline 2: Competency & Competency Standards

2.3.1 Competency

2.3.2 Competency Standards

2.3.3 Difference between Competency and Competency Standards

2.4 Quality and Competency Standards Models

2.4.1 Global Quality Standards

2.4.2 Spa Quality Standards

2.4.3 Competency Standards for Massage Therapists

2.5 The TTM Industry Analysis

2.6 Integrated Model: A Framework of TTM Competencies

2.7 Research Questions

2.8 Conclusion

Figure 2.1: The Structure of Chapter 2
2.2 Quality Concepts and Models pertinent to TTM

This section explains the nature of quality and, in particular, service quality, which are relevant in considering quality in TTM. Various service quality models are presented, including the SERVQUAL model, the TQM model, the Quality Assurance (QA) model, PDCA model, and Lean Six Sigma model.

2.2.1 Significance of Quality

Nowadays, there are rapid changes in both quality and business excellence in many regions, especially in China and India (Sorqvist 2014). Many companies are facing increased competition, challenges, and increased customer expectations (Gregory 2014). New businesses are rapidly developing in fields such as IT, creative industries, biochemistry and tourism services (Sorqvist 2014). Customers are looking for the most advanced technologies. Thus, companies have to search out the latest products to retain existing customers and to attract new customers. Machinery also must be modernized, and quality improved and procedures streamlined (Gregory 2014). Quality must be more comprehensive in its approach and become widespread throughout the system and community. Quality is becoming more transparent in everyday life. Quality is associated with performance criteria as shown where the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) focuses on the commercial organisations, businesses and industries (Westgard & Westgard 2014).

Customers desire quality whether they buy consumer goods or receive services (Osotimehin et. al 2015). The competitiveness of most companies depends on the quality and price of products and services. Customers are more alert to their rights and they are constantly looking out for quality products and services (Dobrin &
Businesses have to promote the quality of their products and services (Goetsch & Davis 2014) and to re-examine the value and feasibility of their procedures to achieve or retain global competitiveness (Nica & Potcovaru 2014). The quality concepts should be determined by marketing and design activities to meet the quality requirements (Cosmin et. al 2015). For quality requirements, quality should be defined in accordance with the market demands, contractual terms and the internal demands of the organization (e.g. profitability, environmental protection) (Goetsch & Davis 2014).

Further, employees play an important role in quality management. Thus, everyone should have a clear responsibility for their work. The employees should have the necessary knowledge, skills, experience and new ideas. They should respect each other and effectively work together. They should have a holistic view that emphasizes customers and processes (Sorqvist 2014).

Quality is a key success factor for companies. Quality becomes a key issue when a customer starts to make demands from the service provided (Sorqvist 2014). Quality embraces working together for mutual purposes and pay attention to the work of each person. Thus, quality is everyone’s business. Quality is not a function of any particular part of the process. Quality is a cooperative effort (Robin & Simon 2018). The ability of people who are working within the quality line must be defined as embracing a homogenous method. This is specifically significant in services and public companies (Sorqvist 2014). As mentioned above, quality is the most significant competitive weapon. The business’s reputation can be enhanced by providing the best quality service. Quality involves meeting or exceeding customer
needs. If the service quality matches or exceeds the customer’s requirements, customers will come back again.

2.2.2 TTM as a Service

Service is a complex phenomenon which is difficult to define clearly. Many researchers define the characteristics of service as including the relationship between services and goods, when studied in three elemental ways: how they are produced, consumed, and evaluated (Zeithaml, Parasuramann & Berry, 1990). The characteristics of service usually found in the marketing literature are: intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity, and perishability of production and consumption (Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry 1990).

Firstly, services are intangible as they relate to performances and experiences rather than physical objects. In most cases, they cannot be counted, inventoried and transported. This refers to the fact that services, because they are activities, are not palpable (Lovelock 1983; Shostack 1997). Intangibility is most often cited as the most important distinction between services and goods.

Secondly, services are heterogeneous because their performance regularly varies from provider to provider, according to different customer wants and by reference to different periods and locations (Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry, 1990). For example, different employees may produce services at different times; thus, the potential for a high level of variability in the service performance can be present. This heterogeneity, or lack of standardization or uniformity, results from the service provider’s inability to control performance or the quality of a service (Zeithaml 1988). Heterogeneity is of
particular importance for labour-intensive services where many different employees may be involved in performing the service (Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry, 1990).

The third distinguishing characteristic of service is that production or creation and consumption of many services are *inseparable*. In other words, services are generally produced or created and consumed in the same time frame. Since services are performed in the physical presence of the customer, his or her assessment of service quality is made during the service delivery process. Inseparability generally limits the channel system to direct distribution. However, as pointed out by Lovelock (1983), agents, middle men or marketing intermediaries (or “infomediaries”) are often employed in the marketing of some services. Hence, it is thought that consumers use their assessment of the physical surroundings or tangibles such as equipment, office appearance, and personnel appearance in their evaluation of the quality of service (Zeithaml 1988).

The fourth distinguishing characteristic of service is perishability. This means that services cannot be stored and that there is no capacity to develop inventory for future use (Donnelly 1976; Zeithaml et al. 1985). Perishability is primarily a concern for the producer of a service. Customers will only be concerned about the issue when there is an inadequate supply such that customers need to wait for the next service opportunity (Hartman & Lindgren 1993).

Further, Kusol (2008) indicates that spa treatments are part of a service business which creates revenues for spa workers, entrepreneurs and other relevant stakeholders, and supports the growth of tourism businesses as well as health and
wellness providers. The Tourism Authority of Thailand (2010) also suggested that Traditional TTM service is a part of the spa business which is called ‘the service business’, so understanding service quality is essential to improving quality and performance in the TTM industry.

To sum up, quality is an important aspect for Thai massages businesses, especially if those businesses provide services to big private sector customers. It can develop the efficiency of their TTM, competitiveness and market share and may be a significant factor in business survival.

### 2.2.3 Importance and Nature of Service Quality

Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) state that service quality is a key success factor in service industries which is the great stimulus of economic growth. Service quality impacts the repurchase purpose of both existing customers and new consumers. Many studies, including those of Comm and Mathaisel (2000), Goodman (2003), Horovitz (1990), Kotler, Bowen and Makens (2003), Mooradian and Oliver (1997) and Tourism Authority of Thailand (2010), have shown that, if performance exceeds or meets what the customer needs, this means that the customer is delighted or at least satisfied, and will return to use that service. In contrast, if customers are dissatisfied by bad service quality, customers can easily walk away from the service business without returning, and will spread their views regarding that bad experience to others.

Moreover, customers may have been satisfied with the quality of a product or service two years ago, but they may now be dissatisfied (Stockley 2014). Today’s customers
are also different from those of the past. They want more and faster service, more convenient service, and more flexibility. Customers do not want to wait in line for a long time, and they really would like their problems to be resolved as soon as possible (Bacal & Associates 2015). High-quality service leads to higher customer satisfaction, customer retention and improved earnings (Roses, Hoppen & Henrique 2009).

Therefore, the company must pay attention to service quality, especially the improvement of customer satisfaction, and to service management in order to achieve the maximum outcomes (Authenticity Consulting 2009; Prugsamatz, Heaney, & Alpert 2007; Kotler, Bowen & Makens 2003). The quality of service is a tool used to assess the perceived level of service recipients gained from a given service. Service quality also is an important aspect of strategy in the field of marketing activities in the service business. The quality of service is not determined by the service provider; it is decided by the service recipient. Thus, quality service should emphasize customer satisfaction (Lertwannawit & Gulid 2011).

According to Alén, Fraiz and Rufín (2006), some customers are concerned about high quality standards, natural surroundings, well-located establishments, nice decoration, a quiet place, and the good appearance of staff – but health spas’ service quality performance is often well below this quality standard. Getting new customers is more difficult than keeping existing customers (Fen & Meilian 2009). Learning customer behaviour and identifying their perceptions is a compulsory strategy for continuously improving the price, delivery, quality, speed and dependability of the service business in response to customer needs and
expectations (Field & Swift 1996; Karl 2009). Similarly, good service quality can be classified as a competitive weapon to better manage hypercompetitive pressures, because it leads to long-term profit. Entrepreneurs should be customer-oriented and comprehend the essential nature of quality as a key success factor (Moore 1987). The Tourism Authority of Thailand (2010) suggests that Traditional Thai massage service is an integral part of spa businesses which are “service business”. There is no permissible exception to the need to supply quality service to their customers.

2.2.4 General Quality Models

This section reviews the quality models which generally are used as key instruments to enable organizations to achieve a higher level of quality performance including TQM, PDCA, JJ, Feigenbaum, QA, and Lean Six Sigma models as discussed in the following.

2.2.4.1 Total Quality Management (TQM) Model

Besterfield et al. (1999) state that Total Quality Management (TQM) is defined as a philosophy. It is also a pattern of guidance to continuously improve firms and improve their traditional manner of undertaking commerce. The objective is for them to be a survivor in the global competition. The abbreviation of Total Quality Management (TQM) can be referred to: total (T) is made up of the whole process; quality (Q) reflects a great product or service; management (M) is the controlling and directing of the procedures (Besterfield et al. 1999). The main aim of TQM is to satisfy customers by understanding their current and future needs through the creation and delivery of a good service and products, as that is the path to long-term profit (Kuo et al. 2009). Customer needs are continuously changing and are
becoming more demanding. The TQM model aims to improve constantly the service and products to create greater customer satisfaction (Besterfield et al. 1999). The technique of TQM in making customers satisfied is to provide a principle for establishing competitive evaluation, accomplishment of targets, superior connections and a procedure of constant improvement (Chapman & Hall 1994).

Juran (1986) comments that the insufficiency of original planning causes ineffective organizational processes; this is because quality planning is seen as a low priority on most senior managers’ agendas. It is argued that TQM is unsuccessful on account of the lack of top management commitment, inaccessible information, improper planning, workforce barriers, insufficient teamwork, paying insufficient attention to the internal and external customers, and inappropriate training (Besterfield et al. 1999), a lack of focus on the organisation’s processes (Hassen 1991), and the issues related to unnecessary costs (such as an excuse for not implementing TQM programs and the lack of good future planning). Thus, managers should encourage employees to participate as much as possible in each stage of the procedures (Brashier et al. 1996).

Chapman and Hall (1994) suggest that there are six key concepts of TQM to be considered. The first concept is known as ‘internal and external customers’. In this context, the organization should realize that customers are not only the people to whom businesses sell products or offer services, but they are also the organization’s internal workers. An internal worker is defined as a full-time employee involved in the socialization of norms and the organization’s training skills and induction of comprehensive plans (Malcolm 2012). By contrast, an external worker is defined by
flexible ways of working and may be called a contractor who does not work full time and does not work permanently (Tucker 2002). The second concept is known as ‘never-finishing development’ which refers to seeking to constantly improve business and production processes (Chapman & Hall 1994). It is probably the most powerful concept to guide management (Oakland & Sohal 1996). Quality improvement projects are a good factor to start continuous improvement in a business in terms of the quality cycle; these may include on-time delivery, and customer satisfaction. This technique is great to solve organisational problems (Chapman & Hall 1994; Besterfield et al. 1999). The third concept is ‘control of business processes’ (Chapman & Hall 1994). Each business’s processes are varied, and each process needs to be controlled in the proper way. Activities such as typing, welcoming visitors, receiving cell phone calls, presenting invoices all have to be controlled so that the process will meet customers’ requirements. ‘Upstream preventive management’, the fourth concept, is the way to change from past-event inspection to pre-event planning, as a proactive activity. Next is ‘continuing protective actions’. Ongoing protective actions can remove or minimize the deep problems which have arisen, and block their renewal (Chapman & Hall 1994). The last concept is ‘headship and teamwork’. Promoting leadership and teamwork is the technique used to implement and sustain TQM. Top leader commitment is important if the organisation wants to be outstanding through TQM as it needs a high standard of partnership and leadership (Chapman & Hall 1994). However, the following models are also important, as they are instruments in the evaluation of quality evaluation and interpreting ‘quality’ in service businesses.
2.2.4.2 Deming Cycle or PDCA Model

The PDCA model is known as the Shewhart or Deming Cycle which is popular for continual process improvement. In the 1950s, this concept was introduced by W. Edwards Deming to describe the quality control processes of Scientists and Engineers in Japan. The PDCA model can be used as the basis for any management procedure (Pietrzak & Paliszkiewicz 2015). Deming created the PDCA concept, addressing the aspects of ‘plan, do, check, and action’ which integrate all stages in management to sustain and constantly improve procedural potential (Pheng & Hou 2008). The managers or entrepreneurs of Thai massage businesses can implement the PDCA model within the process of operational management to achieve and improve service quality standards.

The Deming cycle has been praised for its logical systems and statistical approach to quality (Beckford 1998). Practitioners believe that TQM, as a PDCA model, is an integrated and inter-functional outline to achieve and maintain the competitive benefit (Saraph, Benson & Schroeder 1989). There is a combined management viewpoint and mission, establishing an organisation-wide concentrate on quality (Curkovic et al. 2000) to satisfy customers and improve business accomplishments (Samson & Terziovski 1999). Quality is about measuring the organisation and providing an overall management view of elements such as dependability, toughness, consumer service, characteristics and aesthetics, able to adapt to customer requirements (Brah, Tee & Rao 2002). The obstacles to reaching quality improvement in the Deming cycle include the lack of a long-term strategy, focusing on short term profit, and too much focus on performance evaluations (Kelemen 2003).
Oakland and Sohal (1996) describe the Deming cycle as a pattern of continuous improvement that shows how to set planning, doing, checking and acting. ‘Planning’ is referred to as identifying purposes or objectives to establish a proper standard for the organization. ‘Doing’ is referred to as a measurement of real performance. ‘Checking’ involves a comparison between actual performance and objectives or standards. ‘Action’ is taken to improve and solve problems after the check steps have been completed, as shown in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2: The Deming Cycle or PDCA Model (Wallace & Vallence 1993)

Oakland and Sohal (1996) assert that the Deming cycle (PDCA Model) is a valuable design aid for the measurement system to ensure customer’s requirements are met. Further, Taylor and Wilson (1996) state that adapting the PDCA model to a research topic such as “TQM accomplishments in New Zealand service organizations” has
been quite successful. The results of that research are useful to apply to service sectors such as local government, tourism, communications and hospitality.

Thus, the PDCA model could assist Thai massage services to meet customer requirements and to possibly identify the causes of problems and their potential resolution. The research could apply the PDCA model to measure operational management and clarify the appropriate methods for improving service quality standards in Thai massage businesses.

2.2.4.3 Joseph Juran Model

Juran is famous for originating the established format of the “quality trilogy.” Juran’s book, entitled *Quality Control Handbook*, reflects the reality that Juran’s principles are quite similar to Deming’s ideas but there are some basic, fundamental differences in principle. Juran (1988) thinks that improving quality procedure does not need quick changes but rather that changing quality outcomes should be embedded in the company’s activities.

Juran describes quality as “fitness for use”. This concept is a balance between product characteristics and products free from *deficiencies*. Juran stresses the word “product” which refers to the output of any method including tangible products and intangible services. Juran also categorises the costs of quality in four basic phases including internal failure costs, external failure costs, appraisal costs, and prevention costs (Juran & Gryna, 1988).

Juran (1986) proposes a three-step process for constant quality improvement a process known as Juran’s trilogy. Firstly, the quality planning stage aims to develop
the goods and procedures in order to exceed customer requirements and override business targets. The procedures have to be organized to ensure that quality standards can be reached. Secondly, quality control is based on customer feedback and being prepared to change and take action. This stage is the organization’s focus on its statistical control processes, designed to assure that quality standards can be met, and to classify variations derived from the standards. Lastly, quality improvement is undertaken to identify and analyse the causes of problems, and deal with change to produce a new stage of a higher quality. Juran also mentions that, to achieve continuous development, all workers have to prepare and train in appropriate processes on a normal foundation (Wallace & Vallence 1993).

2.2.4.4 Armand A.V. Feigenbaum Model

According to Kelemen (2003), Feigenbaum is less well known than both Deming and Juran. Feigenbaum was a US expert who specializes in quality control and who lectured extensively in Japan in the 1950s. The first book by Feigenbaum is named by reference to the notion of Total Quality Control (TQC) which he came to know when he studied in Boston, Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In 1950, his book was a quite well-known source of ideas and inspiration. Then, the Japanese choose Feigenbaum’s TQC as a key instrument to enable their companies to reach a higher level of quality performance (TenStep,Inc. 2004).

Feigenbaum defines quality as a customer-oriented term required for internal activities within a disciplined technique and implemented at the “expectations of customers” stage (Watson 2015). He proposes that the high quality concept must be accomplished with managerial assistance, and that quality control should be the first
stage of preparation. He firmly argues that this step should not be an afterthought (TenStep,Inc. 2004). Feigenbaum views quality control not only as a technical issue but more imperatively as a business process (Feigenbaum 1951); his idea is to make it ‘right the first time’ in production and to focus on preventing defects. Quality control as a management tool in Feigenbaum’s view includes the four phases: setting the quality standards; evaluating the suitability of these standards; responding when standards are satisfied or unsatisfied; creating new standards to enable continuous improvement (Kelemen 2003).

To sum up, the quality dimension of Total Quality Management is reflected in the PDCA cycle, which is a working process that can function at any time to provide continuous incremental improvement: Planning means setting an objective and standard; Doing involves acting as a team; Checking is about assessment; and Action occurs when steps are taken but which may be unsuccessful. Then the PDCA cycle is repeated (Kanji & Asher 1996). Simundic and Topic (2008) also point out that the basic idea of TQM is to search and remove weak points in the system and procedures, and reduce the error rate by risk measurement and risk reduction. Thus, the Total Quality Management (TQM) model could apply to assist the interview questions to investigate dimensions of service quality - namely planning, doing, checking and acting to reflect the customers’ expectations and the perceptions for Thai massage services.

2.2.4.5 Quality Assurance (QA) Model

Wallace and Vallence (1993) point out that the idea of assurance is that it embodies sureness and confidence. Quality assurance establishes the constant form of
standards and acts to present confidence in quality. Such standards and actions are generally included in a quality guide, warranting that standards and actions are performed. It refers to the prevention of quality problems through planned and systematic activities focused around processes (Oakland 2004).

Kruger and Ramphal (2009) show that the activities of QA relate to guaranteeing the quality of services and products. These activities refer to the condition of the evidence used to build confidence in a good or service. The data gathered can be used for confirming or assisting the following: that products are suitable for usage and secure for consumers; that standards and rules defined by controllers, industrial organizations, and specialized organizations are being applied efficiently; that the product matches the standards needed by buyers; that processes are sufficient and are being properly skilled; that all concerned organizations are aware of quality necessities; that the right activity is taken to remove faulty products; that chances for development are identified, appraised, and implemented (Kruger & Ramphal 2009).

Figure 2.3 shows a Quality Assurance Triangle model that shows a cycle of the processes of Quality Assurance, which can be utilized to approach the needs of a particular quality program. It is a returnable or interactive method. The process could start with an inclusive effort to identify the standard required or may begin with a small scale quality development. Alternatively, the procedure may start with monitoring. Some organizations choose to simultaneously begin in two stages. Each stage requires time and effort. It depends on the proper information about any scheme or activity which took place in the past (The Quality Assurance Project (QAP) 2012).
2.2.4.5.1 Defining Quality

Defining quality is concerned with the expectations or standards of quality development. Standards can be employed at any stage as follows: individual, facility, and (for example, healthcare) system. A good quality standard must be precise, reasonable, reliable, valid and clear. The quality standards should be developed related to elements of quality and should be considered on the best systematic evidence available. The stakeholder’s expectations of quality should be incorporated when defining quality standards. The defining standards of quality are prerequisites for measuring quality (The Quality Assurance Project (QAP) 2012).

2.2.4.5.2 Measuring Quality

Quality assessment is a part of measuring quality. It is used to measure the difference between actual customer perception and customer expectation to improve the organization’s quality. A quality assessment evaluates activities of performance related to standards set in each dimension of quality such as competency of providing, effectiveness, efficiency, safety, product, service and hygiene. The
method involves examining providers, interviewing customers, customer observations and reviewing customers’ data. In addition, quality assessment is a first step that includes providing feedback on employees’ performance, training and the motivation of workers to improve quality, creating a solution to close the gap between organizational perceptions and customer needs (The Quality Assurance Project (QAP) 2012).

After measuring quality by appraisal, an organization could be licensed, accredited and/or certificated. This license is set to basically protect public health and safety. The standards of the license emphasize the least legal requirement or qualification for organizations to follow. It contributes a framework to conform amendments to existing patterns. Accreditation highlights constantly improving planning, applying quality standards, consistent tutoring and consultation. Certification concerns an authority or board that recognizes the specialized knowledge and skills of workers who have the ability to train confidently and competently in a sector or specialty area (The Quality Assurance Project (QAP) 2012).

2.2.4.5.3 Improving Quality

Improving quality is concerned with applying suitable methods for closing the gap between the current level and expected level of quality, which could be defined by standards. The core of Quality Assurance (QA) employs the tools and principles of quality management for understanding and addressing system deficiencies, enhancing strengths, and improving healthcare processes. A variety of quality improvement can be provided for solving individual problems, team problems, and
systematic team problems to achieve customer satisfaction (The Quality Assurance Project (QAP) 2012).

The quality assurance concepts and model are helpful for applying the implementation process to guarantee customers' confidence that services will consistently meet customer needs. The aspects of the quality assurance model could be integrated to enhance the service quality in the Thai massage industry. Thus, this research could apply the conceptual framework of literature areas to create proper quality standards for the Thai massage industry.

2.2.4.6 Lean Six Sigma (LSS) Model

Bridge (2016) explains that Lean Six Sigma is a management philosophy focused on creating customer value, scheduled waste elimination, as well as continuous improvement in productivity and production time. Mousa (2013) states that Lean Six Sigma is a quite modern management approach. Lean Six Sigma is a strategic and business-oriented way to increase the efficiency of processing, improve customer satisfaction and improve performance. It is also recognized that Lean Six Sigma is a powerful leadership development tool. The Lean Six Sigma methodology is selected to improve organizational performance and operational efficiency (Mousa 2013).

Goleansixsigma (2012), a company which is expert in the Lean Six Sigma concept and provides the training courses of Lean Six Sigma, as accredited by the Better Business Bureau (BBB), explicates that the five steps of Lean Six Sigma (DMAIC) consist define, measure, analysis, improve, and control steps as shown in Figure 2.4.
Goleansixsigma (2012) explains that the defining step is to identify the problems and to set goals in business operations for achieving customer satisfaction. The measuring step is to measure the significant factors of current procedure and gather the relevant information. The analysing step is to analyse data and determine what causes the problems and defects in the operational management. The improving step seeks to optimize the process according to data analysis. The controlling step is a process to ensure that there are no deviations before they result in defects (Goleansixsigma 2012).

Bridge (2016) also explains that Lean Six Sigma (LSS) is a mixture of the principles of Lean and Six Sigma. Lean is just a way to streamline processes that result in increased revenue, lower costs and increased customer satisfaction. A core aspect of lean is fast, effective, inexpensive and satisfactory quality (Goleansixsigma 2012). The lean process reflects the goal of continuous waste reduction and streamlining workflows to produce goods and services, efficiently, that are highly valued for users.
Six Sigma is a process improvement approach that allows companies to improve by designing and monitoring business activities on a daily basis to reduce the causes of business process defects or errors, focusing on results and satisfaction (Kamar 2014). Schweikhart and Dembe (2009) also explain that Six Sigma is a business management strategy for continuous improvement of organizations and works by finding and eliminating the causes of errors and delays in business processes.

Hence, the integration of Lean and Six Sigma will prove beneficial for the entire system as Lean can speed up Six Sigma for better results. Lean Six Sigma can develop employees in the organization efficiently. Employees are involved in the improvement process which promotes and drives everyone to act responsibly. Lean Six Sigma builds confidence in the building and transparency throughout the organization and promotes a common understanding of how each person contributes to the success of the organization. Applying Lean Six Sigma is not complicated and it is quite easy to understand. Lean Six Sigma uses clear principles and can be applied in any industry, such as manufacturing and service industries, including small to large companies (Goleansixsigma 2012).

Thus, Lean Six Sigma is very a valuable and famous tool which is employed in many organizations to improve their own products and services to eliminate defects. Lean Six Sigma techniques could be applied to businesses for managing effectively, in order to increase revenue and reduce costs as well as respond to customer needs.
2.2.5 The SERVQUAL Model and Gaps Model in Service Quality Delivery

The SERVQUAL model was created by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) based on the processes involved in assessing service quality using the Gaps model.

The ten espoused service quality dimensions are as follows:

1. Tangibility - is concerned with employee appearance, the physical indicators of service, equipment, facilities, personnel, and announcement materials;
2. Reliability - regards the capability to present the promised service constantly and dependably;
3. Responsiveness - is associated with the degree of enthusiasm engaged to help customers and provide prompt and timely services;
4. Credibility - includes believability, trustworthiness, and the honesty of the service suppliers;
5. Security - enables the client feel free from hazard, risk or uncertainty;
6. Competence - refers to possession of the required knowledge and skills to execute the service;
7. Courtesy - covers good manners, respect, consideration, and kindliness of contact personnel;
8. Communication - embraces the belief that customers must be addressed and informed in language where they can understand, including staff listening to their customers;
9. Understanding/knowing the customers - means making the attempt to respond to customers’ needs and requirements;
10. Access - covers approachability and simplicity of contact (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry 1985).
However, these service quality dimensions were reduced from ten quality dimensions into five dimensions in 1988. The five dimensions reduce and conceptualize quality, as follows (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry 1988).

1. Tangibility: physical facilities, appearance, machinery, tools, staff and communication materials;
2. Reliability: capability to execute the assured service dependably, precisely and repeatedly;
3. Responsiveness: enthusiasm to assist clients and provide prompt, timely service;
4. Assurance: knowledge and politeness of workers and their capability to convey the faith and confidence the organization seeks to provide to its clients;
5. Empathy: caring and individualized attention which the firm provides to its customers.

Thus, the five dimensions within service quality such as credibility, security, competence and courtesy are labelled as “Assurance” and the other dimensions such as communication, understanding the customers and access are labelled as “Empathy”. The other remaining dimensions such as tangibility, reliability and responsiveness are completed through the scale’s improved procedures.

Figure 2.5 shows the entire Perceived Service Quality Model in various sub-dimensions. It explains more fully the perceptions of human complexity in a service context.
The perceived service quality model illustrates the relationship between the perceptions of service quality and the service quality dimensions. The service quality dimensions consist of tangibles, empathy, assurance, responsiveness, and reliability that will logically affect service expectations and service perceptions – the possible results are shown in outcomes numbered one through three. Number one describes the “quality surprise” if the expected service is less than the perceived service; that is, customers will be surprised if they are received a better service than they had expected. Customers in outcome number two will be satisfied with the service, if they receive a service equal to that which they expected. Number three customers will assess the quality experience to be unacceptable, if they are receive a service level that is less than they expected. Moreover, word of mouth, past experience and personal needs will impact directly to customer’s service expectations. Word of mouth is general information communicated from one person to another person and which could impact service expectations. Word of mouth includes rumours, gossip,
innuendo, and hearsay. In general, word of mouth is commonly used for explaining the positive information being spread rather than negative. Personal needs and past experience are also important factors that can influence service expectations, similar to word of mouth.

Another main finding of Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry’s research (1988) is that there are five key discrepancies or gaps that interfere with service quality. Based on

Figure 2.6: SERVQUAL Model (Parasuraman et al. 1991, p.337)
these five gaps within service quality, as shown in Figure 2.6, they developed a conceptual model that companies could use to measure and improve service quality. The elements of the five gaps and their definitions are as follows:

- **Gap one** shows the discrepancy or gap between customers’ expectations of service to be received, and company or management perceptions of those expectations. For example, in a fast food restaurant, the customer will place an emphasis on receiving the correct food order, but management will emphasise quick service as being more significant. This indicates that management does not understand what the customer expects (Thawani 2004).

  Key factors leading to provider gap one includes:
  - Management does not recognize what customers expect.
  - Management does not understand how to formulate customers’ expectations.
  - Management is lacking research orientation.
  - Management is lacking interaction between management and customers.
  - Management is lacking encouragement/responsiveness to listen to customer complaints.

- **Gap two** is the discrepancy or gap between the service quality specifications and the management perceptions of customer’s expectations. For example, management might perceive that customers expect operators to reply to their
telephone calls in a timely manner. To customers, “timely manner” may mean within twenty seconds. However, if management designs delivery such that telephone calls are replied to within thirty seconds, a service design gap is created. Therefore, management has to develop this perception into a service quality standard (Thawani 2004).

Key factors leading to provider gap two include:

- Poor service design.
- Undefined service designs.
- Lack of translation into workable specifications.
- Absence of customer-driven standards.
- Inappropriate physical evidence and service quality scales.

Gap Three refers to the discrepancy or gap between the service delivery and the service quality specifications. For example, management of a company may have determined a standard, such as the expectation that Optus telephone calls should be answered within twenty seconds. But if it takes more than twenty seconds for the call to be answered, regardless of the cause, there is a delivery gap. Gap 3 is associated to delivery, as the area of the service performance gap, because actual service delivery does not meet the specifications or standard set by management (Thawani 2004).

Key factors leading to provider gap three include:

- Lack of collaboration.
- Poor worker selection.
- Insufficient training.
- Unsuitable occupation design.
- Problems with service intermediaries.
- Failure to match supply and demand.
- Customers who do not fulfil roles.

➢ **Gap Four** is about the discrepancy or gap between delivery of service and external communications to customers. For example, the service company makes promises to customers through its advertising media, sales force, commercials and other connections that raise certain expectations and serve as the criteria against which clients measure the actual quality of service delivered. Thus, Gap Four can be the gap between the real service and the promised service (Thawani 2004).

Key factors leading to provider Gap Four include:
- Lack of integrated service marketing communications.
- Ineffective management of customers’ expectations.
- Over promising in advertising.
- Over promising in personal selling.
- Insufficient communication between sales and operations.

➢ **Gap Five** is the discrepancy or gap between customer service expectations and the service they actually perceive. For example, customers may expect to wait only fifteen minutes for car parking, but in fact they have to wait more than thirty minutes. Gap 5 is referred to as the customer gap, because
actually perceived service does not meet the customer’s service expectations. Key determinants of the service expected by customers include external communications, personal requirements, past experience, and word-of-mouth communications from the service providers (Thawani 2004).

These are the five key discrepancies or gaps that interfere with service quality, as illustrated on Figure 2.6. A key implication is that the communication gap plays a major part in service quality problems (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry 1988). Figure 2.6 also shows the functional gap between customer expectations and the perceived actual performance delivered by an organization. Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman (1993) argue that satisfaction can be the key target established to address the gap between service prediction and service perception. Thus, service quality is the factor used to compare the difference between the desired expectations with perceived service performance outcomes. Joshua and Koshi (2005) assert that the application of the gap model is utilized as driving service quality improvement. Further, Zeithaml and Bitner (2003) point out that Gaps 1 to 4 must be closed by the service providers and management team while Gap 5 can be done by marketers.

The five core dimensions of the SERVQUAL model that are designed for measuring service quality in organizations include (1) Tangible: personal appearance, physical facilities and instruments; (2) Reliability: the skills on which organisations depend to execute the promised service; (3) Responsiveness: willingness to assist customers and offering rapid service; (4) Assurance (containing security competence, credibility, and courtesy): knowledge and degree of politeness of employees and their capability to motivate confidence and trust; (5) Empathy (comprising access,
contact, dealing to clients): the level of care and individualized interest that the organization provides its patrons (Parasuraman, Zeithamal & Berry 1988). In addition, the SERVQUAL model has been extensively utilized by researchers and managers to measure service quality in organizations (Zeithaml & Bitner 2003).

The SERVQUAL model is recognised as an important tool in measuring the quality of services and demonstrates the relationship between organizational management and its customers. This model is designed for measuring service quality in organizations. Thus, the SERVQUAL model is appropriate to be used as a tool for the assessment of service quality and may be significant when seeking to enhance service quality standards in businesses. Hence, this model is used to assess and to guide improvements in operational management of TTM businesses in this thesis research.

2.2.6 Criticisms of Quality Management Tools

The principles referred to quality concepts and models in Section 2.2 – including the TQM model, the PDCA model, the Joseph Juran model, the Feigenbaum model, the QA model, the Lean Six Sigma model, and the SERVQUAL model – are generally employed as key instruments to enable businesses to reach a higher level of quality performance. The critiques of these models are discussed as follows.

The TQM model is a philosophy intended to improve a whole organization which is focused on the continuous improvement of procedures, and enhancing the efficiency of machines and people for improving quality. The TQM model can be employed to reach productivity and procedural efficiency by identifying and solving problems in
the working processes and systems. However, Dam (2010) pointed out that the initial costs of implementing quality management are high, owing to employees having to learn about the importance of quality and processes to improve quality. The usage of TQM can interrupt production during the learning process and the after-training process as well because staff will take a longer time to complete their functions if they want to improve the quality of work (Dam 2010).

The Deming cycle (PDCA model) is a four-step approach for solving problems and achieving a continuous improvement process including plan, do, check and action. The PDCA model is considered as an endless cycle for improving quality. The PDCA model can be a practical design for assisting the measurement system to ensure that customers' requirements are met. The problems of using the PDCA model relate to the requirement for the submission of the results of analysis and appraisal in a formalized linear pattern (Dudin et al. 2017). The action plan and methodological principles of the Deming cycle are sometimes unclear and this technique does not address political or coercive situations (Waldman 1994; Wilkinson 2001).

The Joseph Juran model focuses on cross-functional management including quality planning, quality controlling, and quality improving. This model can be used to associate continuous improvement processes for developing and checking the quality of products and services. However, the process of Joseph Juran does not focus on leadership and motivation theories. This model seems to emphasize the control system rather than the dimension of the humans in the organization (Waldman 1994; Wilkinson 2001).
The Feigenbaum model is a management tool of total quality control which consists of the four phases including setting the quality standards, evaluating the suitability of these standards, responding when standards are satisfied or unsatisfied, and creating new standards to enable continuous improvement. The Feigenbaum model can be employed as an essential instrument to enable organizations to achieve a higher level of quality performance. However, the Feigenbaum model makes no distinction between the different kinds of quality contexts. This model does not bring together the different theories into one coherent whole (Waldman 1994; Wilkinson 2001).

The Quality Assurance (QA) concept addresses developing programs and continuous learning improvement processes to ensure and enhance quality. The QA model focuses on continuous improvement in education systems, in particular in curriculum management. The QA model can be employed as a systematic review of educational institutions and programs to ensure that the quality standards of education, scholarships and infrastructure are recognized. Torre and Zapata (2008) indicate that quality assurance is not a widely known activity. The development of the quality assurance process may be accepted in some organizations.

The Lean Six Sigma (LSS) model is an integration of two different business management techniques – the Lean and Six Sigma concepts. The LSS model is a dynamic process focused on the customer’s requirements, defect prevention, cycle time reduction, and cost savings. The LSS model is employed in organizations to create products and services and to eliminate defects. The LSS model can be applied to businesses for managing effectively to increase earnings, to reduce costs,
and to respond to customer’s needs. However, the LSS model does not have a standard framework and is not clear about the usage of instruments and the direction of strategy planning chosen in the initial levels of projects (Kumar et al. 2006).

The SERVQUAL model is related to the concepts of perception and expectation and is designed for measuring service quality in organizations. This model is used to identify the quality of services to illustrate the relationship between the organization’s management and customer satisfaction in quality measurement. The SERVQUAL model can be applied as an assessment tool to evaluate the service quality in businesses. However, the SERVQUAL model does not create knowledge in psychology, statistics and economics. This model has been improperly based on the expectations disconfirmation concept rather an attitudinal concept (Buttle 1995). Hussain (2014) also pointed out that the SERVQUAL model is not significant on the merit of the service attribute as a normative requirement for service.

Hence, for this research, the quality assurance (QA) model is used, as it focuses on continuous improvement in education systems, particularly in curriculum management. The quality assurance (QA) model is appropriate to evaluate the competencies of TTM for improving Thai massage curriculums to ensure the TTM’s quality standards of Thai massage services in the Bangkok area. The QA model employs a review of institutional systems and educational programs to ensure that standardized education, scholarships and infrastructure are recognized; this has been widely popularized for finding satisfactory and effective quality assurance policies and guidelines within their needs, capabilities and programs.
2.3 Competency & Competency Standards

During the past decade, there has been an increasing awareness, within competency standards systems, of the need for improving individual and organizational practice in health professions (Balkanska, Georgiev & Popova 2010). It is more significant than ever to guarantee that the people-oriented employment services are presented by well-qualified experts (Ford 2008). There is rising demand for better accountability, by health experts, for the results of their performance. Staff or therapists have to respond to ensure that those who work are capable and properly qualified to work. They have to provide quality care services in ethical and effective ways to their customers, to maintain the competence necessary for performance. These factors have already impacted massage therapy managements. In many countries, such as Canada, Australia and the Philippines, the national governments and/or massage therapy professional institutions have recognized the need to create competency standards as guidance for massage therapists, with many members having to meet these standards before taking up professional performance.

As found in fields including law and clinical psychology, the terms “competent” and “competency” are widely used; they are applied to identify the standards of legal capacity or the capability of mental processes and consciousness (Schippman et al. 2000). Other applications of the concept of competency are found in education, mathematics, chemistry and English. Today, even the business of industry is being influenced by these terms. There is no doubt that ‘competency’ is well known in global business offices. Schippman et al. (2000, p.708) claim that “the industrial level and managerial psychology rely deeply on an assumption… that an individual’s
position on [competencies] has the potential to forecast work performance or achievement”. Thus, the concept of competency is implicated in every conceivable business aspect.

2.3.1 Competency

“Competency” is an idea that has been around for centuries. Competency requires training with a professional and receiving a certificate when performance meets the standards created by the trade or profession. Competency refers to the basic characteristics of the person – motivation, personality, image or social role and knowledge that a person can use (Boyatzis, Stubbs & Taylor 2002).

Competencies are defined as a set of attributes that enable individuals to perform a series of tasks to the right standards and as the abilities that result from attributes such as cognitive abilities, skills and attitudes (Battel-Kirk et al. 2009). Competence can be identified as a core element of ethical conduct that is reflected in an ethical standard; an example is the American Psychological Association in 2002, which aimed to improve education and training, progress the field of practice, and build other outlines for responsibility to the community (Hanson & Kerkhoff 2011). Dobson (2003) defines a competency as more than just an explanation of work actions or tasks. It includes evaluating the capabilities and addressing the knowledge, skills and attitudes required of staff, to ensure that performance meets a required standard.

Ash and Phillips (2000) argue that competence is generally defined as the possession and progression of adequate skills, suitable attitudes and experience for
the achievement of performance in life. Competency includes employment and other patterns of work; it indicates developments and tasks in a variety of significant roles, and it comprises experience as an important component of competence. Qualified members encompass meeting minimum level requirements or standards comprising knowledge, attitudes and skills. These key aspects are linked directly to learning outcomes and job performance.

Competence can be thought of as the knowledge, skills and essential features needed for presentation and performance to the right standards (Occupational Therapy Australian 2010). Competency can be separated into the proficient and the competent performance levels. Competent processes can be identified as Important knowledge, skills and ability to participate in professional careers, while ‘proficient trainers’ are those with related competencies who are also able to carry out “with improved ease and sophistication (in) such parts as efficiency and quality, as well as a superior capacity to deal successfully at various stages of difficulty” (Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists 2007, p.15).

Competence within Australia is employed as the benchmark against the occupation that is supposed to appraise the quality of staff (Records Management Association of Australasia 2008; The National Training Board 1992). Australia Health Ministers (2004) defines competence as an especially challenging task, related to the dynamic and evolving environment within Australian occupational treatment and health-care sections.
Balkanska, Georgiev and Popova (2010) state that they attempted to develop competence-based management to attain competitive improvements, in the European Union. The improvement and evaluation of competence or competencies is used to classify key success factors for harmonizing the issue of employment and free movement of workers inside the EU.

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Organizational success can be achieved by establishing competencies in human resource management, organizational improvement and knowledge management (Zaugg & Thom 2010). Competencies are determined to be a valuable base for training, health promotion, academic practice and professional development. Performance demonstrates the development of professional standards and quality assurance systems as well as confirmation of health promotion as specialized abilities (Battel-Kirk et. al 2009)

Thus, competency is a combination of skills, knowledge and attitudes, and the ability to ensure performance meets defined standards. Competencies could be used to assess the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the massage therapists based on the qualification that they should have. Competency is directly associated with skills and knowledge, which is a very important factor for Thai massage therapists, as proper
massage skills can affect customer satisfaction. In addition, the employer can understand what essential massage skills should be added to their employees’ capabilities for developing and improving massage performance.

2.3.2 Competencies Standards

In the 1960s, the competency issues were revived, because of the economic context of society. It is the main reason that moved many occupations to again start an intensified emphasis on competencies. The hasty economic changes impacted production in the 1960s, connected especially to the globalization of community which in turn required that businesses be more competitive – hence the need for competent staff. Global rivalry also impacted many parts of businesses and industries, pertaining to what constitute effective work, and what brings better services and products. When the United States and Great Britain faced the threat of economic disaster, they responded through an improvement in efforts in managerial education, emphasizing responsiveness to the lack of skills within the public workforce. This attempt led to the creation of managerial competency, but in different aspects. The United State emphasizes qualities, attitudes, and motivations that created superiority, but Britain’s competency focuses on improving a variety of abilities and skills to create a standard contract (Horton 2000). David McClelland (1973) is well known as the leader of the competency movement group. His topic and journal were published under the name “Testing for Competence rather than for Intelligence”. At present, his conceptual competency has been widely used all over the world and has been highlighted in numerous works (Miller, Todahl & Platt 2010).
The approach to competency standards seeks to provide tools to assess the task outcomes or performance of individual members. Other related terms include: retaining and achieving proper standards, suggesting the plan of educational and training programs (Abreu, Peloquin & Ottenbacher 1998; Hager&Gonczi 1991). The principle of competencies is conceptualized as symbolic of the building blocks which are taught within elementary graduate schools such as an understanding of scientific, principled standards. Functional competency shows the knowledge, skills and work needed for service conditions such as evaluation, suggestion and management (Hanson & Kerkhoff 2011).

The format of competency standards includes five elements as shown below:

(i) **Units of competency or unit title and descriptions** refer to short concisely-worded statements explaining the significant areas of competency expressed in terms of outcomes. They are descriptors of the main job conditions of a profession. The information details the topic and explains the board application of skills and knowledge in the place of work (National Volunteer Skill Centre 2003).

(ii) **Element of competency** is an outline which depicts the significant activities or parts of a job covered by a specific aspect of the unit. They illustrate the capability of people in the workplace to perform in a particular work characteristic to fulfil these work roles (National Volunteer Skill Centre 2003).

(iii) **Performance criteria** show the assessment of statements explaining the stage of performance needed for individual elements of competency. It is useful for evaluators to determine whether the required mixed unit and
elements have been performed to meet standards (National Volunteer Skill Centre 2003).

(iv) **Range of variables** is an outline of contexts and conditions in which tasks or performance have to take place. These set the boundaries and controls to be concerned with, during the evaluated work (National Volunteer Skill Centre 2003).

(v) **Evidence guides** provide guidance and advanced information for evaluation and interpretation within each unit of competency. They include explanations which need to be considered during appraisal, and the required evidence of sufficient competency (National Volunteer Skill Centre 2003).

Expectations of competence encompass the competency standards contexts. The standards of competencies are associated with official contexts (Standards Australia 2005) describing the proper knowledge, skills and attitudes regarding important aspects to be performed at an acceptable stage (Greiner & Knebel 2003; McAllister 2006). Competency standards are supposed to reflect the awareness of proficient performance credited by the varied member of a profession (Rodger et al. 2009).

### 2.3.3 The Difference between Competency and Competency Standards

 Competence is built or mandated by competency standards papers as authoritative documents (Standards Australia 2005). It reflects essential knowledge, attitudes and skills considered basic to practise at a specific stage (Greiner & Knebel 2003; McAllister 2006). Competency standards are clearly and absolutely involved in a profession’s significant philosophies, principles and extent. The concept refers to
components of the academic and interpersonal competence compared with conditions of the community, academic and practiced requirements (Walsh 2002).

In order to determine competence, the National Volunteer Skill Centre (2003) explains that units of competency are a significant factor of the entire set of applicable competency standards. A unit is created as the building block for section qualifications. Units are the statement of a significant function or mission, especially as it may address work or activities (National Volunteer Skill Centre 2003). Performances or tasks in the organization have to be evaluated. This evaluation procedure is analysed by performance criteria in accordance with individual units of competence. Performance criteria show the stage of activities that may be required and successfully undertaken to reflect competent practice in the frame of the goals needed in an organization or by proper standards. A range of variables contains knowledge and skills in which competent practices are expected, providing additional information for both members and evaluators. Evidence guides explain advanced information for evaluation consisting of the details of the activities and work performance for which appraisal would take place. The element is evaluated along with kinds of evidence required for the determination of competence. An entire unit is related to both a series of variables and indication guides. The evidence guide and the range of variables are alternative elements, but these are applied by each element of competency in the improvement plan of the competency standards (Ash S & Phillips 2000).

Greiner and Knebel (2003) and McAllister (2006) state that the competency expectations are represented and managed by the competency standards
documentations. The standards of competencies are regarded as official documents (Standards Australia 2005) that explain the essential knowledge, skills and attitudes which need to be performed at an acceptable stage and level.

To sum up, the usage of the terms ‘competent’ or ‘competency’ will be applied to Thai massage therapy. Competency refers to knowledge, skills and attitudes for practice in Thai massage services, to meet the competency standards of the occupation, and public expectations with respect to the capability of Thai massage therapists’ performance and organizational performance. Thai massage services should reflect competencies to perform both specific useful skills such as basic and advanced Thai massage therapy and applied Thai herbal applications. These competencies may extend to cognitive techniques such as ethical knowledge, social and public requirements, legal and moral regulations.

2.4 Quality and Competency Standards Models

This section explicates the relevant quality and competency standards including global quality standards, spa quality standards, and the competency standards for massage therapists.

2.4.1 The Global Quality Standards

The study of global quality standards is significant for businesses seeking to improve products and services, to ensure quality standards in the global market. The following reflect such global quality standards: the International Organization for Standardization, the European Quality Award, and the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award.
2.4.1.1 International Organization for Standardization (ISO 9000 – 12000)

The ISO Series of Standards are developed by the International Organization for Standardization (Matouq, Kloub & Inoue 2007). It includes guidelines and requirements on good management practice (International Organization for Standardization 2010). ISO 9000 is the one addressing quality management systems, which is accepted worldwide as a tool for creating a company’s competitive advantage (Kuo et al. 2009). ISO 9000 was created in September 1994 by Chrysler, Ford and General Motors to identify a principal set of quality expectations for suppliers of products and service. This family of standards aims to make sure that quality standards are built into the operation to be carried out, continuously, through to the end of processing products. It is also used to continually improve an organisation’s entire performance and efficiency (Pheng & Hou 2008). ISO 9000 is designed as a simple system for service organisations or manufacturers in many industries such as manufacturing, engineering, health care and other services. These industries use ISO 9000 as their fundamental framework to control the quality of their manufacturing and service systems (Besterfield et al. 1999). ISO 9000 is widely used for scholarly research in order to adapt this standard to develop quality management models such as SERVQUAL and so forth (Parasuraman, Zeithmal & Berry 1985). Five series of standards under the ISO 9000 family are shown in Table 2.2 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISO Series of Standard</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ISO 9000</td>
<td>ISO 9000 is the handbook and selection tool that describes principles of quality models and identifies key terms. It represents a road map for the use of the total series.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISO 9002</td>
<td>ISO 9002 is used to guide businesses in protecting, finding and revising problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISO 9003</td>
<td>ISO 9003 is utilized for the finding and controlling of problems that are found during final assessment and checking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISO 9004</td>
<td>ISO 9004 is applied as a guide for quality organizations and quality system components.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Besterfield et al. (1999).
Thus, the ISO Series of Standards includes guidelines and requirements on good management practice accepted as a tool in creating a company’s competitive advantage. In the future, the Thai massage shops located in Bangkok may be able to receive world-class awards such as ISO 9000. The improvement of service quality standards in the Thai massage businesses will not only be used to satisfy the customer but also will be accepted by international institutions. The Thai massage businesses will then be able to confidently compete with other service businesses.

2.4.1.2 The European Quality Award

The European Quality Award model is a diagnostic tool to assess an organisation’s current health in order to apply for the European Quality Award (or the EFQM Excellence Award), develop new goals, visions, missions and value statements of organizations, explain the systemic nature of organisations, and help organisations identifying the cause and effect of problems. This award is given annually to the appropriate companies by the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM), an institute that supports quality and excellence in Europe with the purpose of establishing good management systems (Kelemen 2003). Russell (2000) indicates that the European Quality Award or the EFQM Excellence Award model differs from ISO in the sense that its scope – leadership tasks, policies and strategies, and the relevant stakeholders – is broader than that of the ISO.

2.4.1.3 The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA)

The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA) was launched in 1987 through the collaboration of U.S. industries and government. This award is a
structure for TQM self-assessment in the United States (Oakland & Sohal 1996). The criteria of the MBNQA are focused on seven core values and concepts: leadership (driver), information and analyses, strategic process planning, business administration, human resource development, business results (measures of progress), customer focus and satisfaction (goal) (Oakland & Sohal 1996), public responsibility, design quality and a focus on the results of preventative measures (Tai & Przasnyski 1999).

2.4.2 Spa Quality Standards

This section presents the best practices of spa quality standards for seeking key elements of service quality standards from practice. The following are three “best practice” spa quality standards models which show how to conduct the research framework, as follows: spa quality standard consumer research by VisitBritain (2005); exploring the quality gap of spa services in the United Kingdom (UK) by Kusol (2008); and the International Standards of Spa Excellence (SM) (2010).

2.4.2.1 Spa Quality Standard Consumer Research (VisitBritain 2005)

VisitBritain (2005) highlights that spa businesses in the United Kingdom (UK) do not clearly show an understanding of the quality standards that reflect and encompass significant issues for acceptance of the industry and its customers. Hence, the activities and focus of VisitBritain – a combined product by the British Tourist Authority, the Spa business Association, and the British International Spa Association – are coordinated to conduct a program for standards of quality. The research entitled Spa Quality Standard Consumer Research aims to understand and appraise customers’ needs, awareness of those needs, and the skills required in the
spa industry in the UK and Ireland (VisitBritain 2005). This case study explores the advanced issues that are relevant to the service quality standard project by using the qualitative approach to recognize the service capability of spa businesses (VisitBritain 2005).

A two-phase qualitative method was applied to the VisitBritain research. The first phase was to use focus groups which were conducted using six focus groups from selected customers in the ABC 1 social classes who use spa products. Five focus groups were taken in London, Birmingham, and Newcastle while one group was taken with just male spa consumers only. Each focus group interview took about one-and-a-half hours. The second phase was based on case studies. Five case studies were conducted in spa businesses in the UK to investigate further issues raised from the focus groups. The in-depth interviews occupied approximately 15-30 minutes for each participant; 40 participants were interviewed who are spa users (VisitBritain 2005).

The results of this research show the significant key findings of insights into the spa business in the UK are as follows (VisitBritain 2005): key areas for improving service quality in the operation and management of spa services include (1) Management perceptions; (2) Specification of service quality; (3) Service delivery; and (4) Communication.

In addition, the lists of quality standards of spa services that were identified by customers were as follows:
a) The most significant aspects of quality standards are – in order of priority – cleanliness, warmth, helpfulness, and noise level (VisitBritain 2005).

b) Next, the ranking indicators of quality standards in order of significant aspects are as follows: staff qualifications; ambience; health and safety; variety of healing; value for money; equipment; standards observed at an individual location; space; and extra materials such as towels, robes and shoes (VisitBritain 2005).

c) Lastly, the least important of customer requirements are childcare facilities, activities outside of the spa, a variety of facility types, medical qualifications of employees, and treatment by using natural spa water, and the number of staff (VisitBritain 2005).

This case study provides the main elements of service quality standards such as cleanliness, warmth, helpfulness, and noise level that are required by customers. These are crucial dimensions to the research that allow the researcher to evaluate and measure the outcomes.

2.4.2.2 Exploring the Quality Gap of Spa Services in the UK (Kusol 2008)

Exploring the Quality Gap of Spa Services in the UK by Kusol (2008) aims to investigate the gap between service quality perceptions of the management of the Thai spas in the UK and expectations of customers. Kusol (2008) indicates that the application of the SERVQUAL Model is a helpful instrument to evaluate service quality for the spa organizations in the UK. The SERVQUAL model is employed to improve service quality with regard to customer expectations and management perceptions against the criteria of good management and service (Kusol 2008).
The qualitative approach including semi-structured interviews was selected to gather in-depth data requirements. Both spa entrepreneurs or managers and customers were interviewed about a variety of service quality issues (Kusol 2008).

**Table 2.2: The Rank of Management Aspects and Customer Aspects in term of the Five Dimensions of Service Quality**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Management aspects</th>
<th>Customer aspects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tangibles</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Assurance</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Kusol (2008).

Table 2.2 shows the comparative rankings given by customers and spa owners, compared with each other, to better reflect the differences which may exist between the customers’ perceptions and those of management. The results for management showed that empathy is ranked first, followed by responsiveness as second; this emerged because they believed that, when specific needs of customers are known, a quick response would be given. Physical facilities and environmental features identified as tangibles are viewed as third. Meanwhile, the customers identified tangibles as the first and most critical factor because they preferred a hygienic environment in an appealing physical location, set up with modern equipment. Empathy was the second-most-important aspect because customers would like spa providers to pay a high level of attention to what customers want. Responsiveness was selected as the third significant factor due to people thinking that prompt and
appropriate service should be offered by the staff. In addition, it is noteworthy that reliability and assurance are stated as the last significant features, of the five identified areas, for both management and customers. Both reliability and assurance are linked to the spa business and massage in terms of the qualifications of therapists, and capacity to address the health needs and safety of clients. It appears that the results indicated that customers believed that the service quality of the therapies they received meet standards required by the Environmental Health Department (Kusol 2008).

The outcome of “analysing the gap” is used as a driver for improving service quality. Thus, the SERVQUAL model is an excellent instrument for Thai spa operators in the UK. The research findings explore that the differences in key aspects, between management perceptions and customer expectations, that may lead to problems with respect to service quality standards. This means that, if the spa operations do not understand their customers’ requirements, those customers are likely to be unsatisfied with the service delivered (Kusol 2008).

2.4.2.3 The International Standards of Spa Excellence (SM) 2010

According to the International Standards of Spa Excellence (SM) (2010), the required standards reflect the essential components which need to be managed in order to best ensure the sustained success of spas. The following five key elements indicate those requirements:

- Intention and strategy plan: to set strategic planning including characterizing the culture, spa vision, mission, values, spa treatment menu, and required
physical equipment or suppliers (International Standards of Spa Excellence (SM) 2010).

- Leadership and management: to select the proper programs for training workers, allocating resources, improving the strategy, and indicating key business performance indicators (International Standards of Spa Excellence (SM) 2010).

- Guest experience: to identify the methods to be improved by using booking records, spa protocols, and records of selling products (International Standards of Spa Excellence (SM) 2010).

- Operation support: to emphasize spa operations such as cleaning and sanitizing the spa equipment, and maintaining tools and facilities for ensuring that delivery of spa services meets regulations applicable to spa business requirements (International Standards of Spa Excellence (SM) 2010).

- Improvement: to identify alternative ways of improvement for the spa management, by using customer feedback, analysing root problems, finding or correcting problems from sources of information, Spa self-assessment for clarifying what aspects need to improve, and classifying and eliminating sources of waste (the International Standards of Spa Excellence(SM) 2010).

The five key elements apply four activities including planning, document recording, managing, and evaluating, to explain the cycle of a comprehensive spa quality management system. These activities are similar to the PDCA Model. This may be due to the International Standards of Spa Excellence (SM) 2010 being based on conceptual frameworks of international quality management systems, which are accepted by other industries, such as the international quality management system.
(ISO 9000), the environmental management standards (ISO14000), the European Quality Award (EFQM) Excellence model, and the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA). Thus, setting standards in spa businesses is needed, to add the significant elements identified above into the planning processes used at each individual operation. The International Standards of Spa Excellence (SM) 2010 points out that these applications could assist a spa business in terms of being successful in their business (International Standards of Spa Excellence (SM) 2010).

2.4.3 The Competency Standards for Massage Therapists

Competency standards, including skills, knowledge and attitudes, are becoming increasingly more essential elements for organizations seeking to improve their workers’ capabilities today. The accomplishments of firms are based upon effective operational management (Balkanska, Georgiev & Popova 2010), but the Thai massage industry faces a lack of competency standards and there is a consequent insufficiency in competency-based performance by Thai massage therapists, at all stages. The following are three best-practice massage competency standards models which show how to conduct the research framework. They are: the Canadian competency standards of massage therapy by the College of Massage Therapists of Ontario (2006); the Australian competency standards of massage therapy by the Department of Education and Training (2012); and the Training Regulations for Massage Therapy NC II by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (2017). The study has chosen three organizations as reflecting best-practice massage competency standards models with the minimum core competency standards for massage practitioners. Firstly, the College of Massage Therapists of Ontario (2006) has been directed by the Ministry of Health and Long
Term Care and regulated by the Health Profession Act, 1991 and the Massage Therapy Act, 1991. The College prescribes minimum massage therapy competency standards according to the skills, knowledge and attitudes of massage practitioners. Secondly, the Australian competency standard for massage therapy as set out by the Department of Education and Training (2012) is selected because the Australian Department of Education and Training has been approved by the Australian government. This department’s requirements are referred to as Australian Minimum Competency Standards for use in massage therapy practice. Lastly, the Training Regulation Massage Therapy NC II was created by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (2017). The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) is the main government agency responsible for managing and supervising technical education and skills development in the Philippines and deals with the national competency standards assessment. The competency categories, including knowledge, skills, and attitudes, are imperative for the researcher to assess with respect to industry standards.

2.4.3.1 The Canadian Competency Standards of Massage Therapy by the College of Massage Therapists of Ontario

According to the development of massage therapy competency standards in Canada, the College of Massage Therapists of Ontario (2006) explains that the competency standards are properly divided into three elements covering Health Science; Clinical Science; and Professional Development. The College of Massage Therapists of Ontario (2006) describes the category of competence as encompassing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that can be measured in various ways including educational achievements, training achievements, work-performance,
and continuing professional development. For example, the researcher can design a test according to the Canadian competency standards to test the Thai massage therapists to determine if they achieve the qualification.

Table 2.3 presents the Canadian competency standards of massage therapy by the College of Massage Therapists of Ontario (2006), to clarify the core competencies in each competency category.

Table 2.3: Canadian Competency Standards of Massage Therapy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency Category</th>
<th>Core Competencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Health Science**  | 1. Practice of general Anatomy and Physiology Principles  
2. Practice of Neuro-anatomy and Physiology Principles  
3. Practice of Pathology Principles  
4. Practice of Kinesiology Principles  
5. Practice of Nutritional Concepts  
6. Consideration of the effects of Medicine and Surgery |
| **Professional Development** | 1. Development of Self Care and Management Techniques into Daily Practice  
2. Development of effective Communication Skills into Practice  
3. Adherence to Legal Requirements of the Massage Therapy profession  
4. Development of a Philosophy Professional Ethics and Conduct  
5. Development of Business and Practice Management Skills  
6. Integration of Critical Thinking |
| **Clinical Science** | 1. Integration of the Basic Concepts, Principles and Fundamentals of Massage Therapy into Client Care  
2. Integration of Hydrotherapy and/or other Physical Agents into Client Care  
3. Integration of Therapeutic Exercises into Client Care  
4. Integration of Systemic Disorders, Conditions and Treatments into Client Care  
5. Integration of Nervous System Disorders, Conditions and Treatments into Client Care  
6. Integration of general Orthopaedic Disorders, Conditions and Treatments into Client Care  
7. Integration of Spinal Orthopaedic Disorders, Conditions and Treatments into Client care  
8. Integration of Regional/Peripheral Orthopaedic Treatments into Client Care  
9. Integration of Athletic Injuries Principles into Client Care  
10. Integration of Manual Modalities and Techniques into Client Care  
11. Integration of Pain and Stress Management Techniques into Client Care  
12. Proposal of Client Case Management Plans |

Thus, the Canadian model of massage competency provides a useful framework against which to assess the current state of massage competences amongst Thai massage therapists in the Thai massage shops as well as suggesting a model to improve and monitor the current competence and awareness of competencies in the industry.

2.4.3.2 The Australian competency standards of massage therapy by the Department of Education and Training

The Department of Education and Training (2012) explains that the Certificate IV in Massage Therapy Practice aims at the development of massage therapists with professional capabilities within the Natural Health Industry pertaining to Body Therapy. This certificate provides the basis of therapeutic massage consisting of common competencies and specialized competencies that are suitable for members in the Australian Traditional Medicine Society (ATMS). Table 2.4 illustrates the competency standards of massage therapy set out by Department of Education and Training (2012).

Table 2.4: Australian Competency Standards of Massage Therapy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency Category</th>
<th>Descriptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.0 Common Competencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Work effectively with others</td>
<td>Required knowledge and range statement changed to include environmentally sustainable practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Confirm physical health status</td>
<td>Describe a detailed level of knowledge of anatomy and physiology required to confirm physical health status.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Communicate effectively with clients</td>
<td>Cover the skills required by practitioners to establish and maintain effective communication with the client/patient throughout all interactions and provide basic counselling as required and as appropriate to facilitate the treatment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2.4: Australian Competency Standards of Massage Therapy (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency Category</th>
<th>Descriptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Administer a practice</td>
<td>Describe the skills required to provide administration for a clinical health practice according to the size and scale of the business.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Make referrals to other health care professionals when appropriate</td>
<td>Describe the skills required to arrange referrals to other health care professionals when required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 Use specific health terminology to communicate effectively</td>
<td>Cover the skills required to understand and respond to instructions, carry out routine tasks and communicate with a range of internal/external clients in a health care practice, using appropriate practice-specific/medical terminology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7 Apply First Aid</td>
<td>Describe the skills and knowledge required to provide first aid response, life support, management of casualty, the incident and other first aiders, until the arrival of medical or other assistance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8 Communicate and work effectively in health</td>
<td>Describe the skills and knowledge required to work effectively in a health setting with clients, staff, visitors, suppliers and others to meet established work requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.9 Comply with infection control policies and procedures</td>
<td>Describe the skills and knowledge required of workers to understand and comply with infection control guidelines. Policies and procedures may be organizational, industry - based and/or legislated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.10 Contribute to OHS Process</td>
<td>Address the national Work Health and Safety (WHS legislation).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2.4: Australian Competency Standards of Massage Therapy (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency Category</th>
<th>Descriptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.0 Specialized Competencies</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Work within a massage framework</td>
<td>Describe the skills required to work effectively within a massage framework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Provide the massage treatment</td>
<td>Describe the skills required to administer client/patient basic massage treatment according to the philosophy and practices of a massage therapy framework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Plan the massage treatment</td>
<td>Describe the skills required to prepare clients/patients for basic massage and negotiate treatment with customers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Apply massage assessment framework</td>
<td>Cover the skills required to interpret information gathered in the health assessment and make and review accurate assessment for basic massage treatment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 Perform massage treatment assessment</td>
<td>Cover the skills required to observe the condition of the client/patient and gather information relevant to the case in order to provide a basic massage.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The Certificate IV in Massage Therapy Practice includes 15 units of massage therapy competency comprising the first five as common units and the second five as specialization units involving skills, knowledge, and attitude. The Certificate IV in Massage Therapy Practice sets out the basic requirements to be assessed by the method of demonstration by participants in a professional environment to ensure that performance competencies are reliable and valid. This is because the Department of Education and Training (2012) recommends that the assessments must be performed in an environment that reaches industry guidelines of practice or
standards according to industry regulations and legislation; participants have to attain all competency units.

2.4.3.3 The Manila competency standards of massage therapy by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority

The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (2017) reveals that the required competencies can be divided into three elements consisting of basic competency standards, common competency standards, and core competency standards. These competencies are covered by skills, knowledge, and attitudes that focus on a person who has to complete their working holistic massage therapy outline. That is, the training is for a practitioner who needs to promote curing to reduce soreness and uneasiness, to increase healing time, to begin relaxation and to develop customers' general wellbeing. Table 2.5 describes the Manila competency standards of the Training Regulations for Massage Therapy NC II by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (2017).

Table 2.5: Manila Competency Standards of Massage Therapy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency Category</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.0 Basic Competency Standards</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Participate in workplace communication</td>
<td>Cover the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to gather, interpret and convey information in response to workplace requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Work in a team environment</td>
<td>Cover the skills, knowledge and attitudes to identify role and responsibility as a member of a team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Practice career professionalism</td>
<td>Cover the knowledge, skills and attitudes in promoting career growth and advancement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Practice occupational health and safety</td>
<td>Cover the outcomes required to comply with regulatory and organizational requirements for occupational health and safety.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 2.5: Manila Competency Standards of Massage Therapy (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency Category</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.0 Common Competency Standards</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Maintain effective relationship with clients</td>
<td>Cover the knowledge, skills and attitude required in building and maintaining effective relationship with clients.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Implement and monitor infection control policies and procedures</td>
<td>Concerned with infection control, responsibilities of employees with supervisory accountability to implement and monitor infection control policy and procedures in a specific work unit or team within an organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Respond effectively to difficult/challenging behaviour</td>
<td>Cover the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to effectively respond to difficult or challenging behavior of patients.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Apply basic first aid</td>
<td>Cover the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to provide an initial response where First Aid is required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 Maintain high standards of client services</td>
<td>Cover the knowledge, skills and attitudes required in the maintenance of high standards of client services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.0 Core Competency Standards</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Develop massage practice</td>
<td>Cover the knowledge, skills and attitude required to establish the foundations of massage practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Perform client consultation</td>
<td>Cover the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to gather information and make an accurate assessment to determine the appropriate application of massage for the client.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Perform body massage</td>
<td>Describe the knowledge, skills and performance outcome required to provide whole body massage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Maintain and organize tools, equipment, supplies and workplace area</td>
<td>Cover the knowledge, skills and attitude required to maintain and organize tools, equipment, supplies and workplace area in massage therapy service environments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Skills, knowledge, and attitudes are the key areas of qualifications required by the industry, requiring the researcher to collect, interpret, and convey data in relation to workplace requirements. These factors are embedded within the competency standards while individual competency standards show the details of different characteristics. For example, the basic competency standards concern participation and communication in the workplace, work environment, and professional practice. The common competency refers to the implementation and monitoring in accordance with the control policy to maintain high quality standards. The core competency standards recognize the therapeutic massage outline, massage evaluation and assistance in clinical massage therapy.

As reviewed, the three best practices are found to be reflected in the views of Department of Education and Training (2012), which separates massage therapy competencies into the common units and specialization units which are the necessary basic qualifications for most private Health Funds and membership of the Australian Traditional Medicine Society (ATMS). The Training Regulations for Massage Therapy NC II by Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (2017) claims that competencies are able to be obviously distinguished as basic competencies, common competencies, and core competencies. The participants have to learn all competencies provided to achieve a satisfactory standard within the components of foundation massage therapy. The College of Massage Therapists of Ontario (2006) places its emphasis on health science, professional development, and clinical science. It is interesting that all those competency standards present a combination of the skills, knowledge, attitudes, values and capabilities required to
work efficiently and effectively in a profession such as masseur, masseuse, and massage therapist.

Thus, the three best-practice massage quality standards are practical items which can be considered for integration into a guiding framework of Thai therapeutic massage competencies for interviews, because the research provides the pattern of basic competency standards which directly involves the development of competency in the TTM industry.

2.5 Thai Massage Therapeutic Industry Analysis

This section explicates the issues related to the TTM industry, including the significance of the traditional Thai massage industry; the quality standards in the TTM industry; and the practices and training within TTM in Thailand.

The practice of TTM has an ancient lineage having been established 2,500 years ago in India in the period of Gautama Buddha and spread by monks, the Buddha’s disciples, with a fusion of Ayurveda and Yoga, which was introduced to Thailand by Shivaga Komarpaj (Jivaka Kumarabhacca), who lived in the era of the Lord Buddha (Salguero 2007). Hence, Buddhist temples became centres of Thai therapeutic massage. Wat Po (or the Po temple) in Bangkok remains an acclaimed TTM school. The Wat Po Thai Traditional Medical and Massage School is accredited by the Thai Ministry of Education. This temple also offers training for Thai midwives, Thai medical practitioners and Thai pharmaceutics (Wat Po Thai Traditional Massage School 2015).
2.5.1 Significance of the Thai Therapeutic Massage Industry

This section will explicate the significance of the TTM industry including: the cultural aspects (of Thai culture); economic benefits; the impacts of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) on the Thai Economy; global competition; and employment opportunities in the Thai massage industry.

2.5.1.1 Cultural Aspect: Thai culture

Richerson and Boyd (2010) define culture as information impacting human behaviour acquired from other factors of a species through their learning, duplication and other patterns of social transmission. This illustrates that an in-depth knowledge of culture implies and requires an understanding of people’s life and behaviour. Thai culture is influenced by ancient India, China and Cambodia and by the religions of Animism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Indian culture affects Thai language, literature, religion, and massage, and Chinese culture influences Thai food, art, architecture, and medicine. Massage is a key element of medicine in Thailand. The integration of Indian, Chinese, Southeast Asian cultural spheres, Buddhism, and traditions of medicine form the basis of Thai massage (Salguero 2007).

The local culture and traditions in each region of Thailand vary according to geographic and religious factors. Rural communities and villages practice traditional activities and arts such as painting, sculpture, architecture, literature, dancing, drama and folk music, and are particular expert in building a range of unique old houses. The North, South, and Northeast parts of Thailand have distinct cultures and traditions. These activities are an important part of the lifestyles, careers and habits of Thai people (The Ministry of Culture 2015).
Apfelbaum (2003) explains that TTM is a totally unique style of massage structured on a foundation of kindness. It is a part of customary remedies, which include manipulation, medicine (oral, ointments, compresses, and steams), diet, and holy ceremonies or supernatural practices. Thai massage includes a wide range of therapeutic techniques, including learning to apply pressure, reflexology, meridian lines or Sen, blood stopping, stretching, and yoga. To perform all of these techniques, Thai massage practitioners apply pressure using their fingertips, palms, thumbs, feet, elbows, forearms, and knees to customers, with five main postures - supine, lying face down, side lying, seated and inverted. The procedures of massage are completed on a floor mat where the therapist can move around. TTM is an ancient remedial method and the authentic form of bodywork has an ancient and worthy tradition. Thai massage employs different techniques from region to region, so there are different approaches and different traditions (Apfelbaum 2003). Wu (2002) reveals that, in Thailand, there are two Thai massage styles. Southern-style begins massage to the customers in the position of abdominal muscles. It is more invasive and strong. In contrast, the Northern Thai massage style starts massage therapies at the client’s feet. It is polite and good mannered, shown for example by walking on the knees to the customers.

Buddhism has been the main religion of Thailand for a very long time, as demonstrated by the great number of monasteries found throughout the country (Thailandtoday 2011). TTM (sometimes called nuadphaenboran) had its roots in Buddhism over 2,500 years ago (Roylance & Salguero 2011). The influence of Buddhism has played an important role in enriching the existing Thai massage
system. Traditional Thai massage has been taught in the monasteries of Thailand for centuries and is performed by Buddhist monks or nuns. Practitioners believe that massage is successful in working on the 10 energy lines or Sens, and can enable natural energy to flow freely (Apfelbaum 2003).

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (2010) claims that TTM is a deep, full-body natural healing technique to rejuvenate energy flows and contributes to excellent health and wellbeing. TTM is a therapy related to stretches and bends of the human body (CBS Interactive Inc 2009), which uses techniques involved in pressing tendons and twisting and flipping the body sideways, backwards and forwards (Wat Po Thai Traditional Massage School 2015). The Thai Institute of Healing Arts (2016) defines Thai massage as the traditional integration of acupressure, yoga stretches, and deep massage to keep the body relaxed and balanced. It is an ancient healing procedure, working on the human body within energy lines, that is performed on a mat or futon mattress. Thai massage is different from Western massage – Thanyapura (2017) defines traditional Thai massage as an art of massage performance that is traditionally performed without oil or lotion. The Wat Po Thai Traditional Massage School (2015) explains that traditional Thai massage is a folk remedy which is well known as an ancient, relaxing massage technique. Smile Thai Wellness (2017) observes that traditional massage uses the same technique as Thai massage and TTM. Their performance consists of interactive movements, smooth movements, stretching and rhythmic massage through workout and acupressure, which are beneficial for the whole body to boost energy and reduce both mental and physical stress.
Thai massages are connected to traditional Thai herbal healing techniques. Thais have been passing local Thai knowledge and skills concerning ancient remedies from one generation to the next in order to keep the Thai heritage alive. Thai massages originated to treat family members. For example, husbands provided massages to wives and children provided massages to their parents, grandparents, relatives and neighbors. Massages can involve using parts of the body such as elbows, knees and feet.

One difference between modern Thai massage and TTM is that training is no longer provided by Buddhists monks and nuns. Thai massage is taught in public and private schools by qualified professional trainers (Chiang Mai Arts & Craft 2011). The desire of consumers for these products includes that they be safe, healthy and hygienic. This has driven the need for the competencies to be established and achieved (Spa Business 2011). Importantly, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (2010) points out that tourists would like to enjoy genuine cultural dimensions of massage with Thai customs, special herbs and oils, in a natural location.

2.5.1.2 Economic Benefits

Dr. Rewat Wisutwet, Director General of the Department of Health Service Support, Ministry of Public Health, proposed that Thai therapeutic massage should become a national export business (Tourism Authority of Thailand 2010). The Thai Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Commerce endorse this goal with a mission to market TTM on three fronts: the Wellness Capital of Asia; the Health Tourism Hub of Asia; and Thai Herbs for Health (Hirankitti et al. 2009). The Thai Spa Academy (2009) stated that the four regions chosen for the Wellness Capital of Asia are
Bangkok, Phuket, Samui and Chiang Mai. In 2008, ten provinces (Chon Buri, Prachin Buri, Udon Thani, Phetchaburi, Ranong, Prachuap Khiri Khan, Songkla, Krabi, Phang-nga, and Chiang Rai) also participated in a health service group to support the proposal of the Wellness Capital of Asia (Thai Spa Academy 2010). In addition, the Thailand Tourism Development Strategy Plan (2015–2017) aims to develop tourism services and products which focus on creating tourism revenue, including through the development of tourism services and products, tourism marketing, and tourism management. Hence, this plan will support Thai herbal products and healthcare services such as spa services and TTM (International Medical Travel Journal 2015).

The Royal Thai Government has become aware of the enormous potential of the developing Thai spa industry. Thus, the government has cooperated with private sector organisations to increase the quality of spa operations – spa services, tools, products, therapists, security, and facilities – towards internationally recognised spa standards and practices. The proposed standards criteria will be shown to the public before implementation. The operating committee includes representatives from government agencies, the private division, and educational institutions. The members of government agencies come from the Department for the Development of Traditional Thai Massage, the Department of Health Support Services, the Alternative Medicine of the Ministry of Public Health, and the Department of Medical Services. The representatives of the private part come from the Spa Associations, while academics from Rangsit University and other state universities are participating on behalf of educational institutions. The main role of these representatives is to produce five standards related to Thai spa regulations. These standards must focus
on safety when providing services, on establishing appropriate facilities, the roles and responsibilities of spa workers, and other requirements and recommendations relating to the spa suppliers (Tourism Authority of Thailand 2010).

The Board of Investment of Thailand (BOI) (2011) observes that Thai economic growth in 2010 was remarkable, reaching 7.8% especially on account of the expansion of the tourism sector. The evidence of economic growth in Thailand shows a strong domestic demand in its tourism (The Board of Investment of Thailand 2011). In Q4, there were 4.6 million revival tourists, indicating an increase of 7.8% over the third quarter. The strong expansion of tourism has constantly contributed to economic growth and shows that the tourism section plays an essential role in the Thai economy (The Board of Investment of Thailand 2011).

The Thai tourism sector made a sufficient recovery, after being impacted by the global crisis and political uncertainty, enabling it to gain 586 billion baht (that equals 11.9% on average). The BOI has established incentives such as exemptions for promoting the tourism industry, which is set to gain nearly 14% of GDP (The Board of Investment of Thailand 2011). The BOI (2011) also reports that, based on the statistics of the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB), the three greatest source-nations of visitors were India (46.2% of all visitors), South Korea (41.1%), and China (26.6%), all contributing to the 8.4% growth of tourist numbers for the hotel and restaurants sector in 2010. Compared with the numbers of tourists in 2009, this result shows a 12.0% increase, equal to 15.8 million tourists, in 2010. The NESDB expects that the Tourism Department can continue to increase gradually with approximately 16.8–17.0 million foreign tourists in 2011. As a result,
relevant sectors such as massage or the well-being industry are in significant demand (The Board of Investment of Thailand 2011).

According to the Board of Investment of Thailand (2011), Mr. Abhisit Vejjajiva, Prime Minister, has proposed that Thailand should develop into a leading creative economy hub in the ASEAN region. These proposals were made when The Prime Minister was discussing ‘The Role of Thailand and the ASEAN Economic Community’. This project involves raising the value of Thai services and products from culture, wisdom, and innovation and proposed at the time that the innovation would increase the share of the Thai creative industry from 12% to 20% of GDP by 2012, particularly in the tourism sector. The Tourism industry employs a wide-ranging workforce and contributes to the GDP of every ASEAN country. Thailand thus has decided to establish an industry-based workforce and elevate its performance standards through having more skilled and globalized employees (The Board of Investment of Thailand 2011).

Despite the challenges which emerged from, and remain important within the aftermath of the GFC, the Thai government ensures the peacefulness, steadiness, and hospitality of the tourism environment to welcome visitors from all over the world (The Government Public Relations Department 2011).

To facilitate the aim of developing the Thai Tourism Industry, it is important to promote the Thai massage industry. This industry is seen as a key element able to contribute significantly through the inputs of its workforce, yielding economic benefits to Thailand.
2.5.1.3 The Impacts of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) to Thailand's Economy

According to the Prince Damrongrajanuphab Institute of Research and Development (2012), economic integration has been emerging around the world since the 1960s and has forced Asian countries to set up their economic bloc by establishing the Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN) in 1967, consisting of Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Thailand. ASEAN aims to introduce and promote stability and peace for its members. Since that time, the membership of ASEAN has increased to ten countries, including Brunei, Indonesia, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Vietnam (CLMV), and Thailand. ASEAN is an economic integration considered as one of the most dynamic and powerful organizations in the region’s history. ASEAN’s focus is very much aimed at continuously working to accelerate regional cooperation for preparing and implementing the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), seeking to play a greater position in overseas trade and investment as well (Siriphratrerasophon et al. 2014).

Tamajai and Amornkitwikai (2012) explicate that the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) is expanded from the AFTA (ASEAN Free Trade Area), and proposes to achieve the structure of a single market and develop the production bases in the region, while promoting the free flow of services, products, investments, capital, and skilled labor. The AEC will generate opportunities for new business, for some entrepreneurs. However, this will effect some challenges for the capacity of entrepreneurs in the region.
Siriphattrasophon et al. (2014) point out that a modern dynamic business framework is being processed by the ASEAN Economic Community for their region. This means that the entrepreneurs or SMEs can expand and supply their products or services into the new market of over 600 million people in the future. Thus, entrepreneurs have to be aware of their competitors and need to prepare for the uncertainties which will emerge from the new ASEAN structure being implemented from 2015. That is, ASEAN members still need to be prompt in implementing improvements, to prepare for and manage the market which will develop after the commencement of the ASEAN Economic Community in 2015 (Siriphattrasophon et al. 2014).

The International Institute for Trade and Development (ITD) (2013) contends that SMEs play a significant role in economic and social development as a key mechanism in ASEAN. 96% of the total numbers of ASEAN enterprises are SMEs. SME performance can generate 42% of the total economic value, 73% of employment, and 25% of the total export value in the ASEAN economy (ITD 2013). The International Institute for Trade and Development (2013) also highlights that the significant statistics of the number of SMEs in ASEAN as are follows: Indonesia has the highest number of SMEs (196.90 per 1,000 people in the population), followed by 43.94 in Thailand, 35.15 in Singapore, 23.99 in Brunei, and 22.89 in Malaysia (ITD 2013). The Kasikorn Research Centre (2012) claims that the Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN) is one of the greatest rising economic forces, with figures including 30 per cent annual economic growth, 25.6 per cent earned from intra-ASEAN trading, and 2.2 trillion USD for the total trade value. As just a single example, ASEAN is the largest producer of hard disk drive parts and of rubber.
Further, the KPMG International Cooperative (2014) highlights that under a working group, ASEAN members created the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). The AEC will form the road map to determine the best investment opportunities and to highlight the processes forward for a single market and production base. The following are the five elementary freedoms created:

- A single market and manufacturing foundation with free flowing products; free flowing services; free flowing investment; free flowing funds and free flowing skilled labour (KPMG International Cooperative 2014).
- A competitive economic region promoting: rivalry policy; purchaser protection; intellectual property rights and infrastructure improvement (KPMG International Cooperative 2014).
- A region of fair economic development: SMEs improvement; beginning for ASEAN incorporation (KPMG International Cooperative 2014).
- A region entirely encompassed within the global economy: a coherent approach to external economic relations and enhanced partnerships with global supply systems (KPMG International Cooperative 2014).

Siriphatrasophon et al. (2014) assert that the ASEAN group can bring modern templates, challenges, new cooperation and the dynamics of a free market in each member country, supporting the free flow of products, services, capital, technologies, people and manufacturer features. Entrepreneurs and indeed all businesses will have to recognize the challenge and to prepare by themselves a strategic plan that is both defensive and offensive owing to the fact that most businesses have limited competencies and restricted performance capabilities. The Asian Development Bank Institute (2014) argues that most ASEAN countries are facing the lack of proper
policies and standards to deal with the mobility of skilled and unskilled labor. The key concerns impacting several countries among ASEAN’s members are that the characteristics of law and governance processes are unclear. To approach the AEC’s planned goals and to improve the principle of ASEAN as a united group of nations, these gaps have to be narrowed substantially. To become a greatly competitive region, ASEAN must address research and development, suitable management and clear direction and vision for economic incorporation beyond 2015 (Asian Development Bank Institute 2014).

As a consequence, ASEAN members looking towards the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) can have a positive impact on a variety of sections of business, particularly including Thailand’s economic structure and conditions. The launch of the AEC’s scheme in 2015 will bring modern business opportunities and new dynamics into Thailand (Siriphattrasophon et al 2014). The Asian Development Bank Institute (2014) also claims that Thailand has a vast potential to develop the hubs of several high value-added services segments, such as the tourism industry, financial performance, health and logistics.

Hence, these factors may be used to provide the fundamental freedoms related to international business, leading to real and significant business impacts. Thailand has been a member of ASEAN for the past 40 years. The use of the AEC’s scheme in 2015 will bring even more modern business opportunities, and inject further dynamics into Thailand’s business organizations. The AEC has a direct impact on service businesses. Service businesses, including Thai massage businesses, will benefit greatly from advancing into the international market. There are six main ways
in which the AEC scheme will benefit TTM businesses: 1) Thai therapists are able to work abroad; 2) Thai spa businesses will be able to access the ASEAN region more easily; 3) spa businesses can export their products to ASEAN neighbours; 4) labour market and business mobility will be free in the ASEAN region; 5) the market will be transformed into a single market within a single production base which will increase the competitiveness and bargaining power within the global market; and 6) ASEAN has became an important part of the supply chain in the global economy (Wongrujjiravanich 2012). Additionally, a Thai massage business is a part of a spa business and functions within the SMEs sector with an average growth rate of 5-6% per year. This business can earn an average of approximately 15,000-16,000 million baht per year (Thai Spa Association 2015). Thus, Thailand has benefited, and will benefit, from the increased economic activity, investment and growing tourism industry. Specifically, free-flowing skilled labour and free flowing services will be beneficial to the TMM industry, which will result in an exchange of knowledge and skills among member countries and lead to a sufficient number of service therapists in the Thai massage industry (KPMG International Cooperative 2014).

2.5.1.4 Global Competition

The revenue of the Thai spa industry worldwide was approximately US$194 billion in tourism, spa-related hospitality, and real estate, and US$60.3 billion in spa facilities, education, media, events, associations, consulting, and capital investments (Global Spa Summit 2009). The Thai government’s mission to market TTM was launched not only for potential economic advantages but also to promote Thailand globally as a health destination leader (Tourism Authority of Thailand 2010). The Global Spa Summit (2009) reported that there had been a steady increase in spa revenue.
However, competition from Malaysia and Singapore in the South-East Asian region is emerging (Global Spa Summit 2009).

The Department of Health (DOH) in the Philippines conducts the regulation of massage therapists and requires that they have to be trained and must have gained their licensure by 2014 (Crisostomo 2011). Given the boom in the spa business, the DOH points out that improving service quality in the massage industry can contribute to and support the growth of the spa service industry. Bernama (2011) reports that the Indonesian spa industry is growing as the third fastest developing and third biggest industry of its kind in Asia. In addition, Tourism would “improve human resources in the industry, develop cooperation with regional governments and produce an ethics code for the industry” (Bernama 2011, p. 2). From these three aspects, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism would like to construct the entire relevant sectors of spa industry in order to prosper the economy. In addition, Indonesia will continue to develop its world-class and ‘affordable luxuries’ tourism (Asia Pacific News 2011).

The Thai government has considered the relevant regulations, procedures, and other projects responding to the global trend in the spa industry. The global competition and spa industry have extensively impacted on Thai massage therapy businesses. Every entrepreneur must learn about, and understand quickly, the changing world, in order to prepare and plan for uncertain circumstances or deal with opportunities and threats which will have major influences on their businesses. Nevertheless, worldwide spa competition has been enlarging with an increase in the number of new businesses, which emerged after the launching of the World Trade Organization
(WTO) (Global Spa Summit 2009). This assists member countries to be better promoted in market competition. Being a WTO member and a representative of the Global Spa Summit is an advantage to Thai spa businesses in the international cooperation between member countries. It also facilitates the bargaining power in dealing or expanding Thai spa businesses. It can be concluded that global competition brings a positive impact to TTM, which is a part of the overall Thai spa business as well as leading to growth in overseas investment on account of global demand.

Recently, the Thai spa industry has expanded rapidly through growth in the international level of demand, similar to other businesses. The Thai spa industry has been driven by the global demand for Thai massage therapy services and Thai spa products. To satisfy the global market demand and to compete with the international market, the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) set two main applicable standards for Thai spa operators to assist their businesses. Such standards are Provisions legislation standards reflected in the certification standard, and the World-class standards identified by internationally recognized conventions. In addition, there are five regulatory sub-standards which are currently enacted, being facilities standards, operational standards, service standards, provider standards and hygiene and safety standards. Meanwhile, the private sector – the Thai Spa Association Committee and Rangsit University – and the public sector (the Thai Department of Health) shared a conceptual framework, and have drawn up plans for the implementation of quality standards (Thai Spa Academy 2010). Thus, the spa standards and conceptual framework set would build confidence within Thai spa business entrepreneurs with respect to competing with other competitors around the globe.
The Thai spa industry has gained international recognition (Tourism Authority of Thailand 2010). At present, Thai products such as therapies and design are being exported around the world. This means that the requirement for culturally authentic spa experiences, and overseas recruitment of Thai directors and therapists, has increased significantly. A wide range of overseas, relevant businesses has requested Thai consultants to provide Thai therapists and improve their spa products (Tourism Authority of Thailand 2010). As a result, Thai spa companies have developed overseas operations, and the Middle East is the major emerging market for Thai expertise. It is reported that Mrs. Surangrath Chirathivat, the owner of Thai Privilege Spa Co., Ltd., signed a contract with the property cluster in Dubai as a part of its international spa expansion. Three Thai Privilege spa outlets will be opened in Dubai under the contract basis, within four years, and 15 spa outlets will be opened internationally. Apart from the Dubai contract, the company expects to open other five spas operations in Macau, India and the United States, (Jitpleecheep 2008).

2.5.1.5 **Employment Opportunity in Thai Therapeutic Massage Industry**

Dr. Rewat Wisutwet, Director General of the Department of Health Service Support, Ministry of Public Health, suggests that Thai therapeutic massage businesses at the local and international levels should be connected with peers in other countries. Moreover, they will need to be supported in the areas of management, finance, raw materials, and human resources in order to be obtain benefits when expanding their businesses in the international market. It is believed that this will also increase the rapid growth of the overall spa business (Tourism Authority of Thailand 2010).
The School of Integrated Body Therapy Lake Spa Healing Therapy & Education Centre (2006) notes the growth of the spa and massage market in Asia and the need for professionally trained and highly skilled therapeutic masseurs. The Thai Spa Academy (2009) reveals that there are 20,000 professionally-trained including masseuses and spa therapists operated in the 585 spas operating in Thailand, of which 51% are day spas and the other 49% are destination spas operated within hotel and resort accommodation. These in part reflect the target of the Thai government’s policy to reduce the unemployment rate and increase the number of Thai therapeutic massage businesses, together with the creation of their future success, to fulfil national economic priorities. However, there is some contention as to what standard Thai therapeutic masseurs can or should operate to, as there are currently no nationally agreed competency standards.

Further, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (2010) decreed that the Ministry of Public Health as a public sector entity should liaise with the various Thai spa associations and private sector entities to improve standards for the Thai spa business. These standards cover the establishment of facilities, spa operations, spa provisions, spa service suppliers, and spa safety. However, there are no specific competency standards pertaining to TTM, which suggests that the Thai government has overlooked or not acknowledged the importance of quality standards for TTM.

2.5.2 Quality Standards in the Thai Spa Industry

This topic explains about quality standards in the Thai Spa industry where the Thai Therapeutic massage is a part of the Thai Spa industry.
According to the Thailand Ministry of Public Health’s Department of Trade Negotiation (2011), there are three categories of spa businesses:

1) Health Spa: Water therapy which uses water to heal customers. There are also other activities such as exercise, nutrition therapy, herbal therapy and alternative medicine.

2) Health Massage: Thai therapeutic massage and foot massage, which is used to relieve muscle tension caused by fatigue.

3) Massage for Beauty: Services intended to enhance beauty, provided in a hairdressing salon.

Thai therapeutic massage, which is the focus of this thesis research, fits within the ‘health massage’ category.

Given its important role in Thailand’s economy, the Thai Spa industry, including Thai therapeutic massage (TTM), is found in both government and private sectors. Various authorities and bodies are involved in overseeing the industry and these are shown in Figure 2.7.

![Figure 2.7: The Structure of Thai Spa Industry (Adapted from Department of Trade Negotiation 2011)](image-url)
The Ministry of Public Health plays an important policy role in health promotion, disease prevention and the health care system. It is also responsible for TTM’s certification, assessment and monitoring programs (The Ministry of Public Health 2017). As for the Ministry of Education, the organization has a core responsibility in vocational schools to develop the services and products throughout the educational system to meet customers’ and the Thai massage industry’s needs (The Ministry of Education 2010). The Department of Thai Traditional and Alternative Medicine is a sub-division of the Ministry of Public Health. This Department is concerned with developing a Thai massage database, conducting Thai massage research and promoting the spa industry (Department of Thai Traditional and Alternative Medicine 2012). The Department of Export Promotion seeks to promote the spa industry and products used in Thai spas to the international market (Department of Trade Negotiation 2011).

The private sector for TTM consists of the Thai spa association and its teaching and consulting in spa and massage businesses (Thai Spa Association 2015).

The Royal Thai Government has become aware of the enormous potential that could be realised by developing the Thai spa industry. As a result, the government has cooperated with private sector organizations to increase the quality of spa operations – spa services, tools, products, therapists, security, and facilities – towards internationally recognized spa standards and practices. The proposed standards criteria will be shown to the public before implementation after being agreed by the operational committee, which consists of representatives from the educational institutions, private sector, and state agencies. Members of state agencies are
chosen from the Department for the Development of Traditional Thai Massage, the Alternative Medicine of the Ministry of Public Health, the Department of Health Support Services and the Department of Medical Services. Representatives of the private sector are selected from The Spa Associations, while academics from Rangsit University and other state universities are participating on behalf of educational institutions. The main role of these representatives is to set five standards regarding Thai spa regulations. These standards focus on the safety in providing services, the appropriate facilities, the roles and responsibilities of spa workers, and other requirements and recommendations relating to the spa suppliers (Tourism Authority of Thailand 2010).

Further, the Ministry of Health of Public and working committee has set the criteria for Thai spa operations to reach a world-class standard. These criteria include: designing a spa rating system; developing promotional signage that can serve as a trademark of quality for the Thai spas services so as to boost the global awareness of and responsiveness to Thai spas worldwide; increasing the spa knowledge found among spa visitors; improving databases and creating a registry system for spa providers; and emphasizing vocational training, constant process development and ethical standards (Tourism Authority of Thailand 2010).

2.5.3 Practicing and Training Thai Therapeutic Massage in Thailand

The Thai Health Laws Act (2008) states that masseurs or masseuses providing therapeutic massage must be 18 years old, and they must have a certificate of massage training from an institution approved by the Thai government (The Ministry
of Public Health 2008). There are 484 schools providing Thai massage training courses in Thailand (see Table 1.1 - Office of Health Business Promotion 2008).

The Ministry of Public Health (2008) has introduced the Central Curricula for Thai massage training programs in Public and Private Massage schools in Thailand, as shown in Table 2.6.

### Table 2.6: Thai Massage Training Courses in Thailand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Details (Duration 80 – 150 hours)</th>
<th>Output</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Basic Massage:</strong> basic anatomy; hygiene; and laws.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theoretical and Comprehensive Massage:</strong> historical massage; 10 lines; Thai massage for health; medicine; and yoga techniques.</td>
<td>Thai Certificate approved by Thai government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Training Massage:</strong> basic inspection; basic massage in human body; and real practicing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Some private schools offer special Thai massage training courses for people who want to work in other countries, which supposedly coordinate with the requirements of those other countries’ authorities. After graduating, trainees are issued a certificate from the Thai government, and can apply for a license from authorities in foreign countries such as the US, the UK, and Canada (International Training Massage School 2013; Thai Massage and Spa Academy 2013).

For instance, the International Training Massage School (2013) provides special Thai massage courses in five stages as shown in Table 2.7.
Table 2.7: The Stages of Thai Massage Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Output</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage I</td>
<td>Foundation of Thai Massage</td>
<td>• Thai Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage II</td>
<td>Intermediate Thai Massage</td>
<td>• License issued by other authorities such as the US, Canada, and the UK.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage III</td>
<td>Advanced Sen-energy lines</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage IV</td>
<td>Advanced Therapeutic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage V</td>
<td>Teaching training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In Thailand, Thai massage courses are certified by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Public Health. However, Thai massage certification is often not recognized as continuing education units (CEUs) in foreign countries and few international schools recognize these certificates (Thai Healing Massage 2011). Further, the School of Integrated Body Therapy Lake Spa Healing Therapy and Education Centre (2006) contends that such certificates provide inadequate expertise in the fields of management, therapeutic skills, knowledge-based educational massage therapy programs, customer care, and appropriate customer massage therapies. This includes inadequate communication skills, training hours, and certification. Without proper training, damage to patients and customers could occur resulting in damage to the international reputation of TTM, with consequences for the Thai economy.

Thai therapeutic massage is sometimes called Thai yoga massage, Thai massage, Thai yoga therapy, nuad paan boran, nuad boran, nuad Thai, and is widely and popularly known as TTM (Salguero 2004). These techniques involve practising and training the body to perform a series of yoga postures and body energy line (“sen”)
lines. It is a traditional technique of acupressure, energy lines or Sen Lines, yoga postures or stretching techniques. Salguero (2004) defines Sen Line as energy lines running throughout the human body and states that there are 72,000 energy lines.

In Thailand, therapists apply acupressure by using the hands, fingers, thumb or knuckles along the 10 main energy lines to their customers. In addition, while performing the massage, the clients and therapists are clothed properly for yoga classes in items such as light, flexible, and clean clothes (Salguero 2004).

The 10 main energy lines are muscles running throughout the body and are regarded as highways of energy. The lines include: Sen Khitchanna; Sen Nanthakravat; Sen Ulangka; Sen Lawusang; Sen Thawari; Sen Sahatsarangsi; Sen Pingkhala; Sen Kalathari; Sen Ittha; and Sen Sumana. These are all employed in practices as defined in Thailand’s massage institutions (Apfellbaum 2003; Duthel 2010; Pegan 2010; Salguero 2004).

The forms of Thai massage Therapy Practices are divided into three levels covering the basic massage, advanced massage, and applied Thai herbal applications levels as shown in Table 2.8.
**Table 2.8: Thai Massage Therapy Practice levels**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Massage levels</th>
<th>Practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Basic Thai Massage Therapy</strong></td>
<td>(i) To start the massage from the side of the body and then throughout the core of the body by twisting and flipping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) To begin massage from the bottom (feet) and move towards the top (head)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(iii) To perform stretches, thumb press, palm press on the 10 Thai energy lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(iv) To massage the entire body by using rhythmic and rocking motions to increase the body’s energy flow for balance and relaxation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advanced Thai Massage Therapy</strong></td>
<td>(i) Advanced Variation: Finger Press Iliopsoas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) Advanced Variation: The King Cobra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(iii) Advanced Variation for More Flexible Clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(iv) Advanced Locust Variation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(v) Advanced Neck Stretch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(vi) Advanced Stretches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Apply Thai herbal applications</strong></td>
<td>(i) Apply Thai herbs and massage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Apfelbaum (2003); Salguero (2004); Salguero (2007).

Salguero (2004) identifies that the basic massage therapy level is constantly performed to clients with four steps consisting of: performing acupressure to the side of the body and throughout the core of the body; providing acupressure to the bottom of the body and through the top of the body; applying acupressure to points along the 10 main energy lines; and offering acupressure to the entire body. Applied acupressure is beneficial for increasing the flow of energy and stimulating healing. The advanced massage therapy level focuses on the back of the body with alternative methods provided to the clients. It could be an added method to the basic massage. Salguero (2007) recommends that therapists who perform the advanced steps to clients must be highly qualified after training as professional instructors. By contrast, Apfelbaum (2003) highlights that Thai herbal applications provide an
alternative step for Thai massage therapy. The clients are provided with Thai herbs known as *Luk Pra Kob*. These herbal materials are applied on the clients’ skin along the energy lines.

Thus, the reviews conducted by Apfelbaum (2003), Salguero (2004) and Salguero (2007) regarding Thai massage therapy practices identify that Thai massage techniques may be classified into: basic steps, advanced steps, and applied Thai herbal applications (that is, directly related to the 10 main energy lines) and acupressure. Section 2.5.3 reveals the fundamental skills practised in the TTM context that can also be defined through the following practices:

- Ensure the client is appropriately attired;
- Stretch the client’s muscles;
- Employ rhythmic and rocking motions;
- Press tendons;
- Twist and flip the client’s body;
- Relieve client stress;
- Relax the client;
- Increase the energy flow of the massage;
- Apply the herbal applications.

Thus, the study of practising and training for TTM in Thailand is useful for understanding the elements of implementing TTM as a real practice.
2.6 An Integrated Model: A Framework of Thai Therapeutic Massage Competencies

As the research revealed, the TTM industry faces a lack of competency standards and there is a consequent insufficiency in competency-based performance by TTM therapists. There is still no framework of quality standards for the TTM industry in Thailand as discussed in Section 2.5.

The conceptual framework has been derived from various areas in the literature and is utilized to develop the research questions which need to be investigated. As discussed in Section 2.4.3, massage quality standards are required by best practice. Competency standards models include the Canadian competency standards for massage therapy, released by the College of Massage Therapists of Ontario (2006); the Australian competency standards of massage therapy prepared by the Department of Education and Training (2012); and the Training Regulations for Massage Therapy NC II drawn up by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (2017). These competency standards models provide the basis for a multi-purpose instrument of massage competency standards covering skills, knowledge, and attitudes, with which to align the practices of Thai therapeutic massage and so form a framework upon which to base interviews and analyse research outcomes. The evaluative framework should inform the construct of the core competencies of TTM to assure quality provision by the Thai spa industry, as called for in this research (see Section 1.2). To this end, in the following sections, a framework of Thai therapeutic massage competencies has been developed from the literature discussed in Section 2.4.3 and Section 2.5.3 (see Table 2.9).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Health Competencies**            | • Apply Anatomy and Physiology Principles  
• Apply Kinesiology Principles  
• Apply Nutritional Concepts  
• Apply first aid  
• Confirm the physical health status of the client  
• Practice infection control  

Adapted from the College of Massage Therapists of Ontario (2006); Department of Education and Training (2012); Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (2017). |
| **Professional Practice Competencies** | • Acknowledge the legal requirements of the massage therapy profession  
•Apply professional ethics in practice and conduct  

Adapted from the College of Massage Therapists of Ontario (2006); Department of Education and Training (2012); Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (2017). |
| **Clinical Competencies**          | • Apply Hydrotherapy to client care  
• Apply therapeutic exercises to client care  
• Apply pain and stress management techniques to client care  
• Draw up client case management plans  
• Recommend health care referrals  

Adapted from the College of Massage Therapists of Ontario (2006); Department of Education and Training (2012); Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (2017). |
| **Communication Competencies**     | • Work effectively with other staff in a Team  
• Communicate effectively with customers  
• Use basic medical terminology appropriately  

Adapted from the College of Massage Therapists of Ontario (2006); Department of Education and Training (2012); Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (2017). |
| **Therapeutic Massage Competencies** | • Work within a framework of holistic therapeutic massage  
• Practice the principles and Thai therapeutic massage  
  - Start the massage from the side of the body and then throughout the core of the body by twisting and flipping  
  - Begin massage from the bottom (feet) and move towards the top (head)  
  - Perform stretches, thumb press, palm press on the 10 Thai energy lines  
  - Massage the entire body by using rhythmic and rocking motions to increase the body’s energy flow for balance and relaxation  
  - Advanced Variation: Finger Press ilipsoas  
  - Advanced Variation: The King Cobra  
  - Advanced Variation for More Flexible Clients  
  - Advanced Locust Variation  
  - Advanced Neck Stretch  
  - Advanced Stretches  
  - Apply Thai herbs and massage  

Adapted from Apfelbaum (2003); Salguero (2004); Salguero (2007). |

Source: Adapted from Apfelbaum (2003); College of Massage Therapists of Ontario (2006); Department of Education and Training (2012); Salguero (2004); Salguero (2007); Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (2017).

A framework of Thai therapeutic massage competencies was derived from various competency models as follows.
Firstly, the Canadian Competency Standards of Massage Therapy, developed by the College of Massage Therapists of Ontario (2006), explains three elements identified as *Health Science; Clinical Science; and Professional Development* (as in Table 2.3). This model focuses on the competence levels required in areas including knowledge, skills, and attitudes, which may be measured in various ways, as well as addressing educational achievements, training achievements, work-performance, and continuing professional development.

Secondly, the Australian Competency Standard of Massage Therapy, by the Department of Education and Training (2012), provides the basic elements of therapeutic massage, consisting of common competencies and specialized competencies, involving skills, knowledge, and attitude (as shown in Table 2.4). This model sets out the basic requirements to be assessed by the method of demonstration by participants in a professional environment, to ensure that performance competencies are reliable and valid.

Thirdly, the Manila Competency Standard of Massage Therapy by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (2017) includes basic competency standards, common competency standards, and core competency standards (as shown in Table 2.5). The basic competency standards include participation and communication in the workplace, professional practice, and the work environment. The common competency standards concern implementation and monitoring of best practices, in accordance with the control policy, to reflect high quality standards. The core competency standards identify the outline of therapeutic massage, massage evaluation and assistance in clinical massage therapy. This model covers skills,
knowledge, and attitudes which focus on a person who has to complete their working holistic massage therapy outline.

Lastly, Apfelbaum (2003), Salguero (2004) and Salguero (2007), with regard to the fundamental skills practised in the TTM industry, suggest that these skills can be categorized into basic steps, advanced steps, and applied Thai herbal applications, as shown in Table 2.8. The basic massage therapy level is to be consistently performed on clients and consists of: 1) performing acupressure to the side of the body and throughout the core of the body; 2) providing acupressure to the bottom of the body and through the top of the body; 3) applying acupressure to points along the 10 main energy lines; and 4) offering acupressure to the entire body (Salguero 2004). The advanced massage therapy level focuses on the back of the body with alternative methods provided to the clients; this could be an added method for basic massage, where therapists who perform the advanced steps to clients are required to take training as professional instructors (Salguero 2007). Thai herbal application is an alternative step for TTM and is provided through the medium of Thai herbs known as Luk Pra Kob. These herbal materials are applied on the client’s skin along the energy lines (Apfelbaum 2003).

To sum up, the views of the Canadian Competency Standards of Massage Therapy by the College of Massage Therapists of Ontario (2006) emphasize health science, professional development, and clinical science. The Australian competency standard of massage therapy of the Department of Education and Training (2012) separates massage therapy competencies into the common and specialization units which are the necessary basic qualifications for massage therapists. The Manila competency
standard of massage therapy of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (2017) claims that competencies are able to be clearly distinguished as basic competencies, common competencies, and core competencies where therapists have to learn all the competencies if they are to reach a satisfactory standard within the components of foundation massage therapy. Further, Apfelbaum (2003), Salguero (2004), and Salguero (2007) classify the elements of practising and training of TTM in Thailand into the basic level, advanced level, and applied Thai herbal applications.

Thus, all the above competency models highlight that a combination of skills, knowledge, attitudes, values and capabilities are required to work efficiently and effectively in professional roles such as masseur, masseuse, and massage therapist. These combined skills are integrated into a framework of Thai therapeutic massage competencies, in order to prepare questions for interviewing, as shown in Table 2.9.

2.7 Research Questions

According to Section 2.5, there are no specific competency standards pertaining to TTM, which implies that the Thai government has not acknowledged or has overlooked the significance of quality standards for TTM services. There has been limited scholarly and practical research into the issues concerning TTM in Thailand. The TTM courses in Thailand still fail to train Thai massage therapists properly in aspects such as knowledge and skills; those courses also lack the necessary quality control needed to ensure adequate levels of practitioner expertise in TTM services. In order to achieve the purpose of this research, as set out in Section 1.2, three basic research questions are proposed, as follows:
Research Question 1 (RQ1): The purpose of this research question is to investigate not only any existing measures of competency for TTM, but also to understand the overall environment related to Thai massages services. Existing measures of competencies for TTM were discussed in Section 2.5.3. This RQ seeks to explore current training programs and educational qualifications for Thai massage therapists. Hence, the RQ1 is: What is the current measure of competency for Thai therapeutic massage?

Table 2.10: The Rationale for Research Questions 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Rationale for Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Research Question 1: What is the current measure of competency for Thai therapeutic massage? | **Group 1: Thai Massage Therapists**  
1. Aim to investigate the overall current training and education qualification for Thai massages therapists.  
2. Aim to investigate the current process for evaluating the success of treatment provided to customers.  

**Group 2: Thai Massage Managers**  
1. Aim to study the requirements of educational qualification of masseurs and training programs for Thai massage services.  
2. Aim to understand the current assessment processes for assuring the quality standards of Thai therapeutic massage services.  

**Group 3: Health Specialists**  
1. Aim to investigate the educational qualification requirement of masseurs and competencies of Thai massage training programs.  
2. Aim to investigate the current measure of Thai massage competency and to identify appropriate competency standards of Thai massage services.  

**Group 4: Government Officials**  
1. Aim to investigate the overall existing training and education of Thai therapeutic massage courses provided in the Thai massage industry and also to understand the educational qualifications required for being Thai massage therapists.  
2. Aim to study the current measurement processes used for assessing Thai massage competencies provided to Thai therapeutic masseurs by Thailand’s massage institutions. |

Source: Developed for this research.
Research Question 2 (RQ2): The purpose of this research question is to investigate and establish the significant competencies for Thai massage services, by first identifying the appropriate competencies required of Thai massage therapists. The training courses for TTM were discussed in Section 2.5.3 and Section 2.6. This RQ will investigate current competencies required from Thai massages therapists and to classify the various competencies found within Thai massage training, which are seen as suitable for TTM services. Hence, RQ2 is: What competency standards are appropriate to ensure the quality delivery of Thai therapeutic massage?

Table 2.11: The Rationale for Research Questions 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Rationale for Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Research Question 2:** What competency standards are appropriate to assure the quality of Thai therapeutic massage? | **Group 1: Thai Massage Therapists**  
Aim to investigate the current competencies provided for Thai massage therapists in the Thai massage industry and to classify the competencies of Thai massage training suitable for Thai massage services. |

**Group 2: Thai Massage Managers**  
Aim to investigate the current competencies required for Thai massage therapists and to identify the competencies standards suitable for Thai massage services.

**Group 3: Health Specialists**  
Aim to examine the current competencies required for training Thai massage therapists in Thai massage schools and to classify the proper competencies of Thai massage training in Thai massage services.

**Group 4: Government Officials**  
Aim to investigate the requirement about competencies training and education of Thai masseurs in Thai massage schools and to identify the suitable competencies of Thai massage in the Thai massage industry.

Source: Developed for this research.
**Research Question 3 (RQ3):** The aim is to introduce suitable competency standards for Thai massages therapists in the TTM industry. The problems of training within TTM were discussed in Section 2.5.3. This RQ will study the important issue of the ways in which TTM competencies can be implemented as suitable standards, via the stakeholders in TTM. Hence, the RQ3 is: *How might competency standards for TTM be implemented?*

**Table 2.12: The Rationale for Research Questions 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Rationale for Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Research Question 3:**  
How might competency standards of Thai therapeutic massage be implemented? | **Group 1: Thai Massage Therapists**  
Aim to investigate the suggestion of Therapists as Thai massage stakeholders to improve competency standards of Thai therapeutic massage services for applying to implement the competency standard to assure the quality in the Thai therapeutic massage industry. |  
**Group 2: Thai Massage Managers**  
Aim to examine the suggestions for improving proper competency standards for Thai therapeutic massage services from Thai massage managers as Thai massage stakeholders for applying to implement the competency standard systems of Thai therapeutic massage services. |  
**Group 3: Health Specialists**  
Aim to study the current measure of competencies for Thai massage services and to identify the key competencies for Thai massage therapists to achieve the customer requirements for assuring the quality of Thai massage services. |  
**Group 4: Government Officials**  
1. Aim to discover the existing measure of Thai massage competency and significant issues required to improve the implementation of quality standards for ensuring Thai therapeutic massage services.  
2. Aim to investigate the implementations of Thai massage service to ensure the quality standards of Thai therapeutic massage and to revise the recommendations for improving competencies standards for Thai massage services to be introduced and implemented into the Thai massage industry. |  

Source: Developed for this research.
As shown, these research questions are derived from the literature. The research questions will employ the framework of TTM competencies (as in Section 2.6) to design the interview questions for each group of research participants, with a view to investigating and analysing information concerning the operation and management relevance of the proposed competencies for TTM. An important objective is to clarify the appropriate quality standards for the implementation of Thai massages services.

2.8 Conclusion

The literature review has included concepts and models related to quality; the competencies and competency standards; quality standards models; and practising and training in TTM in Thailand are related to this research. The influence of these sections covered in this literature review is found most clearly in the conceptual framework to construct the proposed study.

Practising and training in TTM in Thailand are useful and indeed essential for understanding the elements of implementation in TTM in reality. The best practice, spa quality standards and massage competency standards are practical aspects to be integrated into a framework of Thai therapeutic massage competencies for interviews, because the research provides the pattern of basic competency standards which directly involves the development of competency in the TTM industry. The quality assurance concepts and model are helpful for applying the implementation process to guarantee customers’ confidence that the service received will consistently meet their needs. The aspects of the quality standards models could be integrated to improve the quality standards in the Thai massage industry.
CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology used to complete the thesis research. This research presents the qualitative research methodology chosen to investigate the core competencies of Thai massage services, with a view to improving competency standards to ensure the quality standards of Thai massage services in the Bangkok area. The research employs in-depth interviews for gathering comprehensive data.

There are eight sections in this chapter. Section 3.1 the introduction describes the structure of Chapter 3. Section 3.2 justifies the paradigm of research while Section 3.3 justifies the research methodology. Section 3.4 discusses the research participants. Section 3.5 addresses the data collection method. Data analysis is contained in Section 3.6. Section 3.7 deals with ethical considerations and Section 3.8 is the conclusion of Chapter 3. The graphic layout of the structure of Chapter 3 is shown in Figure 3.1.
3.2 Justification of the Paradigm for the Research

Paradigms are a form of fundamental belief that deal with the first or ultimate principles and scientific studies (Morgan 2007). Research paradigms are delineated in terms of their ontology, their epistemology and their preferred methodology (Neuman 2000; Cresswell 2003). Ontology comes from the Greek ‘ontos’ and ‘logos’, which are compounded in the New Latin neologism of ‘ontologia’. The prefix ‘onto’ indicates existence and being, while the suffix ‘logia’ refers to theoretical study and
science. It implies studies related to the nature of reality and humanity (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2011). Methodology focuses on how the researcher will find out whatever she or he believes may be found. It can be a philosophy that is the basis of the procedures and principles of inquiry in a particular field (Crotty 2003). The method depends on assumptions of ontology and epistemology related to the nature of reality and how to reach reality (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007). Epistemology deals with the basics of natural knowledge, how it is acquired and how to communicate with other humans (Crotty 2003; Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007). It addresses what we can perceive about actuality and how we can understand it (Willis 2007). The three main paradigms to which these three characteristics can be applied are positivistic, interpretive and critical paradigms:

1) The positivistic paradigm is considered as “Experimental” or “Scientific research” that depends on empirical philosophical reason and is associated with Aristotle, Auguste Comte, Emmanuel Kant, Francis Bacon and John Locke (Mertens 2005, p.8).

2) The interpretive paradigm deals with a constructivist, a humanist and anti-positivist group, which emerges in contrast to positivism for the understanding and interpretation of human and social reality (Shah & Al-Bargi 2013).

3) The critical paradigm seeks to liberate people by changing their social, political and cultural environments (Alwan 2007).

According to Antwi and Hamza (2015), there are differences between qualitative and quantitative research approaches related to the paradigms of research as shown in Table 3.1.
### Table 3.1: The Differences between Qualitative and Quantitative Research Approaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orientation</th>
<th>Qualitative Approach</th>
<th>Quantitative Approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paradigm/Worldview</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(assumption about world)</td>
<td>Interpretivism/Idealism</td>
<td>Positivism/Realism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Purpose</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(rationale)</td>
<td>Subjective description</td>
<td>Numerical description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Empathetic understanding</td>
<td>Causal explanation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exploration</td>
<td>Prediction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Methods</strong></td>
<td>Ethnographies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(techniques and tools)</td>
<td>Case studies</td>
<td>Empirical examination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Narrative research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Measurement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus group discussion</td>
<td>Hypothesis testing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>Randomization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Field notes</td>
<td>Blinding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recordings &amp; Filmings</td>
<td>Structured protocols</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Questionnaires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scientific Method</strong></td>
<td>Inductive approach,</td>
<td>Deductive approach,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(role of theory)</td>
<td>generation of theory</td>
<td>testing of theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nature of Data Instruments</strong></td>
<td>Words, images, categories</td>
<td>Variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In-depth interviews, participant observation, field notes, and open-ended questions</td>
<td>Structured and Validated-data collection instruments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Antwi and Hamza (2015, p. 222).

Antwi and Hamza (2015) explicate that there are two major forms of research, including the quantitative methodology, which is grounded on the positivist paradigm and the qualitative methodology, which is grounded on the interpretivist paradigm.

The quantitative approach is employed in attempts to quantify social phenomena, compile and analyse numeric data. The quantitative methodology is principally based
on scientific methods so the researcher needs to focus on hypothesis testing and theoretical testing (Antwi & Hamza 2015).

The qualitative approach is relevant to understanding the meaning of social phenomena. The researcher is regarded as a tool of data collection in qualitative research. The qualitative researchers will ask the questions, gather the data, make the interpretations, and record the conversations and observations. The researchers have to attempt to understand the people who are observing from the participants’ viewpoints (Antwi & Hamza 2015).

The purpose of the research topic is intended to study the quality standards of Thai massage services with regards to the feelings and thinking of human beings within the nature of reality. People want to receive good services or products from service providers. This research attempts to investigate what critical competencies really are required to create quality service standards in Thai massage businesses. Improving the service quality standards will require knowledge, in order to set the correct quality standards of service in Thai massage businesses. The interpretive paradigm enables researchers to look at the world through the perception and experience of participants (Thanh & Thanh 2015). The qualitative approach is underpinned by the interpretivist paradigm (Antwi & Hamza 2015; Nind & Todd 2011; Willis, 2007). The qualitative methodology emphasizes the phenomenal environment without control or experimental groups, and considers the meaning of the phenomena in terms of social and cultural contexts (Jumpon 2007). Hence, the research paradigm of the Thai massage research is a part of the interpretive paradigm. The qualitative methodology will be considered as the preferred approach to employ in this
research. The qualitative methods usage enables researchers to gain information pertaining to human behaviour and phenomenon in the Thai massage industry in order to more deeply and better understand what stakeholders need.

3.3 Justification of the Research Methodology

The qualitative method approach is proper for this research as it can be employed to realize the meanings of experiences related to information required from various stakeholders in the Thai massage industry. The proposed research methodology is applied qualitative research given that it seeks to explore the problems of the Thai traditional massage business in diverse contexts. This approach is preferred as it will help ensure that the range of problems and quality issues and concerns in the Thai massage business are understood and described.

Creswell (2003) contends that a qualitative research approach is one of the research methods that researchers regularly use to develop knowledge assets, based primarily on other individuals' experiences and perspectives. Qualitative research methods involve employing inquiry approaches consisting of grounded theory, narratives, ethnographies, phenomenologies, and case studies (Creswell 2003). Patton (2002) argues that qualitative methods support issues-based research, involving richly-detailed data in a small scale of research participants and cases. Berg (2007, p. 3) also states that “Qualitative research thus refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things”. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011) point out that a qualitative approach is an academic, creative, and rigorous skill which the researchers study and develop during research practice for developing their knowledge. Tewksbury (2009) asserts
that qualitative research methods give in-depth understanding of issues that would be impossible through the using of quantitative techniques for investigations.

Qualitative methods assist research into issues which are concerned with richly-detailed information in a small group of people and cases (Patton 2002). The qualitative method collects a large quantity of information from a small group of participants (Leedy & Ormrod 2005). Maanen (1979, p. 520) states that “qualitative method is an umbrella term covering interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world”. Strauss and Corbin (1990) observe that qualitative research regularly employs multiple-methods and empirical strategies such as case studies, interviews, observations, histories, and visual data in specific contexts. Qualitative research is intended to discover complicated phenomenon in specific and changing contexts using an iterative style of eliciting and categorizing participants’ experiences, to deliver a thorough understanding of complex issues from a range of relevant perspectives. Creswell (2003) asserts that a qualitative method involves using inquiry approaches, such as phenomenologies, ethnographies, narratives, case studies, and grounded theory.

The current research is designed as an applied, qualitative case study made up of competency standards models and interviews of stakeholders in the industry. Yin (1993) describes the aspects of case studies as individually focused, involving a wide range of data-collection, focusing on analysis, and being science-oriented. Hence, adopting a case study format in this research project can allow identification
of competency standards of massage therapy in practice and an evaluation of the core competencies for each competency category in terms of skills, knowledge, and attitudes from the perspective of industry personnel. Case studies usually deploy a variety of research activities to launch an effective intervention or change a specific community and are therefore an appropriate framework for this research.

Thus, the research utilised the qualitative case study to investigate the relevance and application of core competencies of TTM in Thai massage shops in the Bangkok area, with a view to developing quality standards for TTM services provided in the Thai spa industry across Thailand. The expected outcomes are intended to be able to inform the Thai government of the appropriate content of, and implementation processes for, a proper framework of TTM competencies. This framework is intended to contain the key competencies for TTM, taking account of its specific contexts; the framework will also address the styles of delivery of services suitable for TTM, to ensure the quality of TTM as an export industry for visitors to Thailand.

3.4 Research Participants

The researcher identified the key stakeholders according to two criteria: (1) Their work experience in the Thai massage services in Bangkok area and (2) their ability to provide comprehensive information from their experience and to suggest the requirements of information in different aspects in their own language.

The research participants consist of four groups: (1) Government officials from the Ministry of Public Health, (2) health specialists from Thai massage schools, (3) Thai massage managers and (4) Thai massage therapists from the Thai massage shops
in the Bangkok area. Participants were selected as potential sources of insight into the appropriate Thai massage services. The method employed to develop the necessary numbers of participants in each group was “snowball” sampling.

Snowball sampling is a sampling technique used for qualitative research; it is employed as a practical tool to build networks and to enhance the number of participants. In this technique, the informants or participants are encouraged to refer the researcher to other persons, who might possibly participate in the study, by drawing on their social networks (Heckathorn 2002). That is, it is a method by which existing recruits are encouraged to recruit new participants, from among those whom they know within their professional field.

The snowball sampling technique enables the researcher to identify specific subjects who can provide the most imperative information related to the phenomenon being investigated (Burns & Grove 2003). Snowball sampling begins when qualified people share an invitation to colleagues and those within their same field of expertise; other subjects are identified within the group on the basis that they can fulfil the necessary qualifications and belong to the targeted group of interest (Berg 2006).

Thus, the snowball sampling technique was utilized within each group of research participants to identify potential informants who have the desired level of work experience related to Thai massage services in the Bangkok area. The researcher requested the initially contacted participants, who consented to join in the research, to assist with nominating other potential informants to participate in this research. The interview questions were designed to enable government officials, health
specialists, and Thai massage operators to provide real information concerning the operation and management of ‘competency’ performance in terms of skills, knowledge, and attitudes; to clarify the appropriate quality standards for implementation; and determine the structure of the Thai massage industry.

There was a limited number of government officials available from the Thailand Ministry of Public Health and health specialists from Thai massage schools in Bangkok to provide the comprehensive information necessary to inform the research. In contrast, there were many Thai massage shops in the Bangkok area with many managers and massage therapists able to provide comprehensive data. The availability of participants from each group determined the number of informants in each of the four groups. The details of selected research participants are shown in Table 3.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government officials</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Specialists</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thai massage managers</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thai massage therapists</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Initial contact was made with potential participants as follows:

1. The researcher made a telephone call to each participant to introduce the researcher, to provide information about the research and to explore the opportunity for a face-to-face interview.

2. A letter from the researcher including a letter of invitation, an information sheet and a consent form were sent to each participant to ask permission for an interview to be conducted.
3. The researcher made a telephone call to make an appointment with each interview participant, four weeks before the proposed interview date/time.

Invitation letters were distributed. The researcher selected 30 potential participants by invitation from each of the key four groups as follows:

### 3.4.1 Five Government Officials

Five government officials were selected from the Ministry of Public Health on the grounds that they are the representatives of the public sector who supervise public health and control the legal provisions. The Ministry of Public Health’s operations include starting the mission of ‘Health Tourism’; the five-year strategic plan to operate medical, spa, and traditional Thai massage services; and controlling the quality and the application of herbal products. The Ministry of Public Health is the representative of the public sector that authorizes providing, supervising and controlling the legal provision of service quality standards in Thailand. The government officers can provide information about the competency standards of Thai massage therapy in terms of health science which is conducted in order to better manage regulation of Thai massage services.

### 3.4.2 Five Health Specialists

Five health specialists were selected from 109 massage schools in the Bangkok area, such as the Wat Po Thai Traditional Medical and Massage School (Wat-Pho TTW), Chetawan Health School, Chiva-Som International Academy, and Bangkok Metropolitan Vocational Schools (Thai Spa Academy 2010). They represent the academic Thai massage institutions that offer competency courses to teach students
the knowledge, skills and attitudes required by Thai massage therapy. The health specialists are expected to provide in-depth information about competency courses management for Thai massage therapy schools in terms of health science consisting of knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

3.4.3 Ten Thai Massage Managers

Ten Thai massage managers who are concerned about the operational management for Thai massage shops in the Bangkok area were chosen. The Thai massage managers are seen to be representative of the private sector, because the managers are involved in the internal management of Thai massage businesses with direct access to the various operations. They are expected to provide in-depth information or data about the whole field of competency management of Thai massage services, in terms of professional development and clinical science consisting of knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

3.4.4 Ten Massage Therapists

Ten Thai massage therapists or masseuses from the Thai massage shops located in the Bangkok area were sampled. They are seen as representative of Thai massage shops who deliver their services or products to customers. In addition, they can provide information about operational performance which must include information on competency standards of massage therapy in terms of professional development when supplying services to their customers. Their information is expected to further enhance information arising from the managers.
3.5 Data Collection Method

Interviews formed the basis for data collection from the identified four groups of participants: government officials from the Ministry of Public Health, health specialists from massage institutions, Thai massage managers and Thai therapeutic masseurs from Thai massage shops in the Bangkok area. Participants were asked through the interview questions to provide detailed responses in relation to their understanding of management, professional knowledge and experiences in Thai massage services.

3.5.1 Interviews

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007) state that interviews are employed in qualitative research to not only recognize information but also to investigate the causes after receiving the answers. Fontana and Frey (1994) express the view that interviewing is an influential technique to apply to problems of research, and may be of the form of structured, semi-structured, or unstructured interviews. A key feature of structured interviews involves asking the same questions, using the same wording and order (identified as a timetabled interview) with all of the interviewees. Unstructured interviews are open-ended processes that foster straight, flowing and open statements between an interviewee and the interviewer, with the content following no predetermined order. The investigator is able to hold unstructured interviews as one to one occurrences or may work with groups of respondents. In contrast, semi-structured interviews are created to collect data for a given theme; it involves having the same general direction for each interview, but allows the questions to follow up and pursue information of interest using a less formal structure. It is a useful application for the researcher to uncover information they
need about massage therapy competency standards from target groups that are related to the Thai massage industry.

Further, Rubin and Rubin (1995) contend that the interview technique selected by the researcher depends on what the interviewer needs to perceive. The procedure of the interview is to find out what the interviewees believe and feel about real-world circumstances and experiences. Semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to suggest topics which require feedback but also allow interviewees to suggest further topics which they feel are relevant to the issues under examination. Fontana and Frey (1994) also point out that the semi-structured interview questions are designed to collect data for this study because it is a helpful approach for the investigator to seek information on requirements about performance and competency management from target groups that are involved in the Thai massage business.

Thus, this research deploys in-depth interviews consisting of face-to-face, individual interviews to collect data from the key stakeholders in the Thai massage services. The research adopted semi-structured interviews to collect information from four groups to assess the equivalence of therapeutic massage competencies between Thailand and the best practice models and so determine quality gaps in Thai therapeutic massage standards.

This research was conducted in the Bangkok area. The researcher used the semi-structured interview method to gather in-depth information from the representative participants of the Thai massage services in the Thai Language. This is because the sample groups are stakeholders in the Thai massage industry; hence they were able
to provide comprehensive information from their experiences and to suggest the requirements of competencies in different aspects by using their own language for ease of communication. The interviews with participants lasted approximately one hour each. The investigator used a voice recorder as a standard protocol for recording information during the semi-structured interviews.

Figure 3.2: The Site of Research at Bangkok, Thailand (International Urban Development Association 2015, p.1)

3.5.2 Interview Instrument

The interview instrument is concerned with the research questions and the interview questions. Interview questions were designed to scope specific questions consistent with Research Question 1 through to Research Question 3 (as in Section 2.7). The interview questions were designed as semi-structured to support the research questions. The interview questions formed the basis for data collection and were employed with all four groups of participants, as outlined above. Participants were asked questions in relation to their management, knowledge, and experiences in Thai massage services. The interview questions for each group were as follows.
Group 1: Interview Questions for Thai Massage Therapists

1) What training or educational qualifications have you completed to become a Thai therapeutic masseur?

2) Which of the following did your training include? (Refer to a set of competencies in Table 3.3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health Competencies</strong></td>
<td>• Apply Anatomy and Physiology Principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply Kinesiology Principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply Nutritional Concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply first aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Confirm the physical health status of the client</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Practice infection control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional Practice Competencies</strong></td>
<td>• Acknowledge the legal requirements of the massage therapy profession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply professional ethics in practice and conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clinical Competencies</strong></td>
<td>• Apply Hydrotherapy to client care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply therapeutic exercises to client care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply pain and stress management techniques to client care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Draw up client case management plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Recommend health care referrals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication Competencies</strong></td>
<td>• Work effectively with other staff in a Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Communicate effectively with customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use basic medical terminology appropriately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Therapeutic Massage Competencies</strong></td>
<td>• Work within a framework of holistic therapeutic massage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Practice the principles and Thai therapeutic massage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Start the massage from the side of the body and then throughout the core of the body by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>twisting and flipping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Begin massage from the bottom (feet) and move towards the top (head)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Perform stretches, thumb press, palm press on the 10 Thai energy lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Massage the entire body by using rhythmic and rocking motions to increase the body’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>energy flow for balance and relaxation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Advanced Variation: Finger Press Iliopsoas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Advanced Variation: The King Cobra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Advanced Variation for More Flexible Clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Advanced Locust Variation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Advanced Neck Stretch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Advanced Stretches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Apply Thai herbs and massage.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Apfelbaum (2003); College of Massage Therapists of Ontario (2006); Department of Education and Training (2012); Salguero (2004); Salguero (2007); Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (2017).

3) Are there reasons why any of the above competencies that you think should NOT be included in your training?
4) Are there any skills, knowledge or attitudes that you think should be added into the set of competencies in the Table 3.3?

5) How do you evaluate the success of massage treatment programs provided to clients?

6) How do you think your work as a masseur might be improved?

7) Would you like to add anything about Thai therapeutic massage or comment further?

**Group 2: Interview Questions for Thai Massage Managers**

1. What training or educational qualifications do you require your Thai therapeutic masseurs to have?

1) Which of the following do you require your Thai therapeutic masseurs to demonstrate? (Refer to a set of competencies in Table 3.3)

2) Are there reasons why any of the competencies in Table 3.3 that you think should NOT be included in your masseurs’ training?

3) Are there any skills, knowledge or attitudes that you think should be added into the set of competencies in the Table 3.3?

4) How do you evaluate the success of massage treatment provided to clients by your staff?

5) How do you think your staff massage services might be improved?

6) Would you like to add anything about Thai therapeutic massage or comment further?

**Group 3: Interview Questions for Health Specialists**

1) What training or educational qualifications should Thai therapeutic masseurs have?
2) Which of the following competencies do you think Thai therapeutic masseurs should possess? (Refer to a set of competencies in Table 3.3)

3) Are there any skills, knowledge or attitudes that you think should be added into a set of competencies as shown in Table 3.3?

4) How do you evaluate the Thai therapeutic massage training provided to Thai therapeutic masseurs by Thailand’s massage institutions?

5) How do you ensure that the quality standards of Thai therapeutic massage meet the requirements of clients?

6) How do you plan to improve the quality standard of Thai therapeutic massage for practitioners to ensure Thai therapeutic massage for the international therapeutic tourism market?

7) Would you like to add anything about Thai therapeutic massage or comment further?

**Group 4: Interview Questions for Government Officials**

1) What training or educational qualifications should Thai therapeutic masseurs have?

2) Which of the following competencies do you think Thai therapeutic masseurs should possess? (Refer to a set of competencies in Table 3.3)

3) Are there any skills, knowledge or attitudes that you think should be added into a set of competencies as shown in Table 3.3?

4) How do you evaluate the Thai therapeutic massage training provided to Thai therapeutic masseurs by Thailand’s massage institutions?

5) How do you ensure that the quality standards of Thai therapeutic massage meet the requirements of clients?
6) How do you plan to improve the quality standard of Thai therapeutic massage for practitioners to ensure Thai therapeutic massage for the international therapeutic tourism market?

7) Would you like to add anything about Thai therapeutic massage or comment further?

The interview instrument is directly related to the research questions, which are based on the framework of TTM competencies. Interview questions were created for each group of research participants. The interview questions were designed as semi-structured questions proposed to support RQ1 to RQ3. Table 3.4 outlines the relationships between the three research questions and interview questions as follows.

**Table 3.4: The Correspondence between Research Questions and Interview Questions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Research Question 1:** What is the current measure of competency for Thai therapeutic massage? | **Group 1: Thai Massage Therapists**  
IQ1: What training or educational qualifications have you completed to become a Thai therapeutic masseur?  
IQ5: How do you evaluate the success of massage treatment programs provided to clients? |
| **Group 2: Thai Massage Managers**  
IQ1: What training or educational qualifications do you require your Thai therapeutic masseurs to have?  
IQ5: How do you evaluate the success of massage treatment provided to clients by your staff? |
| **Group 3: Health Specialists**  
IQ1: What training or educational qualifications should Thai therapeutic masseurs have?  
IQ4: How do you evaluate the Thai therapeutic massage training provided to Thai therapeutic masseurs by Thailand’s massage institutions? |
| **Group 4: Government Officials**  
IQ1: What training or educational qualifications should Thai therapeutic masseurs have?  
IQ4: How do you evaluate the Thai therapeutic massage training provided to Thai therapeutic masseurs by Thailand’s massage institutions? |
Table 3.4: The Correspondence between Research Questions and Interview Questions
(continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Research Question 2:** What competency standards are appropriate to assure the quality of Thai therapeutic massage? | **Group 1: Thai Massage Therapists**  
IQ2: Which of the following did your training include? (Refer to a set of competencies in Table 3.3)  
IQ3: Are there reasons why any of the above competencies that you think should NOT be included in your training? (Refer to a set of competencies in Table 3.3)  
IQ4: Are there any skills, knowledge or attitudes that you think should be added into the set of competencies in the Table 3.3? |
| **Group 2: Thai Massage Managers**  
IQ2: Which of the following do you require your Thai therapeutic masseurs to demonstrate? (Refer to a set of competencies in Table 3.3)  
IQ3: Are there reasons why any of the competencies in Table 3.3 that you think should NOT be included in your masseurs’ training?  
IQ4: Are there any skills, knowledge or attitudes that you think should be added into the set of competencies in the Table 3.3? |
| **Group 3: Health Specialists**  
IQ2: Which of the following competencies do you think Thai therapeutic masseurs should possess? (Refer to a set of competencies in Table 3.3)  
IQ3: Are there any skills, knowledge or attitudes that you think should be added into a set of competencies as shown in Table 3.3? |
| **Group 4: Government Officials**  
IQ2: Which of the following competencies do you think Thai therapeutic masseurs should possess? (Refer to a set of competencies in Table 3.3)  
IQ3: Are there any skills, knowledge or attitudes that you think should be added into a set of competencies as shown in Table 3.3? |
Table 3.4: The Correspondence between Research Questions and Interview Questions

(continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Research Question 3: How might competency standards of Thai therapeutic massage be implemented? | **Group 1: Thai Massage Therapists**  
IQ6: How do you think your work as a masseur might be improved?  
IQ7: Would you like to add anything about Thai therapeutic massage or comment further? |
|                                                                                  | **Group 2: Thai Massage Managers**  
IQ6: How do you think your staff massage services might be improved?  
IQ7: Would you like to add anything about Thai therapeutic massage or comment further? |
|                                                                                  | **Group 3: Health Specialists**  
IQ5: How do you ensure that the quality standards of Thai therapeutic massage meet the requirement of clients?  
IQ6: How do you plan to improve the quality standard of Thai therapeutic massage for practitioners to ensure Thai therapeutic massage for the international therapeutic tourism market?  
IQ7: Would you like to add anything about Thai therapeutic massage or comment further? |
|                                                                                  | **Group 4: Government Officials**  
IQ5: How do you ensure that the quality standards of Thai therapeutic massage meet the requirement of clients?  
IQ6: How do you plan to improve the quality standard of Thai therapeutic massage for practitioners to ensure Thai therapeutic massage for the international therapeutic tourism market?  
IQ7: Would you like to add anything about Thai therapeutic massage or comment further? |

Source: Developed for this research.

3.6 Data Analysis

Analysis of data can be used as the process to find out the research results by organizing and summarizing the information to provide answers for the research
questions within the aims of research (Smith 2008). Data analysis of transcribed interviews was undertaken according to the following steps (Leedy & Ormrod 2005):

1. Identifying the interview statements pertaining to the research topic into small categories of data;
2. Clustering: involved grouping the interview statements into the categories indicating the various perspectives of phenomenal experience;
3. Searching for differing points of view from interviewees’ experiences;
4. Building a compound of the various data derived from interviewing to develop the conceptual framework of the research (Leedy & Ormrod 2005).

The analytical process is employed in this research are as follows. The first step involved transcribing all data collected from voice recordings to the first draft transcript for each interviewee. The first draft of each participant's interview was reviewed to ensure the truthfulness and completeness of significant information. In the second step, the draft of each interviewee transcript was reread again, to facilitate understanding of the content of information provided by each participant. In the third step, data from the second draft of each interviewee transcript was analysed by referring back to the interview questions and research questions. In the fourth step, the important information from each participant was compared with others, to identify the similarities and the differences of the overall requirements to understand the current circumstances of Thai massage services and to identify and describe the significant information of competency requirements for Thai massage services as proposed by each participant.
The considerable information was concluded to depict the overall requirements of competencies for Thai massage services in the Bangkok area for developing the competency standards of Thai massage services in the future. Further, the vital issues and suggestions from respondents were employed to develop a strategy to improve the competency standards for Thai massage therapists, to ensure the quality of the Thai massage industry.

3.7 Ethical Considerations
Ticehurst and Veal (2000) state that ethical considerations are essential in business and academic research, as they are in other parts of human activities. The rules of research ethics are concerned with truthfulness and illegal use of data – they focus on respecting the rights of the research data drawn from or regarding human subjects (Zikmund 2000). Researchers have to respect the participants and the sites of study (Creswell 2003). The ethics of business research are especially concerned with protecting the obligations and rights of the participants.

The rights of participants consist of the privacy of all aspects of the study and the duty to present truthful answers and the right of protection of all collected data (Zikmund 2000). Therefore, the researcher needed to ensure that all the gathered information is safe and securely stored; thus other people cannot access research information of participants.

Accordingly, to meet the requirements of the Southern Cross University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) ethics protocol, the Consent Form needed to be signed by each participant. Thus, before the researcher started interviewing, the
Information Sheet and Consent Form for interviews were handed to each participant and explained. The Consent Forms were signed and the interviews were voice-recorded with approval by each participant in accordance with the Southern Cross University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) ethics protocol. All participants were given their identify codes for written reporting to protect the confidentiality of the participants. Therefore, no identifying information was used in the dissemination of results. For security arrangements, code names for participants were stored in a separate, password protected computer file store separately from transcript data. All data files are also password protected. The ID code was coded for each participant during and after analysis. The records of codes were stored in a password protected file in a separate folder to the results. The data will be stored for at least 7 years in accordance with the Southern Cross University policy.

3.8 Conclusion

Chapter 3 justified the research paradigm and methodology for this research, and addressed why a qualitative research methodology was employed to investigate quality issues and concerns about TTM. It was identified that this approach enabled the researcher to define a set of TTM core competencies for the diverse contexts of the Thai spa industry. The research participants, data collection method and data analysis were explicated. The process of the research was shown to allow the researcher to gain in-depth data to evaluate and analyse, and to provide a practical model to the Thai massage industry. The ethical considerations were also identified and discussed.
CHAPTER 4
RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction
This chapter presents the analysis of the data collected from the face-to-face in-depth interviews with 30 participants in the Thai massage industry in the Bangkok area. The structure of this is set-out as shown in Figure 4.1. The profile of interview participants is presented and the findings relating to each of the three research questions is presented for each participant’s group, Finally, a summary of the research findings is provided.

Figure 4.1: The Structure of Chapter 4
4.2 Profile of Interview Participants

A total of 30 selected participants were interviewed for this research, with representation of the key stakeholders in the Bangkok Thai massage industry. The interview participants were divided into four groups: government officials from the Ministry of Public Health, health specialists from massage schools, Thai massage managers and Thai massage therapists from the Thai massage shops in the Bangkok area. Participants were selected as potential sources of insight into the appropriate Thai massage services, as discussed in Section 3.4. The interview questions were designed for government officials, health specialists, and Thai massage operators to gain information concerning the operation and management of the ‘competency’ category in terms of skills, knowledge, and attitudes for clarifying the appropriate quality standards for the implementation of Thai massage services.

The in-depth interviews of the 30 participants were carried out from the Bangkok area. The interviews were voice-recorded with prior approval from each participant in accordance with the Southern Cross University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) ethics protocol. Before each interview, an Information Sheet and a Consent Form for interview were handed to the participants and explained. Further, each participant signed a Consent Form to meet the requirements of the Southern Cross University HREC ethics protocol. For protecting the confidentiality of the interviewees, each participant was identified by coding only. In addition, in order to reach the ethics requirements set out by the Southern Cross University HREC, the organizational details of interviewees were not identified so as to provide further protection and confidentiality.
4.3 Results and Analysis for Research Question 1 (RQ1)

**RQ1: What is the current measure of competency for Thai therapeutic massage?**

The aim of this research question was to investigate the current measure of competency for TTM and to understand the overall circumstances of Thai massage services, from the point of view of developing quality standards for the Thai massage industry. The research findings can be classified as significant information regarding TTM competencies required to support the implementation of competency standards in the Thai massage industry.

The research results and analysis of the data collected from interviewees of Thai massage therapists, Thai massage managers, health specialists, and government officials groups can be presented for each group as follows.

- **Group 1: Thai massage therapists (T 1 – T10)**

Based on data collected from the group of Thai massage therapists, it was found that eight therapists have completed Thai massage training courses and achieved certificates from public massage schools or private institutions, while two therapists have learned from their colleagues and experts in their workplaces. Most Thai massage therapist respondents reported that they completed their training and education to be a Thai therapeutic masseur from public massage organizations such as the Ministry of Public Health, the Department of Non-formal education, the Department of Labour Protection, welfare organizations and the Northern Woman Department Foundation. In addition, other provinces provided massage courses and programs, etc. However, some participants noted that they had trained with and
been educated at private massage schools, such as the Wat Pho Massage School and other private massage and spa schools. The participants stated that some therapists did not study Thai massage courses from any school, but learned from their relatives and colleagues through self-study.

With regard to the qualification background of participants, most participants from this group mentioned that the services of massage schools are not always required for the basic education of, and prior experiences required to be a masseur. No matter what they have learned or experienced about massage before, formal training is not always seen as an absolute requirement. However, most therapists identified that they do need to be tested with respect to massage theories and practice, for competing Thai massage courses. All therapists also confirmed that they need to study about the main 10 lines theories on body and legs to be a qualified masseur. It should be noted that the participants stated that some therapists did not study Thai massage courses from any schools, but learned instead from their relatives and colleagues, through self-studies.

For the current measure of competency to assure the quality of TTM, the participating Thai massage therapists mentioned that, with regard to evaluating performance, most participants usually make decisions about the success of a massage treatment based on their customer’s appearance.

Interviewee T1 mentioned that

‘I have evaluated the customer satisfaction by observing the facial expression, the size of the tip, and the number of returning customers to come back as well’.
Interviwtee **T3** stated that

‘For me, I evaluated the successful Thai massage performance by considering the number of tips received and also the facial expressions of customers during their massage service’.

Interviewee **T4** pointed out that

‘I considered the success of my massage treatment by observing the facial expressions of clients during massage performance. I also observe that, if my customer feels comfortable and sleepy during massage service, it means that I used a proper massage performance and applied it correctly’.

Intervieees **T7** pointed out that

‘I evaluated my massage performance by observing my clients during massage; if they fell asleep or looked comfortable that means my massage services were successful. I also asked my client directly about how they felt after the massage was provided’.

Interviewee **T8** explained that

‘I observed the facial expression of clients during massage treatments and also directly asked customers about my massage service’.

Interviewee **T9** pointed out that

‘For me, I asked my clients directly about my services. However, some customers talked directly to me or my manager about how they felt after my massage was provided’.
Interviewee T10 identified that

‘I would ask my clients about how they felt, and I also evaluated by observing the facial expressions of my customers during massage performance’.

Interviewees T2, T5, and T6 pointed out that they asked clients about the services provided to customers and about how they feel.

Hence, the participants identified that they tend to judge customers’ satisfaction based upon what they actually see, such as the facial expressions of customers, the amount of tip willingly given, and the number of returning customers. These are effectively the best indicators for their performance. Some participants stated that they asked clients about the services provided to customers, while some other customers instead talked directly with the therapists or managers about how they feel. Participants assume that, if customers feel comfortable and sleepy during client care, it means that they employed an appropriate massage technique and applied it correctly.

Thus, the research findings of Research Question 1 from the Thai massage therapists group can be summarized as follows. Formal qualifications for therapists are not required for the basic levels of education and experience to be masseurs. The main 10 lines theory relating to the body and legs is required for study in Thai massage courses. All therapists need to be tested on both massage theories and practices to complete Thai massage courses. However, some therapists who now work in Thai massage shops did not study Thai massage courses from any schools, but they learned from their relatives and colleagues through self-study. For
assessment of TMM services, most Thai masseurs usually ask their customers directly, after they have finished providing Thai massage services. Further, the most effective indicators of therapists’ performance used to evaluate the success of Thai massage services tends to be based on: facial expressions of customers; customers feeling comfortable and sleepy during client care; the amount of tip received; and the number of returning customers.

- **Group 2: Thai massage managers (M1 – M10)**

According to the data gathered from the Thai massage managers’ group, whose role in the research was primarily to reflect operational management aspects, all participants of Thai massage managers have achieved certificates of Thai massage from Thai massage institutions. The participants observed that the majority of Thai massage businesses or shops require staff to have certificates of Thai massage provided by popular private and public institutions such as the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration Organization, the Ministry of Public Health and the Wat Po massage school, and so-on. Most Thai massage shops require a minimum number of hours of training for employees to be seen as therapists. To be a good member of staff, therapists should be friendly, honest and sincere to their customers and colleagues. In addition, the managers also stated that they expected therapists to have practical experience in Thai massage prior to actually starting work. However, the managers mentioned that their Thai massage shops often also provided basic training for new staff who did not have any experiences, skills or education from Thai massage schools. On account of the fact that demand for traditional Thai massage (or Nuad Paan Bulan) and foot reflexology massage has increased in recent years, especially in Thailand, the number of therapists was seen as limited and there was a lack of
available staff. The Thai massage managers identified that some Thai massage shops hired people from neighbouring countries, such as Myanmar, to work in Thai massage shops. They observed that this might lead to possible management problems in Thai massage services such as in the quality of performance or in communication problems with customers and colleagues.

For the current measure of competency, the data gathered from the Thai massage managers’ group to ensure quality standards of the TTM services being provided are as follows.

Interviewee M1 stated that

‘To evaluate their customers, masseurs would ask them directly how they felt. As manager, if there are issues between my employees and clients during massage operations, I would probably recommend to my staff to do the proper things’.

Interviewee M2 mentioned that

I think that the number of returning customers can be evaluated as reflecting successful Thai massage services. With most customers – I have known them before closely – I also ask them directly about massage services’.

Interviewee M3 pointed out that

‘For me, the returning customers and the number of booking services could be indicators to evaluate the success of Thai massage services. I also asked customers directly about how they feel’.
Interviewee M4 stated that

‘I think that the booking numbers of therapists can be applied as measures of the achievements of Thai massage services’.

Interviewees M5 and M6 also commented that they would ask clients directly about how they feel after Thai massage service.

Interviewee M7 stated that

‘As manager, I would see the number of bookings of therapists as an indicator of the success of treatments provided to customers. In the case of unsatisfactory services, the clients would inform me directly at the counter, and then the conversation would be recorded. In addition, if the clients asked to change from one therapist to another therapist without explanation during massage treatments, that could be a sign of unsuccessful services’.

Interviewee M8 stated that

‘The customer would tell me directly, whether they like it or not. If they do not like it, a customer can request a new masseur. The number of bookings for therapists can be evaluated and observed as an indicator of the success of Thai massage services’.

Interviewee M9 mentioned that

‘For me, the number of people buying programs and repeating services could be indicators of the success of services provided to clients. Most customers are very close to me and live nearby the shop; thus I asked my clients directly about Thai massage services. Also, if customers do not come back in the short term, I will call them to invite them to come again. In the case that the clients won’t come back permanently, I will investigate to find out what happened to make them dissatisfied.’
Further, if customers asked to change from one therapist to another therapist, this might be a sign of unsuccessful massage treatments.

Interviewee M10 stated that

‘For me, I think that the number of customers could be signs of the success of Thai massage services, and I also asked customers directly about how they feel’.

To sum up, the Thai massage managers’ group stated that they would talk directly to their customer how they felt after they had received their massage; reflecting on the staff’s performance helped to appraise the achievement and suitability of the massage treatment provided by their staff. Some participants noted that they are very close to their customers as well. The number of bookings, or of people buying massage programs and returning to a shop for more massage services, could be used as key factors to evaluate the accomplishment of that shop. If customers do not go back in the short term, the shop will often call them to invite them to come again. In some cases, where the customers fail to return at all, the managers will try to find out what happened to make them dissatisfied. In addition, customers changing from one therapist to another, without explanation during the course of treatment, could be a sign of unsuccessful services.

Thus, the research results of Research Question 1 from the Thai massage managers group, with respect to their massage shops’ requirements for Thai therapists and the significant issues for assessments of Thai massage services, can be summarized as follows. The issues include whether staff have certificates of Thai massage from Thai massage schools and the hours of Thai massage training which they expect therapists to have as a measure of practical experience in Thai massage services.
However, Thai massage shops also provide basic training to new staff who do not have any experience, skills or education from Thai massage schools. Thai massage managers usually ask their customers directly after the massage delivery about how customers feel about the services received so that they can evaluate the Thai massage services that have been provided. The key indicators for evaluating the success of Thai massage services are as follows: the number of clients booking massages services; the number of services customers buy; and the number of returning customers. Additionally, asking to change therapists without any reason during Thai massage treatment is regarded as a sign of unsuccessful services.

- **Group 3: Health specialists (H1 – H5)**

The participants of the health specialists mentioned that the therapeutic masseurs should have good ethics, behave morally, and provide great services. They should also possess massage certificates, suitable massage experience and undertake a greater number of training hours. They propose that there is no need for basic education. With respect to the issues of morals and ethics, these are most important to people choosing to be a therapist. These issues must reflect the series of rules provided by the massage foundations. The participants believed that providing a great service can be one of the most important, key factors in having a business capable of significant achievements. Participants drawn from Thai massage managers also noted that a therapist must complete at least 150 hours of basic training, while special therapists require about 200 hours of training. As for Thai massage experience, this is required for any massage shop. Therapists must keep up their knowledge, skills and practice at all times. All masseurs should study both basic and advanced concepts of Thai massage courses, concerned with anatomy,
philosophical concepts and law enforcement – all of which are necessary for being special Thai masseurs.

Thus, the findings of Research Question 1 from the health specialists group suggested that the current measures relating to the educational qualification requirements of masseurs and the competencies of Thai massage training programs can be summarized as follows. There is no need to study basic education for Thai massage courses. All therapists should be required to study anatomy, philosophical concepts, law enforcement, ethics and morality. Additionally, therapists should be required to learn how to provide a great service as one of the key factors for successful business achievements. The number of training hours must be at least 150 hours for basic training and 200 hours for special therapists.

With regard to the current measurement and evaluation processes of Thai massage schools, used to implement the quality standards of TTM industry, the participants from the health specialists’ group mentioned that most therapists had to be asked to complete a hands-on test with the manager or owners, prior to work. Some organizations also provided a paper tests, which includes somewhere between 50 – 100 questions related to Thai massage concepts, the 10 major lines concepts (10 Sen) on human bodies, anatomy theory and clinical practice; these components comprise the examination of the Ministry of Public Health and Labour Department. During working hours, the evaluation of ethics and morals should require for therapists - all therapists should be observed by health specialists directly, or customers could be interviewed directly by managers.
As a consequence, the findings of Research Question 1 from the health specialists group suggested that the examination by the Ministry of Public Health and Labour department should use the following methods to evaluate Thai massage courses provided by Thai massage schools. Therapists should undertake paper tests consisting of 50-100 questions that address Thai massage concepts, the 10 main lines concepts, anatomical theories and clinical processes. The ethics and morals must be evaluated. During training hours, all masseurs should be observed by health specialists. Prior starting to work, therapists should be asked for hands-on tests.

- **Group 4: Government officials (G1 – G5)**

According to the overall existing training and education of TTM courses provided in the Thai massage industry and the educational qualifications required for being Thai massage therapists, the participants highlight that no specific education and training background is required for Thai massage therapists. Therapists should be required to take a minimum number of hours of massage training. For the Royal Thai massage and the ancient massage, all therapists are required to complete their basic training of Thai massage courses lasting between 100-150 hours at least. For the field of foot reflexology massage, a shop usually requires all masseurs to complete 80 hours at least. To be a specialist, they need to complete the minimum 330-1,300 hours of advanced training and gain at least 1 year of massage experience. The other feature required to be a therapist is possessing moral principles, good manners, a healthy body and being service minded.

Thus, the research findings of Research Question 1 from the government officials’ group contended that the current training and educational qualifications required for
being Thai massage therapists are as follows. There are no required educational backgrounds for studying Thai massage programs. All therapists should be required to take a minimum number of training hours. For basic Thai massage courses, therapists should require 100-150 hours of Thai massage training. For advanced Thai massage courses, therapists should be required to have 330-1,300 hours of advanced training and 1 year massage experience. Further, the foot reflexology massage qualification may require at least 80 hours of training.

For the current measure of Thai massage services used to assess the quality performance in the TTM industry, the participants of this group pointed out that most therapists are required to satisfactorily sit examinations prior to starting their actual work. The test focuses on the energy line theories within the ten main Sen Lines. Ten of these lines are mainly significant in Thai massage activities. The assessment can be divided as follows: the formal subjective tests; the 80-120 multiple-choice questions and hands-on tests with organizational experts after 1-3 months. The evaluation indicators for massage shops were very different depending on where the examination centre may be located.

As a result, the findings of Research Question 1 from the government officials group contended that the examination methods of the Ministry of Public Health and Labour department used to evaluate Thai massage courses provided by Thai massage schools should be as follows. Most masseurs are required to undergo evaluation before starting their real work. The formal test should include 80-120 multiple-choice questions. The tests should involve the ten main lines pertaining to the human body. Hands-on tests are required prior to starting actual performance. However, the
evaluation indicators for massage shops were very different and depended on where the examination centre was located.

To sum up, the research results of Research Question 1 from the interviewees groups of Thai massage therapists, Thai massage managers, health specialists, and government officials can be summarized by each group as shown in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Research Results for Research Question 1 by Each Group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Research Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Group 1: Thai massage therapists | 1) The current measure related to educational qualification requirement of masseurs and competencies of Thai massage training programs are as follows.  
  • The qualification backgrounds of therapists are not required for basic education and experience to be masseurs.  
  • Some therapists who worked in Thai massage shops did not study Thai massage courses from any schools, but they learned from their relatives and colleagues in self-study.  
  • To complete Thai massage courses, all therapists need to be tested about massage theories and practices as well  
  • The main 10 lines theory on body and legs are required for study in Thai massage courses.  

2) The evaluate process of Thai massage services can be summarized as follows.  
  • For assessment, most Thai masseurs usually ask directly to their customers after finishing Thai massage services.  
  • The indicators for therapists’ performances to evaluate the success of Thai massage services are often based on their clients’ appearance as follows:  
    - Face expressions of customers;  
    - Customers feel comfortable and sleepy during client care;  
    - Amount of tip received;  
    - The number of returning customers. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Research Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Group 2:** Thai massage managers | 1) The Thai massage shops’ requirement for Thai therapists is as follows:  
   - The certificates of Thai massage from Thai massage schools  
   - Hours of Thai massage training which it is expected therapists will have, to show practical experience in Thai massage services.  
   - Thai massage shops also provided the basic training to new staff who did not have any experiences, skills or education from Thai massage schools.  

   2) The significant issues for assessments of Thai massage services as follows.  
      - To evaluate Thai massage services, Thai massage managers usually ask their customers directly after Thai massage has been performed, about how customers feel regarding their services.  
      - The key indicators for evaluating the success of Thai massage services are as follows.  
        1) The number of booking massage services;  
        2) The number of people buying services;  
        3) The number of returning customers.  

   Asking to change therapists without any reason during Thai massage treatment is a sign of unsuccessful services. |
| **Group 3:** Health specialists   | 1) The current measure related to educational qualification requirement of masseurs and competencies of Thai massage training programs are as follows.  
   - No need to study basic education for Thai massage courses;  
   - The education qualification of Thai therapeutic masseurs are required consist of factors such as:  
     - Ethics and morality;  
     - Great services as one of the key factors for businesses’ achievement;  
     - Massage experiences;  
     - The number of training hours such as at least 150 hours for basic training and 200 hours for special therapists;  
     - All therapists should be required to study anatomy, philosophical concepts and law enforcement.  

   2) The following methods are used to evaluate Thai massage courses provided in Thai massage schools by the Ministry of Public Health and Labour department.  
   Prior starting to work, therapists should be asked to carry out hands-on tests.  
      - The paper tests consist of 50-100 questions which include Thai massage concepts, the 10 main lines concepts, anatomy theories and clinical processes.  
      - Ethics and morality are required to be evaluated.  
      - During training hours, all masseurs should be observed by a health specialist.  
      - Customers could be interviewed by managers. |
Table 4.1: Research Results for Research Question 1 by Each Group (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Research Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 4:</td>
<td>1) The current training and educational qualifications required for being Thai massage therapists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government officials</td>
<td>• No required educational background for studying Thai massage programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• All therapists should be required to take a minimum number of training hours as follows:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1) Basic Thai massage courses require 100-150 hours of Thai massage training;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) Advanced Thai massage courses require 330-1,300 hours of advanced training and 1 year massage experience;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) Foot reflexology massage qualify after at least 80 hours training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) The examination methods used to evaluate Thai massage courses provided in Thai massage schools by the Ministry of Public Health and Labour Department are as follows.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Most masseurs are required to undertake evaluation before starting their real work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The tests should involve the ten main lines on the human body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The formal test should include 80-120 multiple-choice questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Hands-on tests are required prior to starting actual performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The evaluation indicators for Thai massage shops are so different, depending on where the examination centre is located.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source: Developed for this research.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hence, the research results from representative of Thai massage therapists, Thai massage managers, health specialists, and government officials groups indicate that the current measure of competency required in the Thai massage services can be wrapped up by the discussion which follows.

4.3.1 The Qualification Requirement for Studying Thai Massage Courses

The data analysis and findings from therapists showed that education and experience backgrounds are not required for studying Thai massage courses. Further, the findings of the health specialists and government officials groups also confirmed that there are no required educational backgrounds for studying Thai
massage programs. As a consequence, the research findings demonstrate that the current educational qualification backgrounds and experiences for people who want to study Thai massage are not required for basic Thai massage courses.

4.3.2 The Qualification Requirement for Completing Thai Massage Courses

The research findings of the therapists’ group contended that the main 10 lines theory on body and legs are required for studying Thai massage courses and all practitioners need to be tested about Thai massage theories and practices in order to properly complete Thai massage courses. The findings of the government officials’ group pointed out that all practitioners are required to take a minimum number of training hours such as 100-150 training hours for basic Thai massage courses; 330-1,300 training hours and one year experience for advance Thai massage courses; and 80 training hours for foot reflexology massage.

Further, the findings of health specialist asserted that the Thai massage schools require the following educational qualifications for Thai massage therapists in order for them to correctly complete their programs:

1) **For knowledge**, all therapists are required to study anatomy, philosophical concepts and law enforcement.

2) **For skills**, Thai massage experience is required for being Thai massage therapists. Thus, hands-on tests and training hours are required for all therapists including at least 150 training hours for basic Thai massage courses and 200 training hours for Advanced Thai massage courses.

3) **For Attitudes**, great services, ethics and morality are the keys requirements of Thai massage therapists.
Accordingly, the research findings from in-depth interviews results in the view that the requirements of Thai massage therapists need to be examined, with respect to Thai massage theories and practices, in order to ensure properly-qualified people are completing Thai massage courses, as shown in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2: The Qualification Requirement for Completing Thai Massage Courses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>All therapists are required to study and evaluate Thai massage theories about the main 10 lines theory on body and legs anatomy, philosophy and law enforcement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>Hands-on testing and training hours are required for all therapists including at least 100-150 training hours for basic Thai massage courses, 80 training hours for foot reflexology massage, and at least 200 – 1,300 training hours for advanced Thai massage Therapists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>The service-provider mindset, ethics and morality are required by Thai massage therapists.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Developed for this research.

However, the research findings noted that the minimum number of training hours required for basic Thai massage courses and advanced Thai massage reflected quite different standards and expectations between the health specialists from Thai massage schools and the government officials.

**4.3.3 The Qualification requirement of Thai Massage Therapists for working in Thai massages shops**

According to the research findings from the interviews, the Thai massage managers highlighted that the Thai massage shops require qualified Thai massage therapists, holding the certificates of Thai massage training from Thai massage schools. They
must also have proven training hours, and experiences in Thai massage services. However, in reality, the therapists pointed out that some therapists who work in Thai massage shops do not study Thai massage courses from any schools, but they learn from their relatives and colleagues in self-study. In addition, Thai massage managers noted that, for new staff who did not have any experience, skills or education from Thai massage schools, Thai massage shops often provided the basic training as well.

It is noted that the Health Laws Act (2008) points out that Thai masseurs who provide TTM must be 18 years old, and therapists must have certificates of Thai massage training from Thai massage schools that have been approved by the Thai government (The Ministry of Public Health 2008). Therefore, the qualification requirements of Thai massage therapists for working in Thai massages shops are as follows.

1) Thai massage therapists who work in Thai massage shops must be at least 18 years old.

2) Therapists must have certificates of Thai massage training from Thai massage schools.

3) Training hours, and experience in Thai massage services are required for working in Thai massage shops.

However, the research findings also found that the gap in Thai massage services with respect to Thai massage shops requirements allowed some therapists to work without certificates of Thai massage courses from Thai massage schools. This is a key problem for assuring the quality of Thai massage services.
4.3.4 Current Assessment Methods for Getting Thai Massage Certificates

According to the findings of the interviews, the Thai massage therapists explained that all therapists are required to be tested about their knowledge and skills before graduating from Thai massage programs. The health specialists also confirmed that the evaluation methods used to assess all therapists before getting Thai massage certificates are as follows: 1) paper tests including 50-100 questions about anatomy and the 10 main lines concepts, clinical processes, and Thai massage concepts; 2) hands-on tests for Thai massage skills by health specialists; 3) Thai massage training hours where the health specialists observe therapists during their training. In addition, all therapists are required to be educated about ethics and morals in Thai massage as well.

Further, the government officials pointed out that the Ministry of Public Health and Labour Department employs evaluation methods for assessing Thai massage courses provided in Thai massage schools as follows: 1) paper tests including 80-100 multiple choice questions especially related to the 10 main lines on the human body; 2) hands-on tests are required for all therapists before starting to work; and 3) Thai massage training hours.

As a result, the research findings from the interviews demonstrate that the current assessment methods employed to evaluate the Thai massage therapists before issuing Thai massage certificates can be depicted as the Figure 4.2.
4.3.5 Current Assessment Methods for Assuring the Customers' Satisfaction

The data analysis and findings of the therapists' group showed that the assessment methods used to evaluate the customer's satisfactions, as employed by Thai massage therapists include 1) asking directly to their customers after finishing Thai massage treatments; 2) using key indicators from the customers' appearance such as facial expressions, whether or not customers seems to feel comfortable or asleep during client care; the amount of any tip received; and the number of returning
clients. The health specialists group also confirmed that the Thai massage shops would interview their customers for assessing the quality of Thai massages services.

Further, the Thai massage managers pointed out that the evaluation methods used for Thai massage services include: 1) Thai massage managers regularly ask customers directly about therapists’ performance after they have finished receiving Thai massage services; 2) using key indicators such as the number of booking services, buying services and returning customers for evaluating Thai massage services.

As a result, the research findings from in-depth interviews reflect the conclusions that the current assessment methods employed for evaluating Thai massage services to ensure customers’ satisfaction are as follows.

1) Asking customers directly after therapists have concluded the provisions of Thai massage services.

2) Using the following key indicators for evaluation of their services:

   (i) Customers’ appearances by observing responses such as facial expressions, and observing whether or not customers feel comfortable or fall asleep during client care;

   (ii) Amount of any tip received;

   (iii) The number of booking services;

   (iv) The number of buying services;

   (v) The number of returning customers.
4.4 Results and Analysis for Research Question 2 (RQ2)

RQ2: What competency standards are appropriate to assure the quality of Thai therapeutic massage?

The purpose of this research question is to investigate the significant competency of Thai massage services by identifying the appropriate competencies of Thai massage therapists. The findings of this research will introduce the proper therapeutic massage competencies required of Thai massage therapists for assuring the quality standards of TTM.

Balkanska, Georgiev and Popova (2010) point out that, during the past decade, there has been a growing awareness in competencies standards systems for improving individual and organizational practice in health professions. It is more important than ever to guarantee that the people-based employment services are offered by well-qualified professional practitioners (Ford 2008). The concept of ‘competency’ has many definitions related to the individual’s respective knowledge, skills, and attributes, which is attempted in order to distinguish excellent performance from standard performance, with a goal of improving the abilities of staff (Daley 1991; Garvin 2000). Ash and Phillips (2000) argue that competence is commonly described as the possession and progress of adequate skills, proper attitudes and experience for the performance achievement. Competency can be recognized as “the vital knowledge, skills and abilities participated all through an occupational therapists’ career” (Australian Association of Occupational Therapists 1994, p.7).
Moreover, the term ‘competency standards’ is used to reflect the provision of tools employed to evaluate the performance of individual members; other terms and classifications relate to attaining and achieving proper standards, which implies that there is a plan of educational and training programs (Abreu, Peloquin & Ottenbacher 1998; Hager & Gonczi 1991). Greiner and Knebel (2003) and McAllister (2006) stated that the competency expectations are represented and managed by the documentations of competency standards. Standards Australia (2005) noted that the standards of competencies are regarded as official documents which set out and explain the proper knowledge, skills and attitudes regarding as important or critical if therapists are to perform at the acceptable level (Greiner & Knebel 2003; McAllister 2006).

Rodger et al. (2009) also point out that competency standards are supposed to reflect the awareness of proficient performance credited by the various members of a profession. Walsh (2002) highlights that competency standards are obviously and completely focused within the profession’s significant philosophies, theory; the extent of such standards refers to parts of the academic and interpersonal competence compared with expectations of the community, academic and practice requirements. Hanson and Kerkhoff (2011) indicate that the functional competency illustrates the knowledge, skills and work needed for conditions of service such as management and evaluation. Dobson (2003) defines a competency is more than just an explanation of a work action or task, as it includes evaluating the capabilities and addresses the skills, knowledge, and attitudes which are required of staff seeking to provide a performance to meet the required standard.
The College of Massage Therapists of Ontario (2006) elucidates that competency standards are divided into three elements consisting of health science, professional development, and clinical science. The College of Massage Therapists of Ontario (2006) also points out that the category of competence as knowledge, skills, and attitudes can be measured in various ways included educational achievements, training achievements, work-performance, and continuing professional development. In addition, the Department of Education and Training (2012) comments that evaluations must be performed in an environment which matches industry standards, according to industry regulations and legislation, and must show that therapists have attained all competency units. The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (2017) argues that competencies are divided into three elements consisting of basic competency standards, common competency standards, and core competency standards. These competencies are reflected in aspects such as skills, knowledge, and attitudes, focused on a person who has to complete their working holistic massage therapy outline.

Based on the data collection and analysis from the in-depth interviews, the research findings from interviews of Thai massage therapists, Thai massage managers, health specialists, and government officials groups demonstrate that the competencies required of Thai massage therapists can be summarized as follows.

The interview data from the Thai massage therapists group shows that seven therapists met all professional practice competencies, while none of the therapists met all international competencies standards. The details of interviewed therapists who meet some international competencies standards are as follows.
1) Regarding Health Competencies, seven interviewed therapists pointed out that they had trained and applied knowledge related to anatomy, physiology, and kinesiology principles. Further, seven therapists had also practised infection control and eight therapists had trained to confirm the physical health status of clients. All participants also mentioned that they had never known or applied nutritional concepts or proper first aid techniques which were not included in Thai massage courses.

2) Regarding professional practice competencies, seven therapists of this group mentioned that they had received training in the legal and ethical aspects of practice and conduct.

3) Regarding clinical competencies, all interviewed therapists mentioned that they had never known or applied all clinical competencies to client care. The participants stated that they did not suggest treatment plans to their customers.

4) Regarding communication competencies, all interviewed therapists stated that they had never trained in communication competencies. However, nine therapists pointed out that there are no problems with their colleagues in Thai massage shops. The other therapist stated that some employees had language problems, as some employees came from overseas countries such as Myanmar. As for academic medical terminology, all interviewed therapists stated that they had never used it; therapists communicate to their customers directly, using easy words.
5) Regarding therapeutic massage competencies, all interviewed therapists learned Thai massage by following the procedures within a holistic therapeutic massage structure and practised the concept of Thai massage as a therapeutic procedure. The participants explained that “entire” therapists start to massage from the bottom of the body (the feet) and move towards the top (the head) by using rhythmic and rocking motions. This technique is called the “10 Thai energy lines” and is useful for increasing the body’s energy flow for balance and relaxation. All participants also pointed out that they had never trained for advanced variations. This is due to the fact that advanced variations – pressing the iliopsoas by finger, King Cobra style, and advanced variations for more flexible customers – are inappropriate and dangerous for customers. All interviewed therapists had trained in advanced neck stretching and advanced stretches, usually used to treat tiredness and fatigue. Regarding Thai herbs, nine therapists had trained to employ Thai herbal therapy with their customers, if their customers feel discomfort or muscle pain. The other therapist had never learned or applied Thai herbal treatments to their customers.

The representative of therapists, Thai massage managers, health specialists, and government officials recognize that the competencies required for Thai massage Therapists can be compared as shown in Table 4.3.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Details (Document Reviews)</th>
<th>Therapists Trained</th>
<th>Managers Required</th>
<th>Health Specialists Required</th>
<th>Government Officials Required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health Competencies</td>
<td>• Apply Anatomy and Physiology Principles</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply Kinesiology Principles</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply Nutritional Concepts</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply first aid</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Confirm the physical health status of the client</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Practice infection control</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Practice Competencies</td>
<td>• Acknowledge the legal requirements of the massage therapy profession</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply professional ethics in practice and conduct.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Competencies</td>
<td>• Apply Hydrotherapy to client care</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply therapeutic exercises to client care</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply pain and stress management techniques to client care</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Draw up client case management plans</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Recommend health care referrals</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Competencies</td>
<td>• Work effectively with other staff in a Team</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Communicate effectively with customers</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use basic medical terminology appropriately</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.3: Competencies Requirement of Thai Massage Therapists Compared by Each Interviewee’ Groups (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Details (Document Reviews)</th>
<th>Therapists Trained</th>
<th>Managers Required</th>
<th>Health Specialists Required</th>
<th>Government Officials Required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Therapeutic Massage Competencies</td>
<td>• Work within a framework of holistic therapeutic massage</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Practise the principles of Thai therapeutic massage</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Start the massage from the side of the body and then throughout the core of the body by twisting and flipping</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Begin massage from the bottom (feet) and move towards the top (head)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Perform stretches, thumb press, palm press on the 10 Thai energy lines</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Massage the entire body by using rhythmic and rocking motions to increase the body’s energy flow for balance and relaxation</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Advanced Variation: Finger Press iliopsoas</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Advanced Variation: The King Cobra</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Advanced Variation for More Flexible Clients</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Advanced Locust Variation</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Advanced Neck Stretch</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Advanced Stretches</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Apply Thai herbs and massage.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Developed for this research.
Table 4.3 illustrates the comparison of competencies requirement of Thai Massage therapists by each group of respondents. This comparison is valuable for classifying the significant competencies of Thai massage training to ensure the quality standards of TTM.

➢ Health Competencies

The majority of participant groups from the interviewed stakeholders confirmed that the health competencies including

1) Apply Anatomy and Physiology principles;
2) Apply Kinesiology principles;
3) Confirm the physical health status of the client; and
4) Practice infection control.

These are the significant health competencies required for training Thai massage therapists. The research findings however pointed out that therapists have never trained to apply nutritional concepts in Thai massage courses. Applying nutritional concepts are not required by Thai massage managers and government officials as well. Only the health specialists required applying nutritional concepts for training Thai massage therapists. Further, Thai massage therapists pointed out that they did not learn to apply first aid. The government officials also did not require any specifics related to applying first aid for Thai massage therapists. However, the Thai massage managers and health specialists recognize that ability to apply first aid should be required for training Thai massage therapists.
➢ **Professional Practice Competencies**

The overwhelming of participants groups highlighted that the professional practice competencies including “acknowledge the legal requirements of the massage therapy profession”, and “apply professional ethics in practice and conduct” are required when training Thai massage therapists.

➢ **Clinical Competencies**

The Thai massage therapists and managers groups noted that clinical competencies are not required within Thai massage training courses. In addition, the health specialists and government officials argue that Thai massage therapists should be required to be educated in clinical competencies including: 1) apply Hydrotherapy to client care; 2) apply therapeutic exercises to client care; 3) apply pain and stress management techniques to client care; 4) draw up client case management plans; and 5) recommend health care referrals.

➢ **Communication Competencies**

According to the findings of the in-depth interviews from the stakeholders in the Thai massage industry, the therapists were not required to be educated about communication competencies in studies provided by Thai massage schools. In contrast, the government officials and health specialists pointed out that communication competencies are required for Thai massage therapists including: 1) work effectively with other staff in a Team; 2) communicate effectively with customers; and 3) use basic medical terminology appropriately. However, the Thai massage managers noted that Thai massage therapists are required only to satisfy
the communication competency related to “communicate effectively with customers” when working in Thai massage shops.

➢ **Therapeutic Massage Competencies**

The overwhelming majority of participants from the four groups of participants confirmed that the therapeutic massage competencies required for training Thai massage therapists are as follows.

1) Work within a framework of holistic therapeutic massage;

2) Practice the principles and patterns of TTM;
   (i) Begin massage from the bottom (feet) and move towards the top (head);
   (ii) Perform stretches, thumb and palm presses on the 10 Thai energy lines;
   (iii) Massage the entire body by using rhythmic and rocking motions to increase the body’s energy flow for balance and relaxation;
   (iv) Advanced Neck Stretch;
   (v) Advanced Stretches;
   (vi) Apply Thai herbs and massage.

However, the findings of interviews from Thai massage managers noted that there are some therapeutic massage competencies including Advanced Neck Stretch, Advanced Stretches, and Apply Thai herbs and massage which are not required for therapists providing services to customers in Thai massage.
It should be noted that the findings of in-depth interviews from the therapists and Thai massage managers groups commented that the competencies which should not be included in Thai massage courses include “apply hydrotherapy to client care”, and “apply nutritional concepts.” Significantly, the majority of participant groups pointed out that, currently, foreign language skills are vital for Thai massage therapists. For instance, English language for therapists should be added into Thai massage courses in order to better prepare Thai massage therapists to upgrade their career.

The competencies required for training Thai massage therapists by stakeholders in Thai massage industry and the recommendation related to recognize the proper competencies of Thai massage therapists were classified and analysed, to assist in identifying the appropriate competencies of Thai Massage Therapists for working in Thai Massage Industry. The results are shown in Figure 4.3.

**Figure 4.3: The Methods of Identifying Critical Competencies of Thai Massage Therapists from Stakeholders in Thai Massage Industry** (Developed for this research)
As a consequence, the research findings of Research Question 2 from in-depth interviews asserted that the critical competencies required for Thai massage therapists are as shown in Table 4.4.

**Table 4.4: The Critical Competencies Required for Thai Massage Therapists**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health Competencies</td>
<td>• Apply Anatomy and Physiology Principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply Kinesiology Principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply first aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Confirm the physical health status of the client</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Practice infection control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Practice</td>
<td>• Acknowledge the legal requirements of the massage therapy profession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competencies</td>
<td>• Apply professional ethics in practice and conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Competencies</td>
<td>• Apply therapeutic exercises to client care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply pain and stress management techniques to client care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Draw up client case management plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Recommend health care referrals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Competencies</td>
<td>• Work effectively with other staff in a Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Communicate effectively with customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use basic medical terminology appropriately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Prepare English language for therapists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Therapeutic Massage Competencies</td>
<td>• Work within a framework of holistic therapeutic massage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Practice the principles and patterns of Thai therapeutic massage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1) Begin massage from the bottom (feet) and move towards the top (head)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) Perform stretches, thumb press, palm press on the 10 Thai energy lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) Massage the entire body by using rhythmic and rocking motions to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>increase the body’s energy flow for balance and relaxation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4) Advanced Neck Stretch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5) Advanced Stretches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6) Apply Thai herbs and massage.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Developed for this research.
Table 4.4 shows the results of categorizing the critical competencies required for Thai massage therapists into five groups, consisting of health competencies, professional practice competencies, clinical competencies, communication competencies and therapeutic massage competencies. The details of critical competencies required for training Thai massage therapists in each group are as follows.

- **Health competencies**: the training details of health competencies for Thai massage courses are as follows.
  1. Apply Anatomy and Physiology Principles.
  2. Apply Kinesiology Principles.
  3. Apply first aid.
  4. Confirm the physical health status of the client.
  5. Practice infection control.

- **Professional practice competencies**: the training details of professional practice competencies required for Thai massage courses are as follows.
  1. Acknowledge the legal requirements of the massage therapy profession;
  2. Apply professional ethics in practice and conduct.

- **Clinical competencies**: the details of clinical competencies required for Thai massage courses are as follows.
  1. Apply therapeutic exercises to client care;
  2. Apply pain and stress management techniques to client care;
  3. Draw up client case management plans;
  4. Recommend health care referrals.
Communication competencies: the details of communication competencies required for Thai massage training courses are as follows.

1) Work effectively with other staff in a Team
2) Communicate effectively with customers.
3) Use basic medical terminology appropriately.
4) Prepare English language for therapists.

Therapeutic massage competencies: the training details of therapeutic massage competencies required for Thai massage courses are as follows.

1) Work within a framework of holistic therapeutic massage
2) Practice the principles and patterns of TTM;
   (i) Begin massage from the bottom (feet) and move towards the top (head)
   (ii) Perform stretches, thumb press, palm press on the 10 Thai energy lines
   (iii) Massage the entire body by using rhythmic and rocking motions to increase the body’s energy flow for balance and relaxation
   (iv) Advanced Neck Stretch
   (v) Advanced Stretches
   (vi) Apply Thai herbs and massage.
4.5 Results and Analysis for Research Question 3 (RQ3)

RQ3: How might competency standards of Thai therapeutic massage be implemented?

The purpose of this research question is to study the significant issues of Thai massage competencies to be implemented via the stakeholders in Thai massage services, with the goal of introducing the appropriate competencies for Thai massage therapists in the Thai massage industry.

➢ Group 1: Thai massage therapists (T1 – T10)

Most therapist participants would like to improve their career, financial supports, attitudes, ethics, moral, services and locations. They would like to study more about advanced massage methods such as oil massage, spa massages and so-on, where these features are based on the main 10 line theories. People who want to work abroad and start a massage business need government support. Most participants mentioned that attitudes, ethics and morals are significant aspects of working as a masseur. This is especially so because most masseurs in Thai massage services are female, but most customers are male. Thus, therapists may be approached to provide sexual services. This would have a major effect on the image of Thai massage. Participants suggested that, being masseurs, they have to love what they provide to clients. With respect to the standards of the location of work, participants identified that premises should be tidy, clean and ample for their customers.
Further, some interviewees from this group also pointed out some important information as follows.

Interviewee T2 mentioned that

‘For me, I want to work abroad; thus I want the government to support the financial assistance plan for the Thai massage therapists who want to go working abroad’.

Interviewee T3 stated that

‘In my opinion, most people think that Thai massage business is related to sexual services. That can negatively affect the image and reputation of Thai massage businesses; thus the image of Thai massage services must be improved’.

Interviewee T5 pointed out that

‘As a Thai massage therapist, I think that therapists have to attend actual Thai massage courses. Some therapists also want to help their society as much as they can’.

Interviewee T7 pointed out that

‘Thai massage should be an alternative career for people who are unemployed. In some cases, if they want to go to international markets, the government should provide financial assistance for them’.

Interviewee T10 commented that ‘As a good therapist, therapists are willing to help their society as well’.
Hence, the interviewees commented that, in the future, Thai massage businesses could be an alternative job for people who are unemployed. Further, the participants of this group also commented that the financial assistance is very important for masseurs who want to go to international markets. The image of Thai masseurs needs to be improved – this aspect might be related to supposed or actual sexual activities. In addition, some therapists noted that they also want to assist their society willingly, as much as they can.

➢ **Group 2: Thai massage managers (M1 – M10)**

The collected data from the Thai massage managers’ group, related to the significant issues for improving Thai massage competencies of the TTM service, indicated the following.

Interviewee M1 stated that

‘I think that therapists are required to improve their skills and manners for providing a great massage service’.

Interviewee M2 commented that

‘For me, the positive attitudes, skills and manners of Thai massage therapists are required to improve their service’s quality’.

Interviewee M3 commented that

‘In my opinion, great skills and attitudes are necessary to improve the service of therapists. To improve their skills, everyone in this shop is required to practise and to study more through self-study processes’.
Interviewee M6 stated that

‘Our shop is focused on improving the services of therapists included attitudes, manners, and skills for the customers’ satisfaction. I would be satisfied if our therapists want to improve their massage skills by practising advanced Thai massage courses’.

Interviewee M10 mentioned that

‘Some Thai massage shops employ therapists who came from neighbouring countries such as Myanmar for working in Thai massages shops. This is because the demand for Thai massage services is increasing rapidly, particularly in the Bangkok area. Thus, our therapists are required to improve their Thai massage skills and manners for ensuring the quality of massage services’.

Interviewee M7 also pointed out that ‘I want therapists to improve their skills and attitudes for improving the quality of services’.

Hence, the participants commented that therapists are required to improve their attitude, manners and skills in order to provide a great massage service. The therapist should pay attention to whatever they provide as a service to their customers. All Thai massage shops recognize the importance of customer satisfaction. Thus they need to perform what the customers want. However, the total number of Thai massage therapists is inadequate in the Thai massage industry. This is because the demand for Thai massage services is increasing rapidly, particularly in the Bangkok area. The Thai massage managers noted that some Thai massage shops employed therapists who came from neighbouring countries such as Myanmar for working in Thai massage shops. They expressed concerns that this might cause
operational problems in Thai massage shops such as quality control, communication problems with customers and colleagues, and the quality of service.

Further, interviewee M1 also pointed out that

‘My therapists do not want to study advanced massage. They believe that the basic Thai massage course that they learnt before is enough for massage services. For me, I really want therapists to keep practising massage skills all the time’.

Interviewee M3 mentioned that ‘To improve their skills, everyone in this shop is required to practise and to study more by the self-study processes’.

Interviewee M5 commented that

‘For me, I noticed that the therapists really do not want to study anymore to improve their skills. Because they believe that if they provide massage services to their customers more often, so their massage skills will be improved’.

Interviewee M6 stated that

‘Our shop is focused on improving the services of therapists. I would like our therapists to improve their massage skills by practising advanced Thai massage courses’.

Interviewee M10 mentioned that ‘Therapists are required to practise their massage skills at all times’.

Thus, the participating Thai massage managers commented that most therapists did not want to study advanced massage skills. This is because the therapists believe
that studying Thai massage courses, as provided by Thai massage schools, is enough for the services they provide. However, the Thai massage managers highlight that therapists are often required to practice the full range of Thai massage services.

- **Group 3: Health specialists (H1 - H5)**

The collected data from the health specialist group, related to the competencies required of Thai massage therapists to achieve customers’ requirements, indicated the following.

Interviewee H1 mentioned that

‘Therapists must be nice and friendly to their clients and must know how to do massage well. I think that the most important rule of massage is to provide healing and relaxing services’.

Interviewee H2 commented that

‘I think that therapists have to clearly understand the legal aspects and ethics of massage therapists. The professional code of ethics must be considered as setting quality standards in Thailand’.

Interviewee H3 stated that

‘I think that the moral and merit theories need to be added in massage performance for assuring the quality standards of Thai therapeutic massage. Additionally, therapists must be friendly to their customers.'
Interviewee H4 pointed out that

‘I think that the quality standard for Thai massage is quite low. Therapists must know how to do massage well and have to be nice to their customers’.

Interviewee H5 mentioned that

‘In my opinion, all therapists are required to clearly understand their legal and ethical obligations to clients’.

Hence, a key focus for this group was to ensure that the quality standards of Thai massage are maintained to meet the customers’ requirements. The participants of the health specialists group mentioned that the characteristics for satisfied customers were as follows: 1) being friendly and nice to their customers - it means presenting courtesy and kindness to their clients; and 2) remembering important massage rules so as to provide a relaxing and healing massage. In addition, the professional code of ethics should be a significant aspect of massage therapy in Thailand. It is intended to provide a massage therapist with a clear understanding of their legal and ethical obligations to their customers.

Further, the collected data from this group related the plans and suggestions to improve competency standards for Thai therapeutic massage, as follows.

Interviewee H1 mentioned that

‘For me, I recommend that the competition of Thai massage therapy is important as an efficient way for Thai massage therapists to review their skills, similar to the competition between Thai food in each part of Thailand. Currently, the Thai massage courses have many standards for each organization, particularly in
Therapists and shop owners never come back to review their skills after they have finished and received certificates from Thai massage schools. The massage standards building and ability is based upon their practices in massage treatments. Additionally, all therapists need to love their careers.

Interviewee H2 stated that

‘Therapists and shop owners never come back to review their skills after they had finished and received certificates from Thai massage schools. The massage standards building and ability are based upon their practices in massage treatments. Additionally, all therapists need to love their careers’.

Interviewee H3 commented that

‘Currently, the organization involved does not support setting up the system. There are no graduate follow-up reports for students who have graduated. I think that the organizations involved should assist Thai massage schools to set up the systems for follow-up reports for graduated students’.

Interviewee H4 discussed that

‘Thai massage curriculums of Thai massage schools are very different. There are many standards for assessment across Thai massages institutions. The examinations also use different indicators to evaluate’.

Interviewee H5 pointed out that

‘The Thai massage industry still has no plans to encourage therapists through competition to improve their massage skills’.
Therefore, the participating health specialists pointed out that there were no plans for competition in Thai massage therapy. They felt that Thai massage contests, for therapists, would be very efficient ways for the Thai therapists to review their skills and knowledge again. Thai massage contests might be a great way to identify the proper massage therapists in the Thai massage market as well. At present, the curricula of Thai massage institutions show differences: there are also many and varying standards. Thus, approaches to assessment, practice, and course syllabuses need to improve. Further, these are the significant problems which need to be fixed. After graduating from Thai massage schools, the Thai therapists never have to review their knowledge again, but this can lower standards over time. Thus they need access to methods whereby they can review their knowledge and skills. For students who have graduated, the Thai massage schools do not conduct a follow up survey with them. Thus, the organizations involved in training should support Thai massage schools to set up the systems to follow-up outcomes for students who have graduated.

Additionally, interviewee H1 also stated that

‘The policy is good enough but the operational management is still having problems. There is also no central organization for consulting by Thai massage businesses about their management problems. I think that a central organization is required to assist the Thai massage industry’.

Interviewee H3 suggested that

‘The Thai massage businesses are still having operational management problems. For me, I think that a central organization is required for consulting by Thai massage businesses about their management problems’.
Interviewee H4 also pointed out that

‘The Thai massage policy is good, but there are still problems about the operational management. The budget for supporting activities of the Thai massage industry is insufficient’.

Interviewee H5 mentioned that

‘There are many kinds of herbal products in Thailand, thus, these providers need the support of the government’.

Hence, the health specialist group highlighted that the Thai massage policy is good but the Thai massage operating system still has problems. The participants also noted that the budget for supporting Thai massage activities is insufficient and there is still no central organization for industry participants to be able to consult about Thai massage management problems. In Thailand, there are so many different kinds of herbal remedies and supplements, for which a central organization of Thai massages services is needed to support providers.

➢ **Group 4: Government officials (G1 – G5)**

According to the data collected from government officials, to ensure the quality standards of Thai massage, services for clients requires that the massage therapy examinations are governed by the Ministry of Public Health. All masseurs must be required to undergo assessment before they are allowed to graduate. Regarding massage policy, the officials state that it is quite clear and unique. The Ministry of Public Health, through various departments, sets out the courses syllabus, provides
guidance, addresses the requirements of business locations and looks at factors such as the number of customers' beds and so on.

The following data is gathered from the government officials related to the implementation of Thai massage service to ensure quality standards for Thai therapeutic massage.

Interviewee G1 mentioned that

‘In my point of view, Thai massage courses have many different standards. Many educational institutions have offered Thai massage courses including the relaxing massage and healing massage. Thus, to improve the quality standards of Thai massage services, Thai massage institutions are required to use a national curriculum and they also have to ask for the permission for their services location from the Ministry of Public Health. Currently, they are beginning the process of changing the name of Thai massage to “Nuad Thai”. They are also trying to set clear standards such as a minimum qualification required for Thai massage therapists. Thai massage therapists who finish Thai massage programs receive certificates. In my opinion, to ensure the quality of standards in the Thai massage industry, a license for Thai massage therapists should be required as well’.

Interviewee G2 commented that

‘Most people think that Thai massage is related to sexual services. It is for this reason that the name of massage and the logo are going to change from Thai massage to Nuad Thai’.
Interviewee G3 stated that

‘There are various Thai massage curricula provided by Thai massage institutions. For assessment of Thai massage performance, they have many different standards where the policy and standards criteria are not clear as well. Thus, the government organizations are trying to make clear standards criteria related to the quality of Thai massage services.

Interviewee G4 pointed out that

‘At present, there are many Thai massage schools providing different kinds of Thai massage courses. For me, I would like Thai massage institutions to be required to use a national curriculum to improve the quality standards of Thai massage services. In addition, for setting standards about a minimum qualification required for Thai massage therapists, a minimum of 100 hours of relaxing massage training must be required before starting to work in Thai massage shops’.

Interviewee G5 mentioned that

‘There are many standards provided for massage businesses, it depends on the units to be used in each department. Thus, I would like to make a national curriculum by meeting people involved to discuss about a minimum number of massage training hours and to develop the necessary contents related to Thai massage courses. Further, Thai massage businesses are seen as related to sexual services. Thus, the name of massage services and the logo are going to change from Thai massage to “Nuad Thai” as well’.

Hence, the participants from this group pointed out that Thai massage courses have many different standards; the various educational institutions offering Thai massage courses consisting of relaxing massage and healing massage need to employ
standards which are more uniform across the training process. Thus, to improve the quality of Thai massage services, Thai massage schools are required to use a national curriculum and also need to ask the permission for their services location from the Ministry of Public Health. The participants mentioned that they are beginning the procedure of changing name of Thai massage to “Nuad Thai” and also are trying to set clear standards for various areas, such as setting a minimum qualification required for Thai masseurs. For instance, a minimum of 100 hours of relaxing massage, within training, must be required before starting to work in Thai massage shops. At present, Thai masseurs who finish Thai massage programs receive only certificates. Instead, licenses for Thai massage therapists should be required, to assure the quality of standards in the Thai massage industry. With regard to facilities, Thai massage shops must be shown as unique to Thai massage and created for that purpose only. Further, participants noted that most people think that Thai massage is related to sexual services. Thus, the name of Thai massage and the logo should be changed – the change of name from “Thai massage” to “Nuad Thai” and the logo of TTM has to be registered officially with the Department of Intellectual Property (DIP) which is responsible for providing trademark patents and copyright in Thailand.

Further, interviewee G1 also mentioned that

‘Many Thai massage schools offer various Thai massage courses. I think that they should have to follow a national Thai massage curriculum for assuring the quality standards of Thai massage courses. Therapists should be required to complete a minimum of 100 training hours for the relaxing massage and a minimum of 300 training hours for Thai massage specialists. Further, if therapists would like to go abroad to work, they must get a proper license for Thai massage services; thus if
foreigners would like to work in Thailand, they should be required to get and display the Thai massage license as well. Nowadays, people are interested in Thai massage treatment. People think that the use of herbal ingredients and massage treatments are safe and useful.

Interviewee G2 pointed out that

‘In my point of view, currently, the Thai massage services and Thai herbal ingredients are very popular in the spa industry. In the future, I think that Thai massage and modern treatments should be combined together to serve their customers’.

Interviewee G3 commented that

‘In my opinion, I would like to have obvious regulations and marketing brands. The stability of policy is also important. Thus, Thai massage must have a unique identification and unique logo’.

Interviewee G4 stated that

‘There are many massage schools offering different kinds of Thai massage courses. The Thai massage schools have to provide the Thai massage curriculum which is the same as the ancient Thai massage. I would like to see the traditional Thai massage provided being clear and matched to a national curriculum. I think that there are very few scientific studies of Thai massage treatments. For me, I think that all therapists should be required to earn and display a licence for Thai massage services. The Thai government should be issuing the licence for Thai massage therapists who have completed Thai massage courses and also passed the assessment of Thai massage training for assuring the quality of Thai massage services. In addition, I recommend that case studies are important for healing masseurs; and researching Thai massage is also necessary’.
Interviewee G5 mentioned that

‘For me, Thai massage standards are still not clear. There are problems about the indicators of standards and evaluation tools employed for the traditional Thai massage and Royal Thai massage because the Board of Examiners come from different institutions. I recommend that indicators of standards as a national standard for assessing Thai massage therapists should be developed. The responsible organizations have to discuss with educational institutions, businesses, and people involved in the Thai massage industry for resolving the problems of Thai massage standards. In my opinion, Thai massage courses and training should proceed in the same direction. Thai massage therapy has to be covered in the whole training process such as Thai massage courses and evidence-based training. The Thai massage certification has to reflect therapists’ skills, so therapists need to be examined and registered to classify the levels of their Thai massage skills. Further, there is very little research about Thai massage treatments’.

The participating government officials also pointed out that, currently, there are various massage curriculums provided by public and private schools where the main aims of study were different; instead, they should have to follow a national Thai massage curriculum. These participants commented that both Thai therapists and foreigners who want to work in Thailand should be required to earn and display the license for Thai massage services. Today, TTM and Thai herbal ingredients have been very popular in spa industry. In the future, it is likely that both the Thai massage therapy and modern therapy could be combined together as alternative remedial systems. The interviewees noted that Thai herbal ingredients and treatments are useful and safe for customers. In Thailand, the government should provide precise
law enforcement, obvious policy and marketing brands to identify a clear Thai massage definition.

In addition, the interviewees also mentioned that therapists are required to complete a minimum of 330 hours of Thai massage training for Thai massage specialists. For Thai massage therapy, there are very few scientific studies of local Thai massage therapy undertaken in this area. There appear to be problems with the indicators of standards and assessment tools used for Royal Thai massage and the ancient Thai massage because the Board of Examiners is derived from different institutions. Thai massage standards are still not clear, thus the organizations responsible for these aspects need to engage with businesses, schools and the people involved, to resolve the problems of varying Thai massage standards. One instance would be to find a way to make the Thai massage service as unique as possible. Thai massage courses and training must work in the same direction. Training of Thai massage courses and evidence-based Thai massage therapy need to be covered across all processes. Receiving certification of TTM has to reflect to the masseurs’ skills, where the masseurs need to be tested and registered to classify their skill levels. In addition, the case studies are important for healing masseurs and ongoing Thai massage research is essential.

To sum up, the research results of Research Question 3 from interviewees of Thai massage therapists, Thai massage managers, health specialists, and government officials groups can be summarized by each group as shown in Table 4.5.
# Table 4.5: Research Results for Research Question 3 by Each Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Research Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Group 1:** Thai massage therapists | 1) The suggestions of Thai massage therapists to improve competency standards for Thai therapeutic massage services are as follows.  
- Therapists would like to improve their jobs, attitude, ethics, morals, and service.  
- Thai massage owners and therapists would like government organizations to support them financially if they want to run massage business and to work aboard.  
- Thai massage places need to improve to better services.  
- The 10 main lines theories are required for studying Thai massage.  
- The attitude, ethics and morals are important for being a masseur.  
- For Thai massage shops, it must be tidy, clean and wide.  
- In the future, Thai massage jobs could be an alternative career for Thai people.  
2) The significant issues which need to be improved are as follows.  
- Financial assistance for Thai masseurs who want to go to work in the international markets.  
- The images of Thai masseurs need to be improved which might be related to sexual activities.  
- Some activities for Thai therapists where they can get involved to assist their society as much as they can. |
| **Group 2:** Thai massage managers | 1) The suggestions for improve competency standards in Thai therapeutic massage services as follows.  
- Attitude, manners and skills are vital issues for being great therapists.  
- Therapists have to pay attention when they provide Thai massage performance to their clients.  
- Therapists have to recognize the importance of customer satisfaction.  
- Some Thai massage shops employ therapists who came from neighboring countries for working in Thai massage shops; that might cause operational problems in Thai massage services such as quality and communication problems with customers and colleagues.  
2) The recommendations for improving the quality standards of Thai therapists are as follows.  
- Most Thai therapists in the Thai massage shops did not want to learn more about advanced Thai massage.  
- Thai therapists should practice Thai massage performance usually for improving their skills. |
| **Group 3:** Health specialists    | 1) The key requirements of Thai massage services for Thai massage therapists to assure the quality of Thai massage services are as follows.  
- All therapists should be friendly and nice to their customers;  
- Understanding about law and ethical obligations involved in Thai massage services are important;  
- Practicing massage and remembering rules of Thai massage are important to provide a relaxing and healing massage.  
2) The significant issues to improve Thai therapeutic massage services are as follows.  
- There was no plan addressing competitions in Thai massage industry.  
- There are many types of standards for Thai massaged institutions, and the curriculum and examination are also different.  
- The Thai therapists have never reviewed their knowledge again, thus Thai masseurs should be required to review their skills and knowledge once they have graduated.  
- Thai massage institutions require a survey system and central institutions of Thai massage services for supporting their management.  
3) The commendations for improving quality standards in Thai therapeutic massage services are as follows:  
- Some problems in the Thai massage operation system need to be solved.  
- The budget for supporting Thai massage activities is inadequate.  
There is no central association for consulting and resolving management problems in Thai massage services. |
Table 4.5: Research Results for Research Question 3 by Each Group (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Research Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 4: Government</td>
<td>1) The significant issues related to the assessment of Thai massage services are as follows.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>officials</td>
<td>• To ensure quality standards, the examinations of Thai massage services need to be governed by the Ministry of Public Health;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Before therapists graduate, all therapists must undertake assessment of their Thai massage training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Thai massage policy must be clear and unique;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The issues required for the Ministry of Public Health to manage and control include the course syllabuses of Thai massage training, Thai massage guidance, the location of Thai massage shops, and the numbers of customers’ beds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) The following issues are required for improving quality standards in the Thai massage services as follows:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Thai massage performance requires a standard style of Thai traditional massage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• There are many standards used to examine Thai massage services where the key issues of the examination depend on the assessment’s departments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Identification cards for therapists who complete and pass the required training need to be shown during Thai massage performance to ensure the quality of the trained masseurs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Building a Thai massage logo and additional significant standards are areas to be concentrated on.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A minimum of 100 hours of relaxing massage hands-on training must be required before starting to work in Thai massage shops.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The traditional Thai massage curriculum should be provided with clear contents and be set as the national curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) The significant issues for improving the quality standards of Thai massage services are as follows.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• There are various massage curriculums provided by public and private schools where the main aims of study are different; thus there should be a single national Thai massage curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Training in Thai massage courses and evidence-based Thai massage therapy need to be covered in the all processes. For developing a national Thai massage curriculum, the meeting of organizations involved to discuss about minimum number of Thai massage training hours and to identify the necessary contents for training of Thai massage therapists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Thai therapists should be required to obtain the license for Thai massage services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Thai masseurs need to be tested and registered to classify their skill levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Thai government should provide the precise law enforcements; obvious policy and marketing brands to identify Thai massage definition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• For Thai massage specialists, therapists must be required to practice a minimum of 330 training hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• For Thai massage therapy, there are very few scientific studies of local Thai massage therapy undertaken in this area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• There are some problems with the indicators of standards and assessment tools on the Royal Thai massage and the ancient Thai massage because the Board of Examiners is derived from different institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Thai massage courses and training must work in the same direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Thai massage standard is still not clear thus the organizations involved need to discuss ways of resolving the problems of Thai massage standards.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Developed for this research.
To sum up, the data collected and findings of interviews from the four groups of stakeholders exposed that the significant issues of Thai massage service, recognized as needing to be addressed in order to improve the quality standard of Thai massages services, can be summarised as follows.

### 4.5.1 Gaps in the Thai Massage Industry

According to the data collected and analysis from in-depth interviews, the research findings exposed the problems related to Thai massage services as follows.

For qualification of Thai massage therapists, the therapists’ group pointed out that some therapists who worked in Thai massage shops did not study Thai massage courses from Thai massage schools, but learned from their relatives and colleagues by self-study. The Thai massage managers also confirmed that some Thai massage shops employed therapists who have come from neighbouring countries such as Myanmar for working. As the demand for Thai massage services has been increasing, particularly in the Bangkok area, the number of Thai massage therapists is now inadequate. This might lead to operational problems in Thai massage shops such as communication and quality control problems with colleagues and their clients.

For assessment methods, the government officials highlighted that the evaluation indicators used for assessment of Thai massage services were different. There are many standards used to examine Thai massage services where the key issues being examined are dependent on the assessor’s perspectives. In addition, Thai massage
standards are still not clear: there are problems such as with the indicators of standards and assessment tools for Royal Thai massage and the ancient Thai massage because the Board of Examiners is derived from different institutions.

For Thai massage training, the health specialists and government officials stated that there are many standards for Thai massage schools and various massage curriculums provided are different as well. As an additional point, the government officials’ group noted that there are very few scientific studies of local Thai massage therapy practices and accepted standards. The health specialists commented that Thai masseurs very often never have their knowledge and practice reviewed after they have graduated from Thai massage schools.

The health specialists also highlighted the significant problems needing to be solved in Thai massage services as including the following.

1) There are no plans related to competitions in the Thai massage industry.

2) Some problems in the Thai massage operating system needed to be resolved.

3) The budget for supporting Thai massage activities is inadequate.

4) There is no central association for consulting with respect to management problems in Thai massage services.

As a consequence, the findings of Research Question 3 suggested that important problems existing in the Thai massage services need to be resolved. These problems are as follows.
1) Controlling the qualification of Thai massage therapists for working in Thai massage services.

Interviewee G4 pointed out that

‘For setting standards about a minimum qualification required for Thai massage therapists, a minimum of 100 hours of relaxing massage training must be required before starting to work in Thai massage shops’.

Interviewee G1 also mentioned that

‘Therapists should be required to complete a minimum of 100 training hours for the relaxing massage and a minimum of 300 training hours for Thai massage specialists. Further, if therapists would like to go abroad to work, they must get a proper license for Thai massage services; thus if foreigners would like to work in Thailand, they should be required to get and display the Thai massage license as well’.

2) Identifying the standard of the evaluation indicators employed for assessment of Thai massage services.

Interviewee H4 discussed that

‘Thai massage curriculums of Thai massage schools are very different. There are many standards for assessment across Thai massages institutions. The examinations also use different indicators to evaluate’.

Interviewee G3 stated that

‘There are various Thai massage curricula provided by Thai massage institutions. For assessment of Thai massage performance, they have many different standards
where the policy and standards criteria are not clear as well. Thus, the government organizations are trying to make clear standards and criteria related to the quality of Thai massage services’.

Interviewee G5 also mentioned that

‘I recommend that indicators of standards as a national standard for assessing Thai massage therapists should be developed. The responsible organizations have to discuss with education institutions, businesses, and people involved in the Thai massage industry for resolving the problems of Thai massage standards’.

3) Establishing the standards of Thai massage training courses and curriculums provided by Thai massage institutions.

Interviewee G1 mentioned that

‘Many Thai massage schools offer various Thai massage courses. I think that they should have to follow a national Thai massage curriculum for assuring the quality standards of Thai massage courses.

Interviewee G4 also pointed out that

‘At present, there are many Thai massage schools providing different kinds of Thai massage courses. For me, I would like Thai massage institutions to be required to use a national curriculum to improve the quality standards of Thai massage services’.

4) Launching plans for improving the competition of TTM.
Interviewee H5 pointed out that

‘The Thai massage industry still has no plans to encourage therapists through competitions to improve their massage skills’.

Interviewee H1 also mentioned that

‘For me, I recommend that the competition of Thai massage therapy is important as an efficient way for Thai massage therapists to review their skills, similar to the competition between Thai food in each part of Thailand’.

5) Considering an adequate financial plan for supporting Thai massage activities.

Interviewee H4 pointed out that

‘The Thai massage policy is good, but there are still problems about the operational management. The budget for supporting activities of the Thai massage industry is insufficient’.

Interviewee T2 also mentioned that

‘For me, I want to work abroad; thus I want the government to support the financial assistance plan for the Thai massage therapists who want to go working abroad’.

6) Establishing the central association for consulting about management problems in Thai massage services.
Interviewee H1 stated that

‘There is also no central organization for consulting by Thai massage businesses about their management problems. I think that a central organization is required to assist the Thai massage industry’.

Interviewee H3 also suggested that

‘The Thai massage businesses are still having operational management problems. For me, I think that a central organization is required for consulting by Thai massage businesses about their management problems’.

4.5.2 The Key Features for Improving the Quality Standards of TTM

According to the data gathered and analysed from in-depth interviews, the participants from therapists, Thai massage managers, health specialists, and government officials suggested the significant issues of Thai massage services for improving the quality standards in the Thai massage industry as follows.

The Thai massage therapists suggested that the significant issues for improving TTM are as follows.

1) The attitude, ethics and morals are important for being a Thai masseur.
2) The 10 main lines theories are required for training Thai massage therapists
3) Thai massages shops must be tidy, clean and wide and also need to improve their service quality.
4) Financial assistance for Thai masseurs who want to go to work in international markets.
5) Currently, Thai masseurs are seen by some as providing sexual services; the negative impact of this perspective needs to be improved.

Further, the Thai massage managers also commented on the significant issues for improving the TTM to ensure the quality standards in the Thai massage services as follows.

1) Therapists required recognizing their customers’ satisfaction.
2) Attitude, manners and skills are vital issues for being great therapists.
3) Therapists must pay attention for providing Thai massage performance to their clients.
4) Most Thai therapists in the Thai massage shops did not want to learn more about advanced Thai massage.
5) Thai therapists are required to practice Thai massage performance usually for improving their skills.

While, the health specialist’s group pointed out the key requirements of Thai massage services for Thai massage therapists to assure the quality of Thai massage services as follows.

1) All therapists should be friendly and nice to their customers.
2) Thai massage therapists are required to understand about law and ethical obligations involved Thai massage services.
3) Thai massage therapists should practice and remember the rules of Thai massage which are important to provide relaxing and healing massages.
4) Thai massage therapists have often never reviewed their knowledge after graduation; thus Thai masseurs should be required to review their skills and knowledge formerly after they graduate.

5) Thai massage schools required the survey's system and centre institutions of Thai massage services for supporting their management.

In addition, the participants of government officials highlighted that the key issues required for improving quality standards in the Thai massage services are as follows:

1) Thai massage performance requires a standard style of Thai traditional massage.

2) Identification cards for Thai massage therapists who completely passed the training are need to be shown during Thai massage performance to ensure the quality standards of the Thai masseurs.

3) Building a Thai massage logo and developing quality standards of Thai massage services are required to be a focus.

4) For basic or relaxing Thai massage, a minimum of 100 training hours should be required for working in Thai massage shops.

5) The traditional Thai massage curriculum should be provided with clear contents and set as a national Thai massage curriculum.

6) The meeting of organizations involved are needed to develop the national Thai massage curriculum about minimum number of Thai massage training hours and to identify the necessary contents for training of Thai massage therapists.

7) Training of Thai massage courses and evidence-based Thai massage therapy are needed to be covered in the whole process.
8) Thai therapists should be required to present Thai massage licenses for working in Thai massage services.

9) Thai masseurs need to be tested and registered to classify their skill levels.

10) The Thai government should provide law enforcement, an obvious policy, and identify a more relevant Thai massage definition in order to assist the industry.

11) Thai massages specialists, undertaking advanced Thai massage training courses, are required to practice a minimum of 330 training hours. Thai massage courses and training must work towards the same, agreed goals.

12) Thai massage standards are still not clear; thus the organizations involved need to discuss ways of resolving the problems of Thai massage standards.

13) Ongoing Thai massage research is required.

14) TTM training courses should provide case studies for healing masseurs.

As a result, the findings of Research Question 3 from in-depth interviews asserted that the key features for improving the quality standards of TTM can be concluded by using the SERVQUAL model to analyse the operational management in TTM services as shown in Table 4.6.
Table 4.6: The Key Features for Improving the Quality Standards of Thai Therapeutic Massage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functions</th>
<th>Suggestions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Performance of Thai Massage Therapists</strong></td>
<td>1) The attitude, ethics, moral, manners, and skills are vital for being a Thai masseur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) Thai massage therapists are required to understand about law and ethical obligations involved Thai massage services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) All therapists should be friendly and nice to their customers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4) Therapists must pay attention for providing Thai massage performance to their clients.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5) Thai therapists are required to practice Thai massage performance usually for improving their skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6) Thai massage therapists should practice and remember rules of Thai massage that are important to provide a relaxing and healing massage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operation Management of Thai Massage Services</strong></td>
<td>1) Thai massages shops must be tidy, clean and wide and also need to improve to their service quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) Most Thai therapists in the Thai massage shops did not want to learn more about advanced Thai massage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) Identification cards for therapists who completely passed the training need to be shown during Thai massage performance to ensure the quality of the trained masseurs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Courses and Practice Management for Thai Massage Training</strong></td>
<td>1) The “10 main lines” theories are required for training Thai massage therapists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) Thai massage performance requires a standard style and uniform standards for Thai traditional massage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) The TTM curriculum should provide clear guidance for its content and should set out the national Thai massage curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4) Meetings of organizations involved in TTM are needed to develop the national Thai massage curriculum, including guidance about the minimum number of Thai massage training hours and to identify the necessary contents for the training of Thai massage therapists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5) TTM courses and evidence-based Thai massage therapy principles must be explored across the whole process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6) For relaxing or basic Thai massage, a minimum of 100 training hours should be required before working in Thai massage shops.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.6: The Key Features for Improving the Quality Standards of Thai Therapeutic Massage (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functions</th>
<th>Suggestions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Thai Government Management Policies and Supporting | 1) Financial assistance for Thai masseurs who want to go to work in the international markets.  
2) The image of Thai masseurs needs to be improved, especially as the current image tends to be associated with sexual activities.  
3) Thai massage therapists are not required to review their knowledge after they graduate. Thai masseurs should be required to formally review their skills and knowledge on a regular basis.  
4) Thai massage schools require an oversight role from the government and central institutions, in order to support their management.  
5) Building a Thai massage logo and developing quality standards for Thai massage services are seen as essential. Thai therapists should be required to show Thai massage licenses for working in Thai massage services.  
6) Thai masseurs need to be tested and registered to classify their skill levels.  
7) The Thai government should provide law enforcement; a clear policy, assistance with marketing and an agreed, identifiable Thai massage definition.  
8) Thai massage standards are still not clear. The organizations involved in the industry need to resolve problems related to suitable Thai massage standards.  
9) Ongoing research related to Thai massage is required. |

Source: Developed for this research.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter presented the research results of in-depth interviews from four groups consisting of Thai massage therapists, Thai massage managers, health specialists, and government officials. The key research results can be summarized as follows:

1) Currently there are no agreed educational qualifications or minimum experience requirements for people who want to study courses and work in basic Thai massage services.
2) The minimum requirements for completing Thai massage courses consist of a range of areas - knowledge, skills and attitudes, as shown in Table 4.2.

3) The current assessment methods employed to evaluate Thai massage therapists, when issuing Thai massage certificates, are shown in Figure 4.2.

4) The current assessment methods employed for evaluating the effectiveness of Thai massage services and to ensure customer satisfaction are as follows.

   4.1 Direct questions addressed to customers after Thai massage have been provided.

   4.2 Using the following key indicators for evaluation of their services:

   (i) Customers’ appearances - evaluating Thai massage services from customer indicators such as facial expressions, customers’ feeling comfortable or falling asleep during client care;

   (ii) Amount of tip received;

   (iii) The number of booked services;

   (iv) The number of bought services;

   (v) The number of returning customers.

5) The competencies required for Thai massage Therapists encompass various areas including health, professional practice and clinical competencies.

6) The critical competencies address not only the above listed areas of health, practice and clinical competencies but also include communication and therapeutic skills.

7) A major concern is that some Thai massage shops allowed some therapists to work without certificates of completion of accredited Thai massage courses from
Thai massage schools. This irregularity is a vital problem when seeking to assure quality standards for Thai massage services.

8) The significant problems existing in the Thai massage services are needed to be solved in many aspects as follows.

   (i) Controlling the qualification of Thai massage therapists for working in Thai massage services.
   (ii) Identifying the standard of the evaluation indicators employed for assessment Thai massage services.
   (iii) Establishing the standards of Thai massages training courses and curriculums provided by Thai massage institutions.
   (iv) Launching plans for improving the competitiveness of the TTM industry.
   (v) Considering an adequate financial plan for supporting Thai massage activities.
   (vi) Establishing the central association for consulting management problems in Thai massage services.

9) The key requirements for improving the quality standards of TTM are found in all areas of the industry, beginning with the government but also covering training schools, massage shop operations and the qualifications and training of the can be concluded as shown in Table 4.6.
CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 discusses and draws conclusions about the research findings drawn from the interview questions related to Research Questions 1 to 3 (as detailed in Section 2.7). The interview data addresses the current measures and levels of competency standards of TTM, and also the proper Thai massage competencies required for Thai massage therapists to ensure quality standards for the Thai massage industry.
This research was conducted in the Bangkok area. The researcher employed the semi-structure interview method to gather in-depth information in the Thai Language. The interviews with participants lasted approximately one hour each. Participants were asked questions in relation to their management practices, knowledge and experiences in the provision of Thai massage services. Thus, the semi-structured interviews with this range of industry stakeholders generated rich and complex data based on their wide experiences and differing perspectives, enabling a more complete understanding. This understanding provides insight into significant information, in terms of the overall performance and management aspects which are concerned with competency standards of the Thai massage services, especially with respect to knowledge, skills and attitudes. The 'competency' category was adapted to analyze and interpret the data collected for clarifying significant core competencies of Thai massage therapy from the Thai government officials, health specialists and Thai massage operators.

Chapter 1 of this research introduced the research background and the significance of research problems related to the Thai massage industry. Chapter 2 reviewed the literature related to the key elements concerning the implementation of quality assurances to ensure quality standards in TTM. Chapter 3 illustrated the qualitative methodology and plan employed in this research. Chapter 4 presented the research results and analysis derived from 30 stakeholders in the Thai massage industry by individual in-depth interviews in the Bangkok area. Chapter 5 will summarise the key research findings from Chapter 4 and makes recommendations about a strategy to implement competencies for Thai massage therapists, aimed at assuring quality
standards in TTM. Conclusions and the limitations of this research will also be presented.

5.2 Conclusions about Research Questions

The research focused on the competencies required of Thai massage therapists in order to better implement quality assurance for the TTM industry. The purpose of this research was to develop quality standards for Thai massage services in the industry. The outcomes of this study are expected to inform the Thai government of appropriate content and methods of implementation of a set of Thai massage competencies, to be used in training programmes in Thai massage institutions. The focus will be on ensuring quality standards for Thai massage services in the TTM industry as an export industry for visitors to Thailand. This research is embedded in the three research questions, which are separately reflected in the following sections.

5.2.1 Conclusions about Research Question 1 (RQ1)

**Research Question 1:**
What is the current measure of competency for Thai therapeutic massage?

The research findings for Research Question 1 reflect the reality that current measures of the competency of Thai massage therapists vary quite considerably. The significant information indicates a need to employ the implementation of uniform competency standards in the Thai massage industry. Table 5.1 shows current practices as well as existing gaps in the approach to massage therapists’ training and skills.
Table 5.1: A Summary of Research Question 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Question 1: What is the current measure of competency for Thai therapeutic massage?</td>
<td>1.1 The current educational qualification backgrounds and experiences for people who want to study in Thai massage courses are not required for basic Thai massage courses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.2 The qualification requirements of Thai massage therapists for completing Thai massage courses consist of knowledge, skills and attitudes are as shown in Table 4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.3 The gap in Thai massage services is about Thai massage shops allowed some therapists worked in Thai massage shops without certificates of Thai massage courses from Thai massage schools which is a vital problem for assuring the quality standards in Thai massage services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.4 The current assessment methods are employed to evaluate the Thai massage therapists for issuing Thai massage certificates can be depicted as shown in Figure 4.2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.5 The current assessment methods are employed for evaluating Thai massage services to ensure customers’ satisfaction as follows.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1) Asking directly to their customers after finished Thai massage performances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) Using the following key indicators for evaluation their services:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Customers’ appearances by observing Thai massage services such as face expression, customers’ feeling comfortable or asleep during client care;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Amount of tip received;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The number of booked services;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The number of bought services;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The number of returning customers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Developed for this research.
5.2.2 Conclusions about Research Question 2 (RQ2)

**Research Question 2:**
What competency standards are appropriate to assure the quality of Thai therapeutic massage?

The research findings for Research Question 2 indicate that it is possible to develop generally agreed lists of critical competencies for Thai massage therapists, which in turn can indicate requirements for training in Thai massage courses. These could be employed to introduce the implementation of competency standards, as summarized in Table 5.2.

**Table 5.2: A Summary of Research Question 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Research Question 2:** What competency standards are appropriate to assure the quality of Thai therapeutic massage? | 2.1 The competencies required for Thai massage Therapists as shown in Table 4.3.  
2.2 The critical competencies required for training Thai massage therapists as shown in Table 4.4. |

Source: Developed for this research.
5.2.3 Conclusions about Research Question 3 (RQ3)

**Research Question 3:**
How might competency standards of Thai therapeutic massage be implemented?

The research findings indicate that the research groups provided significant information about possible Thai massage competencies, which should be implemented by the stakeholders in training for and providing Thai massage services. The key aspects are shown in Table 5.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Question 3:</strong> How might competency standards of Thai therapeutic massage be implemented?</td>
<td>3.1 The significant problems existing in the Thai massage services that need to be resolved are as follows.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1) Controlling the qualifications of Thai massage therapists for working in Thai massage services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) Identifying the standard of the evaluation indicators employed for assessment Thai massage services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) Establishing the standards of Thai massages training courses and curriculums provided by Thai massage institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4) Launching plans for improving the competition of Thai therapeutic massage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5) Considering an adequate financial plan for supporting Thai massage activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6) Establishing a central association available for consultation about management problems in Thai massage services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.2. The key requirements for improving the quality standards of Thai therapeutic massage can be concluded as shown in Table 4.6.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Developed for this research.
5.3 Conclusions about the Research Findings

The key findings of this research are based on the in-depth interviews from the 30 interviewees with stakeholders from the TTM industry. The entire research findings can be depicted in the following.

5.3.1 The Qualification Requirement for Thai Massage Therapists

By drawing on the research findings, the following qualification requirement for Thai massage therapists can be summarized (see Figure 5.2).

**Figure 5.2: The Qualifications Requirements for Thai Massage Therapists**
(Developed for this research)
Figure 5.2 shows the qualifications requirements for Thai massage therapists in three stages including studying Thai massage courses, completing Thai massage courses, and working in Thai massage shops.

5.3.2 The Key Elements of Therapists’ Assessment for Issuing Thai Massage Certificates

The research findings emphasized the key elements needed for evaluating Thai massage therapists for issuing the Thai massage certificates by the Ministry of Public Health as shown in Figure 5.3.

![Diagram showing key elements of therapist's assessment for issuing Thai massage certificates](image)

Figure 5.3: The Key Elements of Therapist's Assessment for Issuing Thai Massage Certificates
(Developed for this research)
Figure 5.3 demonstrates the key elements of therapist’s assessment for issuing Thai massage certificates by the Ministry of Public Health. These are the key elements employed to evaluate Thai massage therapists studies in Thai massage schools, required to be met before issuing Thai massage certificates. They consist of training hours required, paper tests and hands-on tests.

5.3.3 Assessment Methods for Assuring Customer Satisfaction in Thai Massage Services

According to the findings of Research Question 1 in Section 4.3.5, the following assessment methods are currently applied for evaluating Thai massage services to ensure customers’ satisfaction. The key indicators employed for evaluation of services are as follows: customer surveys following the provision of TTM services. The key indicators are used for evaluation of TTM services include: 1) customers’ appearance, such as observing the results of Thai massage services such as facial expressions, customers’ feeling comfortable or asleep during client care; 2) the amount of tip received; 3) the number of booking services; 4) the number of services bought; and 5) the number of returning customers.

5.3.4 The Critical Competencies Required for Thai Massage Therapists

According to the research findings, the critical competencies required for Thai massage therapists are shown in Figure 5.4.
Figure 5.4: The Critical Competencies Required for Thai Massage Therapists
(Developed for this research)
Figure 5.4 illustrates the critical competencies required for Thai massage therapists classified into five groups consisting of health competencies, professional practice competencies, clinical competencies, communication competencies, and therapeutic massage competencies. This model can be applied to set out the appropriate competencies of TTM for Thai massage training programs in Thai massage institutions, to ensure quality standards for the industry.

5.3.5 The Current Problems in the Thai Massage Industry

The findings of this research contend that the significant problems existing in the Thai massage services and which need to be solved are as follows.

1) Problems in controlling the qualifications of Thai massage therapists for working in TTM services.
2) Problems in defining the evaluation indicators employed for assessment of TTM services.
3) Lack of quality standards in TTM training courses and curriculums provided by Thai massage institutions.
4) Lack of competition plans for TTM.
5) Inadequate financial planning to support TTM activities.
6) Lack of a central association for consulting about management problems in TTM services.

For the qualifications of Thai massage therapists, there are some problems related to managing and controlling the qualifications held by Thai massages therapists when working in Thai massage services. Some therapists who work in Thai massage shops have not studied at Thai massage schools, but have learned from their relatives and colleagues through self-directed studies. Further, some Thai massage
shops employed therapists who come from neighbouring countries such as Myanmar. As the demand for TTM services has increased, particularly in the Bangkok area, thus the number of Thai massage therapists have become inadequate. This might lead to operational problems, such as quality control and communication problems.

For assessment methods, the Thai massage standards are still indistinct, such as the problems with standards and assessment tools for Royal Thai massage and the ancient Thai massage because the Board of Examiners is derived from different institutions. The assessment indicators utilized for evaluation of TTM services are also different. There are many standards employed to examine TTM services, as the key indicators of assessment are dependent on the examiner’s departments.

Problems in Thai massage training are related to the varying standards for TTM training programs in Thai massage schools, as they provide Thai massage curriculums which differ from each other. There are very few accepted scientific studies of local Thai massage therapies. Furthermore, Thai massage therapists almost never review their knowledge after graduating.

Further, the findings of Research Question 3 (in Section 4.5.1) also suggested that other significant problems needing to be resolved with regard to Thai massage services can be summarized as follows. There are no plans about how to manage competition in the TTM industry effectively. There are some problems in the Thai massage operational systems that need to be resolved. For example, the budget for
supporting TTM activities is currently inadequate. Further, there is no central association for consulting about management problems in TTM services.

As a consequence, the findings reflect the reality that the TTM industry still has some problems related to services and training. These need to be resolved in order to improve standards. The vital problems existing in the TTM industry are depicted in Figure 5.5.

![Figure 5.5: The Current Problems in the Thai Massage Industry](Developed for this research)

5.3.6 The Key Features Required for Improving the Quality Standards of Thai Therapeutic Massage

The findings for Research Question 3 in Section 4.5.2 emphasize the key features required for improving the quality standards of TTM and are shown in Figure 5.6.
# Figure 5.6: The Key Features Required for Improving the Quality Standards of Thai Therapeutic Massage

(Developed for this research)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance of Thai Massage Therapists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Key factors for being a Thai masseur as follows: attitude, ethics, moral, manners, and skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Required to understand about law and ethical obligations involved Thai massage services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Should be friendly and nice to their customers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Required to recognize their customers’ satisfaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Required to concentrate for providing Thai massage performance to their clients.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Required to practice Thai massage performance usually for improving therapist’s skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Required to practice and remember rules of Thai massage for providing relaxing and healing massages.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operation Management of Thai Massage Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Thai massages shops are required to be tidy, clean and wide and also need to improve to their service’s quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Most Thai therapists in the Thai massage shops did not want to learn more about advanced Thai massage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Required identification cards for therapists who completely passed the training need to be shown during Thai massage performance to ensure the quality of the trained masseurs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Courses and Practice Management for Thai Massage Training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Required to train the 10 main lines theories for being Thai massage therapists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Required a standard style of Thai traditional massage for Thai massage performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Required Thai massage courses and training to provide in the same direction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Required the traditional Thai massage curriculum to provide in clear contents and set the national Thai massage curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Required the meeting of organizations involved to develop the national Thai massage curriculum about minimum number of Thai massage training hours and to identify the necessary contents for training of Thai massage therapists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Training of Thai massage courses and evidence-based Thai massage therapy are needed to be recovered in the whole processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Required a minimum of 100 training hours in the relaxing or basic Thai massage course for working in Thai massage shops.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Required a minimum of 330 training hours in the advance Thai massage programs to practice Thai massage specialists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Case studies are vital for healing masseurs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thai Government Management Policies and Supporting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Required financial assistance for supporting Thai masseurs who want to go to work in the international markets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Required to improve the images of Thai masseurs due to currently Thai massage images might be related to sexual activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Required Thai masseurs to review their skills and knowledge formerly after they graduated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Required the survey’s system and centre institutions of Thai massage services for supporting Thai massage schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Building a Thai massage logo and developing quality standards of Thai massage services are required to be focused.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Required to show Thai massage licenses for working in Thai massage services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Thai masseurs need to be tested and registered to classify their level - skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Required Thai government to provide the precise law enforcements; obvious policy, marketing brands, and identify Thai massage definition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Thai massage standard is still not clear thus the organizations involved need to discuss for resolving the problems of Thai massage standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Thai massage research is required continuously.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 5.6 shows the key features needing to be addressed in order to improve the quality standards of TTM. They are categorized in four aspects consisting of the performance of Thai massage therapists; the operational management of Thai massage services; the courses and practice management for Thai massage training; and the Thai government management policies and support. Thus, these key features can be employed to develop the strategy plan to implement the quality standard of TTM in the Thai massage services.

- **Performance of Thai Massage Therapists**

The key features required for improving the performance of Thai massage therapists are as follows.

1) Key factors for being a Thai masseur are as follows: attitude, ethics, moral, manners, and skills.

2) Therapists must understand legal and ethical obligations involved Thai massage services.

3) Therapists should be friendly and nice to their customers.

4) Providers must be able to ensure their customers' satisfaction.

5) Therapists must focus on providing an appropriate level of Thai massage performance to their clients.

6) Staff must practise Thai massage techniques in order to improve their skills.

7) Providers must practise and remember the rules of Thai massage, aimed at providing relaxing and healing massages.
➢ Operation Management of Thai Massage Services

The key features required for improving the operational management of Thai massage services are as follows.

1) Thai massages shops are required to be tidy, clean and wide and also need to improve to their service’s quality.
2) Most Thai therapists in the Thai massage shops did not want to learn more about advanced Thai massage, which is the threat for improving the quality in Thai massage services.
3) Identification cards for therapists who completely passed the training need to be shown during Thai massage performance to ensure the quality of the trained masseurs.

➢ Courses and Practice Management for Thai Massage Training

The key features required for improving the courses and practice management of Thai massage training are as follows. Instructors must be required to:

1) Train in the 10 main lines theories for being Thai massage therapists.
2) Meet a standard style of TTM for Thai massage performance.
3) Ensure that Thai massage courses and training work towards the same agreed goals.
4) Observe the Thai massage curriculum to provide in clear contents and set the national Thai massage curriculum.
5) Attend meetings of organizations involved to develop the national Thai massage curriculum including issues such as the minimum number of training hours and to identify the necessary contents of training for Thai massage therapists.
6) Recognise that training in Thai massage courses and evidence-based Thai massage therapy are needed to be covered across the whole processes.

7) Ensure a minimum of 100 training hours in the relaxing or basic Thai massage course for working in Thai massage shops.

8) Ensure a minimum of 330 training hours in the advanced Thai massage programs to train Thai massage specialists.

9) Case studies are vital for healing masseurs.

➢ Thai government management policies and supporting

Further to its role in overseeing TTM, as discussed in Section 2.5.2, the Thai government needs to concentrate on improving quality standards in TTM by establishing management policies and supporting Thai massage services as follows:

1) Providing information about sources of financial assistance for supporting Thai masseurs who want to go to work in the international markets.

2) Improving the image of Thai masseurs because; currently, images of Thai massage might present massage services as related to sexual activities.

3) Reviewing their skills and knowledge formally after they graduate.

4) Reviewing the survey systems and central institutions of Thai massage services for supporting Thai massage schools.

5) Developing a Thai massage logo and developing quality standards for Thai massage services need to be a major focus.
6) Displaying Thai massage licenses for working in Thai massage services.

7) Thai masseurs need to be tested and registered to classify their skill levels.

8) Thai government needs to provide precise law enforcement; there must also be obvious policy, marketing brands, and an identifiable Thai massage definition.

9) Discuss with other TTM participants the means for resolving the problems of Thai massage standards.

10) Undertake further regular research into TTM.

5.4 Implications

The recommendations employ the Quality Assurance (QA) process including defining, measuring, and improving processes for developing quality standards in the Thai massage industry. The following sections address the recommendations about methods for applying and improving the competencies standard of TTM across the industry.

5.4.1 Defining the Qualification Standard for Being Thai Massage Therapists

It is essential to define the qualifications standards for Thai massage therapists working in the Thai massage industry, as discussed in Section 2.4.3. The following discussion addresses the recommendations, from the research findings, which set out to establish the qualification standards for therapists working in the TTM industry.
The key findings of the research highlighted the essential qualifications required of Thai massage therapists when working in Thai massages shops. It is found that these qualifications required that massage therapists must be evaluated about both theories and practices before seen as completing their courses, as in Section 5.3.1. Further, the key research findings also point out the key features required for improving the performance of Thai massages therapists as shown in Figure 5.6 (p.219).

As a consequence, the qualification standards of Thai massage therapists for working in the Thai massage industry could be defined as follows.

1) Thai massage therapists must be at least 18 years old.

2) Thai massages therapists must be required to study the basic Thai massage course and to achieve certificates of fundamental Thai massage from Thai massage institutions.

3) Thai massages therapists must be required to practice at least 100 training hours in the basic Thai massage course before they start working in Thai massage shops.

4) Thai massage therapists must be required to present Thai massage certificates for working in Thai massage services.

5) Thai massage therapists must be required to show the identification cards or licence of Thai massage during Thai massage performance to ensure the quality of the trained masseurs.

6) Thai massages therapists must also demonstrate a “services mind” and understand both legal and ethical obligations involved when providing Thai massage services.
This research asserts that defining the qualification standards for Thai massage therapists, and for working in the Thai massage industry, is vital for improving the quality standard of Thai massage therapists and assuring quality services.

5.4.2 Defining the Competencies Standard of TTM for Training Thai Massage Therapist

In addition to qualifications standards, competencies standards for TTM – especially when training therapists – are vital to introducing quality standards into the Thai massage industry.

The key research findings point out a model of critical competencies required for Thai massage therapists (shown in Figure 5.4, p.215), which can be employed as the appropriate competencies standard of Thai massage therapists. Thus, the recommendation is to apply that model of critical competencies, to ensure improvements to the quality of Thai massage services in the industry.

5.4.3 Developing the National Thai Massage Curriculum for Training in Thai Massage Institutions

The process of developing the national Thai massage curriculum for Thai massage training programs is essential when seeking to improve quality standards. This process requires the organizations involved to meet and seek to develop a single, national curriculum. This will include identifying the necessary contents of training programs provided by all Thai massage institutions.
The key recommended elements for organisations to consider when developing the national Thai massage curriculum, are as follows: firstly, the qualification standards of Thai massage therapists for working in the Thai massage industry as clarified in Section 5.3.1; secondly, the competencies and standards of Thai massage therapists for basic Thai massages training programs (as discussed in Section 5.3.4). Lastly, the key features required for improving the performance of Thai massage therapists as shown in Figure 5.6 (p.219).

Accordingly, the national Thai massage curriculum for Training in Thai Massage Institutions could be utilized as a tool for improving the quality of Thai massages services. It is believed that the process could be implemented to ensure quality standards; the method for developing the national Thai massage curriculum for Training in Thai Massage Institutions can be depicted as shown in Figure 5.7.

![Diagram showing the development of the national Thai massage curriculum](image)

**Figure 5.7: The Model of Developing the National Thai Massage Curriculum for Training in Thai Massage Institutions** (Developed for this research)
5.4.4 Identifying the Key Indicators for Assessment of Quality Standards in Thai Massage Services

The key research findings point out the gaps in assessment methods in Thai massage services. The quality standards for Thai massage services are still unclear, owing to a lack of agreed indicators and assessment tools for evaluating services. The assessment indicators utilized for evaluating Thai massage services differ, depending on the individual examiner. Thus, identifying the key indicators for evaluating quality standards in TTM will be a significant step for improving those standards.

The process must seek to identify the key indicators for evaluating quality standards in TTM – those indicators can be categorized into two groups, being those for evaluating the quality standard of therapists and those used to evaluate the quality of services.

The recommendation is to apply the critical competencies standards of Thai massage therapists (in Figure 5.4, p.215) to assess Thai massage therapists for completing the Thai massage training courses from Thai massage schools. A further recommendation is to utilize the key feature required for improving Thai massage services as shown in Figure 5.6 (p.219). The key features include the performance of Thai massage therapists, the operational management of Thai massage services, the courses and practice management for Thai massage training, and Thai government management policies and support which can be employed to identify the key indicators.
As a consequence, the process of identifying the key indicators for evaluating quality standards in TTM is very important for the future capability to measure quality standards for TTM and implement uniform quality standards.

5.4.5 Establishing the Assessment Processes for Evaluating the Quality Standard of TTM

The processes of establishing the assessment processes for evaluating quality standards in TTM are essential for implement those standards. Thus, it is seen as essential that organizations involved in training meet and establish assessment processes. The way to establish the processes is set out in Figure 5.8.

![Figure 5.8: Establishing Assessment Processes for Evaluating the Quality Standard in Thai Therapeutic Massage (Developed for this research)](image)

The first step of this process is set up the assessment criteria of each key indicator. The assessment criteria can employ the competencies standards needed for the knowledge, skills and attitudes required of Thai massage therapists.
The second step is to employ the key processes for therapists’ assessment, when planning to issue certificates. The Ministry of Public Health, as shown in Figure 5.3 (p.213) will need to set up the assessment processes needed to evaluate elements such as the number of training hours required, nature of paper tests, and the hands-on tests. The next step is to apply the assessment criteria to each assessment process (training hours, paper tests and hands-on tests) to provide guidance on how to evaluate TTM standards. The last step is to advise that the organisations involved are required to utilize the same standards and assessment criteria for each assessment process.

5.4.6 Launching Management and Supporting Polices for Improving Quality Standards in Thai Massage Services

This process will require the Thai government to establish management policies and support the Thai massage industry. The recommendations employ the SERVQUAL model for closing gaps in the operational management of TTM services. Thus, the Thai government are required to concentrate on a strategy for closing quality service gaps in the Thai massage industry, as suggested in Section 5.4.6.1 to Section 5.4.6.6.

5.4.6.1 For Closing Gaps in the Qualification of Thai Massage Therapists

Some therapists who work in Thai massage shops do not study Thai massage courses from Thai massage schools. Furthermore, some Thai massage shops employ therapists who have come from neighbouring countries such as Myanmar. These issues may create problems related to managing and controlling the
qualifications of therapists. They reflect operational problems needed to be addressed.

The following are the recommendations from the research findings that the Thai government should consider to reduce gaps in the qualifications of therapists and improve quality standards.

1) Issue regulations for Thai massage therapists to review skills and knowledge formally, after they graduate, such as every three years.

2) Issue regulations for Thai massage licenses for therapists working in Thai massage services – they will need to be tested and registered to classify each therapist's skill-levels.

3) Require Thai massage therapists to show identification cards or Thai massage licenses when performing Thai massage, to ensure the quality of their training.

4) The Thai Government should recognize self-study therapists in order to test them and allow them to turn professional if qualified.

5.4.6.2 For Closing Gaps in the Thai Massage Training

The following are the recommendations from the research findings that the Thai government should consider in order to close gaps in massage training and improve the quality standards of training programs in Thai massage schools.

The key features required of the organisations involve consideration of ways to improve courses and practice management, as follows.
1) All therapists are required to train and practice about the 10 main lines theories for basic Thai massage training programs.

2) A minimum of 100 training hours in the relaxing or basic Thai massage course will be required before working in Thai massage shops.

3) A minimum of 330 training hours will be required in the advanced Thai massage programs before practising as Thai massage specialists.

4) A standard style of Thai traditional massage will be required in Thai massage services.

5) Thai massage courses and training in Thai massage institutions should be provided uniformly.

6) The curriculums provided in Thai massage schools need to be clear in contents and it will be necessary to set a national curriculum.

7) Training courses and evidence-based Thai massage therapy are required to be covered across all processes.

8) There must be an oversight of Thai massages schools, required for support by the Thai government.

As a consequence, the problems in training are related to the varying standards for programs in Thai massage schools which currently follow different curricula. Thus, it is emphasised that there must be a meeting of all organizations involved in training, in order to improve the national curriculum and identify the necessary contents of training programs, as suggested in Section 5.4.3.
5.4.6.3 For Closing Gaps in Assessment Methods of Thai Massage Services

Thai massage services are still imprecise with respect to standards and assessment tools for evaluation of services. As noted, assessment indicators often depend on the individual examiner’s requirements. The following are the recommendations from the research findings that the Thai government should consider in order to close gaps in training quality.

1) Identifying the key indicators for evaluating quality standards in TTM, as suggested in Section 5.4.4 (p.227).

2) Issuing regulations for assessing and controlling the qualification standard of therapists to ensure quality standards in the industry.

5.4.6.4 For Closing Gaps in the Competition plan of Thai Therapeutic Massage

At present, the Thai massage industry still faces problems related to its image, which might often be related to sexual activities. Further, there are no plans to address competitiveness.

The following recommendations are issues that the Thai government should consider to close gaps in competitive planning and to improve quality standards.

1) Improve the image of Thai masseurs by developing a Thai massage logo.

2) Required the Thai government to provide precise marketing brands.

3) Launch plans for improving the competitiveness of TTM in the international market.
5.4.6.5 For Closing Gaps in Financial Plans for supporting Thai Massage Activities

The research findings pointed out that the budget for supporting Thai massage activities is inadequate. Thus, the recommendations for closing gaps in the financial plan for supporting Thai massage activities are as follows

1) Consider an adequate financial plan to support Thai massage activities.
2) Provide financial assistance to support Thai masseurs who want to work in the international markets.

5.4.6.6 For Closing Gaps in the Operation Management of Thai Massage Services

The following are the recommendations for closing gaps related to operational management, which need to be resolved.

1) Establish a central association for consulting about management problems in Thai massage services.
2) Require the Thai government to support the organisations involved for resolving the problems of Thai massage standards.
3) Require the Thai government to provide precise law enforcements, and establish an obvious policy.
4) Require the Thai government to support the organisations involved in doing Thai massage research.

To sum up, the recommendations apply the Quality Assurance (QA) concepts consisting of defining, measuring, and improving processes for developing quality standard in the Thai massage industry. Schemes for applying the competencies
standard into Thai massages services, and strategies to reduce the gaps in the Thai massage industry, are also advised. Recommendations are made to the Thai government on ways to improve the quality standards in the industry.

5.5 Limitations

Several limitations associated with this research were briefly described in Section 1.7. Some limitations relate to the research approach while other limitations that emerged during the conduct of the research are presented in this section. Although the research findings provide some new insights into competencies required in the Thai massage services, they are limited in the following ways.

This research was conducted with just thirty participants, from Bangkok, using individual in-depth interviews. The participants are representative of stakeholders in the Thai massage industry. On account of the small size of the sample, the research findings might not be generalizable to all Thai enterprises in Thailand.

The interviews concentrated on the participants’ experiences from their everyday life; these experiences might be formed by culture, practices and attitudes which are unique in Thailand. Hence, the findings may be not generalizable to Thai massage enterprises in other countries.

5.6 Further Recommended Research

The government and political situation in Thailand remain unstable thus this problem can impact on the chances of continuing to implement strategies to improve the quality of the Thai massage industry. This research focused only on Thai massage
services provided by Thai massage shops in the Bangkok area. The researches related to Thai massage services in the Thai massage industry are limited because appropriate educational standards for TTM are still unclear; the industry is still in the early stages of the improving quality standards. Thus, a large scale of research study applied with more stakeholders in the Thai massage industry might provide a superior range of opinions and more comprehensive information to verify or expand the findings of this research. This would be beneficial to future research.

5.7 Conclusion

This research aimed to develop quality standards for TTM to be employed by the Thai spa industry across Thailand. The research utilized the relevance and applications of the competencies standard of TTM in Thai massage services in the Bangkok area.

The research applied a qualitative research methodology to explore quality issues about TTM and defined a set of competencies standards for the TTM, to ensure the quality of Thai massage services in the Thai massage industry. The research was conducted in the Bangkok area. The research employed individual, face-to-face in-depth interviews to gather data from thirty participating stakeholders in the Thai massage services. This research study utilized the semi-structure interview questions to collect in-depth information in the Thai Language. The interviews lasted approximately 45-60 minutes for each participant and used a voice recorder as a standard protocol for recording information during the interviewing process.

The results of the research identified what are believed to be the critical competencies underpinning the standards required for TTM. Those results also
indicate the key features required for improving the quality of Thai massage services, in order to ensure the quality standards in the Thai massage industry, as discussed in Chapter 4. The recommendations and proposed schemes for applying the competencies standards are presented in Chapter 5. The research outcomes include advice to the Thai government about appropriate content and implementation for a framework of TTM competencies. This will include competencies required by TTM, given its context, with a delivery style suited to TTM services (as shown in Table 5.4), ensuring quality standards of TTM as an export industry for tourists to Thailand.

Table 5.4: The Proper Framework for Thai Therapeutic Massage Competencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health Competencies</strong></td>
<td>• Apply Anatomy and Physiology Principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply Kinesiology Principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply first aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Confirm the physical health status of the client</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Practice infection control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional Practice</strong></td>
<td>• Acknowledge the legal requirements of the massage therapy profession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competencies</td>
<td>• Apply professional ethics in practice and conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clinical Competencies</strong></td>
<td>• Apply therapeutic exercises to client care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply pain and stress management techniques to client care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Draw up client case management plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Recommend health care referrals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication Competencies</strong></td>
<td>• Work effectively with other staff in a team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Communicate effectively with customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use basic medical terminology appropriately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Prepare English language training for therapists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Therapeutic Massage</strong></td>
<td>• Work within a framework of holistic therapeutic massage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competencies</td>
<td>• Practice the principles and patterns of Thai therapeutic massage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1) Begin massage from the bottom (feet) and move towards the top</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(head)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) Perform stretches, thumb presses, palm presses on the 10 Thai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>energy lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) Massage the entire body by using rhythmic and rocking motions to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>increase the body’s energy flow for balance and relaxation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4) Advanced Neck Stretch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5) Advanced Stretches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6) Apply Thai herbs and massage.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Developed for this research.
As a consequence, the objective is the ultimate improvement of the quality outcomes of Thai therapeutic massage, through the implementation of national competency standards for Thai massage practitioners. It is expected that national competency standards of Thai therapeutic massage might position TTM securely in the international therapeutic tourism market, thereby enhancing the Thai economy.
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interviews Data Report

Interview-based Data Report

This report presents an analysis of the data collected from the face-to-face in-depth interviews data gathered from 30 respondents in the Thai massage industry in the Bangkok area. The interview data analysis reflects the profile of interview participants and presents data related to the interview questions for each participant’s group.

1. Profile of Interview Participants

A total of 30 selected participants were interviewed for this research, with representation of the key stakeholders in the Bangkok Thai massage industry. The interview participants were divided into four groups: government officials from the Ministry of Public Health, health specialists from massage schools, Thai massage managers and Thai massage therapists from Thai massage shops in the Bangkok area. Participants were selected as potential sources of insight into the appropriate standards for Thai massage services, as discussed in Section 3.4. The interview questions were designed for government officials, health specialists, and Thai massage operators to gain information concerning the operation and management of the ‘competency’ category, in terms of skills, knowledge, and attitudes for clarifying the appropriate quality standards for the implementation of Thai massage services.
1.1 Five Government Officials (G1- G5)

Five government officials were selected from the Ministry of Public Health. They represented the section of the public sector that regulates and authorizes the provision, supervision and oversight of the legal aspects of the service quality standards for the Thai massage industry. The government officials provided information about the desired competency standards for Thai massage therapy in terms of health sciences; these standards assist in establishing and managing regulations for Thai massage services.

1.2 Five Health Specialists (H1 – H5)

Five health specialists were selected from 109 massage schools in the Bangkok area. They were representatives of the staff academic of Thai massage institutions which provide Thai massage courses for teaching students a range of needs such as the desired knowledge, skills and attitudes in Thai massage therapy. The health specialists were expected to provide in-depth information about the management of competency courses, for Thai massage therapy schools in terms of health sciences.

1.3 Ten Thai Massage Managers (M1- M10)

Ten Thai massage managers, who are engaged in the operational management of Thai massage shops in the Bangkok area, were chosen. The Thai massage managers were selected as representatives of the private sector, because the managers are involved in the internal management of Thai massage businesses, with direct access to daily operations. They were expected to provide in-depth information about the overall operational management needs of Thai massage services in terms of professional development and clinical sciences.
1.4 Ten Massage Therapists (T1 – T10)

Ten Thai massage therapists (or masseuses) from Thai massage shops located in
the Bangkok area were sampled. They were selected as representatives of Thai
massage businesses who deliver their services or products to customers. They were
expected to provide information related to their operational performance, which must
reflect the competency standards of Thai massage therapy in terms of professional
development. They were expected to provide insight into the transformation of
academic standards into performance standards, when serving their customers. It
was also hoped that they would provide further information arising from the
managers.

This research was conducted in the Bangkok area. The researcher employed the
semi-structure interview method to gather in-depth information in the Thai language.
The interviews with participants lasted approximately one hour each. Participants
were asked questions in relation to their management history, knowledge
requirements, and experiences in the delivery of Thai massage services.

The semi-structured interviews with this range of industry stakeholders generated
rich and complex data based on their wide range of experiences and differing
perspectives. This enabled the researcher to develop a complex understanding of
significant information, in terms of the overall performance and management aspects
directly concerned with competency standards for Thai massage services, with
relation to knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Competency categories were adapted to
analyse and interpret the data collected, with a view to identifying and clarifying
significant core competencies for Thai massage therapy, using data from the Thai government officials, health specialists, and Thai massage operators.

2. Data Collection and Analysis for Thai Massage Therapists Group

This section presents the data collected from the 10 Thai massage therapists during their interviews. The in-depth data was reported by reference to each interview question (IQ1 – IQ7), as follows.

2.1 Presentation Data of Interview Question 1 (IQ1)

IQ 1: What training or educational qualifications have you completed to become a Thai therapeutic masseur?

The aim of this question is to investigate the overall current training and education in Thai therapeutic massage for Thai massages therapists.

According to data collected from the group of Thai massage therapists, it was found that eight therapists have completed Thai massage training courses and achieved certificates from public massage schools or private institutions, while two therapists have studied from their colleagues and experts in their workplaces. Most Thai massage therapist respondents reported that they completed their training and education to be a Thai therapeutic masseur from public massage organizations such as the Ministry of Public Health, the Department of Non-formal education, the Department of Labour Protection, welfare organizations and the Northern Woman Department Foundation. In addition, other provinces provided massage courses and programs etc. However, some participants noted that they had trained with and been
educated at private massage schools such as the Wat Pho Massage School and other private massage and spa schools. The participants stated that some therapists did not study Thai massage course from any schools, but learned from their relatives and colleagues through self-study.

According to the data collected from interviewing the Thai massage therapists, the Thai massage courses provided by Thai massage schools can be classified into three features - body massage training; foot reflexology courses; and herbal practices (which most people call Nuad Paan Bolan). Thai massage programs consist of the Royal Thai massage program and the ancient massage program. The Royal Thai massage program style is quite gentle and soft, whereas the ancient massage program performance employs techniques which are more physical. Further, the participants also pointed out that the body massage course is more famous than the foot reflexology course and the herbal management course for people studying to be masseurs.

The Thai massage curriculums from each organization are different – for example, the numbers of training hours depend on the organizations doing the teaching and where the places are located. Organizations also teach in many ways depending upon their teachers' backgrounds and locations.

Regarding the educational background of participants, most respondents in this group mentioned that specific qualifications are not required before undertaking basic education and gaining the experiences needed to be a masseur. Academic training is not necessary because therapists will be tested on knowledge of massage
theories and practices before they can complete training. All therapist representatives confirmed that they need study the “10 main lines” theories of the body and legs to be a masseur.

The findings for the therapists, for interview question 1, can be summarized as:

1) Specific qualification backgrounds are not required for therapists undertaking basic education and gaining experience to be masseurs.

2) Some therapists who worked in Thai massage shops did not study Thai massage courses from any schools, but they learned from their relatives and colleagues through self-directed studies.

3) To complete a Thai massage course, all therapists need to be tested on their knowledge of massage theories and for their massage practices as well.

4) The “main 10 lines” theory of body and legs must be a required area of study in Thai massages courses.
IQ2: Which of the following did your training include? (Refer to a set of competencies in Table 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health Competencies</strong></td>
<td>• Apply Anatomy and Physiology Principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply Kinesiology Principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply Nutritional Concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply first aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Confirm the physical health status of the client</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Practice infection control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional Practice Competencies</strong></td>
<td>Acknowledge the legal requirements of the massage therapy profession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply professional ethics in practice and conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clinical Competencies</strong></td>
<td>• Apply Hydrotherapy to client care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply therapeutic exercises to client care</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply pain and stress management techniques to client care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Draw up client case management plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Recommend health care referrals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication Competencies</strong></td>
<td>• Work effectively with other staff in a Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Communicate effectively with customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use basic medical terminology appropriately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Therapeutic Massage Competencies</strong></td>
<td>• Work within a framework of holistic therapeutic massage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Practice the principles and Thai therapeutic massage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▷ Start the massage from the side of the body and then throughout the core of the body by twisting and flipping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▷ Begin massage from the bottom (feet) and move towards the top (head)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▷ Perform stretches, thumb press, palm press on the 10 Thai energy lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▷ Massage the entire body by using rhythmical and rocking motions to increase the body’s energy flow for balance and relaxation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▷ Advanced Variation: Finger Press Iliopsoas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▷ Advanced Variation: The King Cobra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▷ Advanced Variation for More Flexible Clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▷ Advanced Locust Variation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▷ Advanced Neck Stretch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▷ Advanced Stretches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▷ Apply Thai herbs and massage.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Apfelbaum (2003); College of Massage Therapists of Ontario (2006); Department of Education and Training (2012); Salguero (2004); Salguero (2007); Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (2017).

This question aims to investigate the current knowledge provided for Thai massage therapists related to health competencies; professional practice competencies; clinical competencies; communication competencies; and therapeutic massage competencies. The research findings will shed light on the current competencies provided for massage therapists in the Thai massage industry.
The research findings of Interview Question 2 are as follows:

**Table 2: The Number of Therapists Trained for a Set of Competencies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Details (Document Reviews)</th>
<th>Number of Therapists Trained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health Competencies</td>
<td>• Apply Anatomy and Physiology Principles</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply Kinesiology Principles</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply Nutritional Concepts</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply first aid</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Confirm the physical health status of the client</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Practise infection control</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Practice</td>
<td>• Acknowledge the legal requirements of the massage therapy profession</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Competencies</td>
<td>• Apply professional ethics in practice and conduct.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Competencies</td>
<td>• Apply Hydrotherapy to client care</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply therapeutic exercises to client care</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply pain and stress management techniques to client care</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Draw up client case management plans</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Recommend health care referrals</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Competencies</td>
<td>• Work effectively with other staff in a Team</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Communicate effectively with customers</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use basic medical terminology appropriately</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: The Number of Therapists Trained for a Set of Competencies (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Details (Document Reviews)</th>
<th>Number of Therapists Trained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Therapeutic Massage Competencies</td>
<td>• Work within a framework of holistic therapeutic massage</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Practise the principles of Thai therapeutic massage</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Start the massage from the side of the body and then throughout the core of the body by twisting and flipping</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Begin massage from the bottom (feet) and move towards the top (head)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Perform stretches, thumb press, palm press on the 10 Thai energy lines</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Massage the entire body by using rhythmic and rocking motions to increase the body’s energy flow for balance and relaxation</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Advanced Variation: Finger Press Iliopsoas</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Advanced Variation: The King Cobra</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Advanced Variation for More Flexible Clients</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Advanced Locust Variation</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Advanced Neck Stretch</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Advanced Stretches</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Apply Thai herbs and massage.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from the data collected by in-depth interviews.
For Health Competencies, seven participants of the Thai massage therapists’ group pointed out that they had trained and applied knowledge related to anatomy, physiology, and kinesiology principles. Further, seven therapists had also practised infection control. During Thai massage services, therapists wear masks for infection control. For confirmation of the physical health status of customers, eight therapists had trained to confirm the physical health status of clients. Therapists may just ask generally about the health of customers. In the case of customers injured in accidents, the therapists did not provide massage to the injured part(s). The participants did not provide formal medical advice related to their clients’ care. If customers wanted treatments, the therapists just provided the local treatment by pressing the hot ball instead on the client’s skin, which is known as ‘Thai Herbal Compress Massage’. All participants also mentioned that they had never known or applied nutritional concepts or proper first aid techniques which were not included in Thai massage courses.

Regarding professional practice competencies, seven participants of this group mentioned that they had received training in the legal and ethical aspects of practice and conduct, which are important elements in training. Although the participants had learned it before, they had completely forgotten these concepts. Some participants also mentioned that they had just known about it from their colleagues. All interviewees highlighted that morals, ethics and honesty are of the greatest importance to customers.

With respect to clinical competencies, all participants mentioned that they had never known or applied clinical competencies to client care. The participants also pointed
out that applying Hydrotherapy within clinical competencies did not relate to client care. For relieving pain and stress causing bodily discomfort, the therapists applied massage techniques to parts of the body such as the head, neck and shoulders. The participants stated that they did not suggest treatment plans to their customers.

With respect to communication competencies, all participants from the Thai massage therapists’ group stated that they had never trained in communication competencies. However, nine participants pointed out that there are no problems with their colleague in Thai massage shops. The participants could work quite efficiently with their teams, owing to the location of the service and the small number of employees in an establishment. The participants also commented that they were quite welcome and know each other very well. The other participant stated that some employees had language problems, as some employees came from other countries such as Myanmar. Further, it was noted that there was no communication between clients and staff during Thai massage sessions. The participants noted that this is because most clients like to take a rest while being massaged, and some customers come from overseas where therapists have language problems when seeking to communicate with their customers. As for academic medical terminology, all participants stated that they had never used it; therapists communicate to their customers directly, using easy words.

When addressing therapeutic massage competencies, it was found that eight interviewed therapists had officially studied at public massage schools or private institutions, while the others had learned from their colleagues and experts in their workplaces. All participants learned Thai massage by following the procedures within
a holistic therapeutic massage structure and practised the concept of Thai massage as a therapeutic procedure. The participants explained that “entire” therapists start to massage from the bottom of the body (the feet) and move towards the top (the head) by using rhythmic and rocking motions. This technique is called the “10 Thai energy lines” and is useful for increasing the body’s energy flow for balance and relaxation. This is the academic outline guiding Thai therapy and the therapists emphasised that these processes are not allowed to start from the side of the body. Participants of this group pointed out that the advanced variation – pressing the iliopsoas by finger, King Cobra style, and advanced variations for more flexible customers – are inappropriate and dangerous for customers, thus they had never trained for advanced variations. For these reasons they are rarely used, but it was noted that advanced neck stretching and advanced stretches are usually used to treat tiredness and fatigue that they had trained. Regarding Thai herbs, nine therapists had trained to use Thai herbal therapy with their customers if they felt discomfort or muscle pain. In contrast, the others had never learned or applied Thai herbal treatments to their customers.

Additionally, the interviewees highlighted that some of their colleagues had never studied in Thai massage schools, but rather were self-taught. Furthermore, participants commented that most customers just seek relaxing massages and do not care much about the use of the correct massage processes. Thus, therapists propose that theories and concepts related to competencies in the areas of health, professional practice, clinical practice, communication and therapeutic massage competencies may be unnecessary for Thai massage training.
As a result, the research findings of the interview question 2 for the Thai massage therapists' group can be summarized through the competencies shown in Table 3.

Table 3: The Competencies of Thai Massage Therapists Trained by Thai Massage Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Training Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health Competencies</td>
<td>• Apply Anatomy and Physiology Principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply Kinesiology Principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Confirm the physical health status of the client</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Practice infection control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Practice</td>
<td>• Acknowledge the legal requirements of the massage therapy profession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competencies</td>
<td>• Apply professional ethics in practice and conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Therapeutic Massage</td>
<td>• Work within a framework of holistic therapeutic massage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competencies</td>
<td>• Practice the principles and Thai therapeutic massage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Begin massage from the bottom (feet) and move towards the top (head)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Perform stretches, thumb press, palm press on the 10 Thai energy lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Massage the entire body by using rhythmic and rocking motions to increase the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>body’s energy flow for balance and relaxation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Advanced Neck Stretch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Advanced Stretches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Apply Thai herbs and massage.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from the data collected by in-depth interviews

2.3 Presentation Data of Interview Question 3 (IQ3)

IQ 3: Are there reasons why any of the above competencies that you think should NOT be included in your training?

The aim of this question is to investigate if there are any inappropriate competencies in the areas of health, professional practice, clinical competencies, communication
and therapeutic massage. The research findings will use to identify proper and suitable competencies for the Thai massage industry.

Most of the therapists group noted that the hydrotherapy and nutritional concepts were not included in study or applied to their customers’ care. Further, the therapists also noted that these aspects were not necessary to Thai massage training programs.

As a result, the research findings for Interview Question 3 from the Thai massage therapist group contended that the following competencies should not be included in Thai massage courses:

- Apply Hydrotherapy to client care.
- Apply Nutritional concepts.

### 2.4 Presentation Data of Interview Question 4 (IQ4)

**IQ 4: Are there any skills, knowledge or attitudes that you think should be added to the above competencies?**

This interview question aims to identify the competencies of Thai massage training which are suitable for Thai massage services, including those which may need to be added. It addressed additional skills, knowledge, and attitudes. The research findings of this interview question will seek to incorporate additional competencies to be incorporated into Thai massage training to assure the quality of Thai therapeutic massage.
According to the data collected for Interview Question 4 from Thai massage therapists, regarding fundamental skills and knowledge, the participants of this group mentioned that they really were not concerned about basic massage even though some participants had never learned its basic processes before. Some participants pointed out that there is no need to add more competencies for the basic Thai massage courses provided by Thai massage schools. Participants also stated that they forgot completely what they had learned about Anatomy and Physiology principles. They would like to learn more about advanced massage skills such as spa massage skills, oil massage skills and other specialised treatment massage programs. For higher levels of Thai massage, therapists require more training to be specialists in Thai massage services. Some participants would like to work aboard so they need to study foreign languages such as English. Participants mentioned that being self-employed, such as being massage business owners, would be great for them. For matters related to attitude, interviewees commented that politeness, gentleness, and ethics are very essential in Thai massage services.

As a result, the findings for Interview Question 4 from the Thai massage therapists group contended that the following issues were significant to Thai massage courses:

1) There is no need to add more competencies for the basic Thai massage courses provided by Thai massage schools.

2) Most participants have completely forgotten what they learned about Anatomy and Physiology principles.

3) Masseurs would like to learn advanced massage skills including spa massage skills, oil massage.

4) For higher skills, greater numbers of hours of training are required.
5) Most therapists need to study English because they would like to work abroad.

6) Politeness, gentleness and ethics are very important.

2.5 Presentation Data of Interview Question 5 (IQ5)

IQ5: How do you evaluate the success of massage treatment programs provided to clients?

This question aims to understand the current measures of success in the treatments provided to customers. The findings of this research will define competency standards to assure the quality of Thai therapeutic massage.

The therapist participants mentioned that, when evaluating performance, most participants usually make decisions about the success of their massage treatments base on their clients’ appearance.

Interviewee T1 mentioned that

‘I have evaluated the customer satisfaction by observing the facial expression, the size of the tip, and the number of returning customers to come back as well’.

Interviewee T3 stated that

‘For me, I evaluated the success of Thai massage performance by considering the number of tips received and also the facial expressions of customers during their massage service’.
Interviewee T4 pointed out that

‘I considered the success of my massage treatment by observing the facial expressions of clients during massage performance. I also observe that, if my customer feels comfortable and sleepy during a massage service, it means that I used a proper massage performance and applied it correctly’.

Interviewees T7 pointed out that

‘I evaluated my massage performance by observing my clients during massage; if they fell asleep or looked comfortable that means my massage service were successful. I also asked my client directly about how they felt after the massage was provided’.

Interviewee T8 explained that

‘I observed the facial expression of clients during massage treatments and also directly asked customers about my massage service’.

Interviewee T9 pointed out that

‘For me, I asked my clients directly about my services. However, some customers talked directly to me or my manager about how they felt after my massage was provided’.

Interviewee T10 identified that

‘I would ask my clients about how they felt, and I also evaluated by observing the facial expressions of my customers during massage performance’.
Interviewees T2, T5, and T6 pointed out that they asked clients about the services provided to customers and about how they feel.

Hence, the participants observed that the key indicators when judging customers’ responses are the facial expressions of customers, the amount of any tip willingly given, and the number of returning customers. Some participants stated that they asked clients about the services provided, while in some cases customers talked directly with the therapists or managers about how they feel. Participants assume that if customers feel comfortable and sleepy during client care, it means that they did the right things during the massage.

Accordingly, the research findings from the therapists for this interview question indicate that the evaluation of Thai massage services can be summarized as follows.

- For assessment, most Thai masseurs usually ask their customers directly, after massage services are finished.
- The indicators used by therapists to evaluate the success of their massage services are based on their customers’ appearance, as follows:
  1) Facial expressions of customers;
  2) Customers feeling comfortable and sleepy during client care;
  3) Amount of tip received;
  4) The number of returning customers.
2.6 Presentation Data of Interview Question 6 (IQ6)

**IQ 6: How do you think your work as a masseur might be improved?**

This Interview Question aims to investigate the suggestions of Therapists to improve competency standards for Thai therapeutic massage services. The research findings of this interview question can be employed to implement competency standards for Thai massage services.

Most therapist participants would like to improve their career, financial supports, attitude, ethics, morals, services and locations. They would like to study advanced massage methods such as oil massage and spa massages etc where both features are based on main 10 line theories. People who want to work abroad and to start massage businesses need government support. Most participants mentioned that attitude, ethics and morals are significant to a masseur because most masseurs in Thai massage services are female but most customers are male. Thus, therapists may be assumed to condone or offer sexual services. This negatively affects the image of Thai massage. Participants suggested that, being masseurs, they have to love what they provide to clients. Locations should be tidy, clean and wide for their customers’ enjoyment. The interviewees also commented that, in the future, Thai massage businesses could be an alternative job for people who are unemployed.

As a result, the research findings of Thai massage therapists’ group for interview question 6 can be summarized as suggesting improvements for Thai therapeutic massage services as follows.
1) Therapists would like to improve their jobs, attitude, ethics, morals, and services.

2) Thai massage owners and therapists would like government organizations to support them financially if they want to run massage businesses or to work abroad.

3) Thai massage places need to improve their services.

4) The 10 main lines theories are required for studying Thai massage.

5) Attitude, ethics and morals are important for being a masseur.

6) Thai massage shops must be tidy, clean and wide.

7) In the future, Thai massage jobs could be an alternative career for new masseurs.

2.7 Presentation of Data from Interview Question 7 (IQ7)

IQ 7: Would you like to add anything about Thai therapeutic massage or comment further?

The aim of Interview Question 7 is to study current measure of competency and develop proper competency standards for Thai therapeutic massage, related to health, professional practice, clinical, communication and therapeutic massage competencies (and other aspects). These will be used to implement competency standards to ensure the quality of the Thai therapeutic massage industry.

The data collected for Interview Question 7 from Thai massage therapists are as follows.
Interviewee T2 mentioned that

‘For me, I want to work abroad; thus I want the government to support the financial assistance plan for Thai massage therapists who want to go working abroad’.

Interviewee T3 stated that

‘In my opinion, most people think that a Thai massage business is related to sexual services. That can negatively affect the image and reputation of Thai massage businesses; thus the image of Thai massage services must be improved’.

Interviewee T5 pointed out that

‘As a Thai massage therapist, I think that therapists have to attend actual Thai massage courses. Some therapists also want to help their society as much as they can’.

Interviewee T7 pointed out that

‘Thai massage should be an alternative career for people who are unemployed. In some cases, if they want to go to international markets, the government should provide financial assistance for them’.

Interviewee T10 commented that ‘As a good therapist, therapists are willing to help their society as well’.

Hence, this group observed that financial assistance is very important for masseurs who want to go to international markets. The image of Thai masseurs needs to be improved (especially as related to imputations of sexual activities). Some therapists
also noted that they would like to feel that they are able to assist their society as much as they can.

As a result, the findings of this interview question for Thai massage therapists contended that the significant issues which need to be improved are as follows.

1) Financial assistance for Thai masseurs who want to go to work in the international markets.
2) The image of Thai masseurs needs to be improved.
3) Some activities should be provided for Thai therapists, where they can get involved to assist their society as much as they can.

2.8 Summary of Research Findings for Thai Massage Therapists Group

The research findings of Thai massage therapists group from interview questions (IQ1 – IQ7) can be summarized as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Findings of IQ1 – IQ7 for Thai Massage Therapists Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IQ</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1  | The current measure related to the educational qualification requirements of masseurs and competencies of Thai massage training programs are as follows.  
   - Formal qualifications are not required for the basic education and experience to be masseurs.  
   - Some therapists who work in Thai massage shops did not study Thai massage courses from any schools, but they learned by their relatives and colleagues through self-directed study.  
   - To complete Thai massage courses, all therapists need to be tested about massage theories and practices as well.  
   The main 10 lines theory on body and legs are required for study in Thai massage courses. |
| 2  | The competencies of Thai massage therapist trained by Thai massage schools are shown in Table 3. |
| 3  | The competencies which should not be included in Thai massage courses are as follows.  
   - Apply Hydrotherapy to client care.  
   - Apply Nutritional concepts. |
### Table 4: Findings of IQ1 – IQ7 for Thai Massage Therapists Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IQ</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 4  | The significant issues of Thai massage courses related to skills, knowledge, or attitudes which should be added include:  
- Most participants have completely forgotten what they have learned about Anatomy and Physiology principles.  
- Masseurs would like to learn advanced massage skills including spa massage skills, oil massage.  
- For higher skills, significant numbers of hours of training in various skills are required.  
- Most therapists need to study English because they would like to work abroad.  
  Politeness, gentleness and ethics are very important. |
| 5  | The evaluative processes for Thai massage services can be summarized as follows.  
- For assessment, most Thai masseurs usually ask their customers directly after they finish Thai massage services.  
- The indicators for therapists’ performances to evaluate the success for Thai massage services are based on client appearances, as follows:  
  1) Facial expressions of customers;  
  2) Customers feeling comfortable and sleepy during client care;  
  3) Amount of tip received;  
  4) The number of returning customers |
| 6  | The suggestions of Thai massage therapists to improve competency standards for Thai therapeutic massage services are:  
- Therapists would like to improve their jobs, attitude, ethics, moral, and service.  
- Thai massage owners and therapists would like government organizations to support their financial needs if they want to run massage businesses and to work aboard.  
- Thai massage places need to improve to provide better services.  
- The 10 main lines theories are required for studying Thai massage.  
- The attitude, ethics and morals are important for being a masseur.  
- Thai massage shops must be tidy, clean and wide.  
- In the future, Thai massage jobs could provide alternative careers for Thai people. |
| 7  | The significant issues which need to be improved are as follows.  
- Financial assistance for Thai masseurs who want to go to work in international markets.  
- The image of Thai masseurs needs to be improved due to implications of providing sexual activities.  
- Some activities should be enabled so Thai therapists can get involved in assisting their society as much as they can. |

Source: Adapted for the data collected by in-depth interviews.
3. Data Collection and Analysis for Thai Massage Managers Group

This section presents the data collected by interview from the 10 Thai massage manager respondents. The in-depth data collected from the interview questions are reported by reference to each interview question (IQ1- IQ7) as follows.

3.1 Presentation of Data from Interview Question 1 (IQ1)

**IQ 1: What training or educational qualifications do you require your Thai therapeutic masseurs to have?**

The purpose of this question is to identify the required educational qualifications of masseurs and therefore better develop training programs for Thai massage services. This interview question enabled the respondents as Thai massage operation managers to describe the current Thai massage training and to select appropriate competency standards to assure and to implement quality Thai therapeutic massage.

According to the data gathered from the Thai massage managers’ group it was found that all participating Thai massage managers have achieved certificates of Thai massage from Thai massage institutions. The data indicated that participants mentioned that the majority of Thai massage businesses or shops require therapists to have gained certificates in Thai massage provided by private and public institutions such as the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration Organization, the Ministry of Public Heath, the Wat Po massage school and so-on. Generally, these organizations offer two curriculums – addressing Royal Thai massage therapeutics and Thai ancient massage – that aim to relax their customers. However, some
massage shops have adapted a massage style which was created by the shop’s experts to train their masseurs. Most Thai massage shops require a minimum number of hours of training for staff to be recognised as therapists. To be good staff, therapists should be friendly, honest and sincere to their customers and colleagues. Additionally, the managers also stated that they expected therapists to have practical experience in Thai massage prior starting in an actual position. However, the managers mentioned that their Thai massage shops provided the basic training for new staff that did not have any experience, skills or education from Thai massage schools. As demand for traditional Thai massage or Nuad Paan Bulan and foot reflexology massage has increased in recent years, especially in Thailand, the number of available therapists is limited. The Thai massage managers disclosed that some Thai massage shops hire people from neighbouring countries such as Myanmar, to work in Thai massage shops, which might lead to management problems in Thai massage services – such as the quality of therapy provided, and communication problems with customers and colleagues.

As a result, this interview question indicated that massage managers require Thai therapists to be qualified as follows:

1) The certificates of Thai massage from Thai massage schools
2) Expected hours of Thai massage training - therapists should have practical experience in Thai massage services.
3) However, Thai massage shops also provide basic training to new staff who do not have any experiences, skills or education from Thai massage schools.
3.2 Presentation of Data from Interview Question 2 (IQ2)

| IQ2: Which of the following do you require your Thai therapeutic masseurs to demonstrate? (Refer to a set of competencies in Table 1) |

The aim of this question is to investigate the current competencies that are required for Thai massage therapists including health, professional practice, clinical, communication and therapeutic massage competencies. The findings of this interview question can be employed to develop standards to assure the quality of Thai therapeutic massage.

Regarding Health Competencies, the Thai manager participants commented that all Thai therapeutic masseurs are required to study anatomy, physiology and kinesiology concepts which are very important for therapists as a part of Thai massage education. Some 70% of respondents commented that applying first aid is necessary; however, the other 30% percent stated that applying first aid is not important. Similarly, when considering nutritional concepts, most managers commented that applying nutritional concepts is not necessary. Further, 70% of managers required therapists to check and confirm the customer’s status in general physical health assessments. For example, pregnant women and those currently having a period may not be allowed to receive massaging. The other 30% of respondents do not agree with confirming the physical health status of their customers as they believe that, normally, customers speak directly to staff if they feel unwell. When practising infection control, 80% of managers note that their therapists should wear a mask and to wash their hands prior to beginning therapy. However, 20% of the managers’ group commented that wearing a mask would not be appropriate for providing Thai massage services to their customers.
As for professional practice competencies, the findings show that most managers require Thai therapeutic masseurs to observe legal regulations, and reflect morals, ethics and a great manner in practice, to best meet customers’ requirements.

Regarding clinical competencies, the participants explained that not every therapist is required to provide hydrotherapy and therapeutic exercises to clients. Masseurs were not supposed to draw up management plans or recommend particular health care to their clients. All therapists always provide simple suggestions based on their responses to clients.

As for communication competencies, these interviewees noted that managers and owners did not focus on how their staff work effectively with each other in shops. This is because both the number of employee and the shop sizes are too small; also the therapists work quite separately. In contrast, the managers care quite a lot about the communication between therapists and clients. Especially, they regard great manners, ethics, morals and friendliness as important attributes for therapists. Using medical and practice terminology suitably is not compulsory for staff, because massage shops provide only relaxing Thai massage.

With respect to therapeutic massage competencies, 80% per cent of the managers commented that most of therapists studied and correctly provided Thai massage by working from the bottom (feet) and moving towards the top (head). This technique works well within holistic therapeutic massage outlines and principles. All therapists were required to perform stretch, thumb press, palm press on the main ten lines.
Therapists also were required to provide Thai massage by using rhythmic and rocking motions which help to increase the body’s energy flow for balance and relaxation. However, the other 20% respondents stated that therapists would start the performance from the side of the body and then work throughout the core of body by twisting and flipping. It was noted that applying Thai herbs is very costly, thus it was not required for customers.

The research findings for Interview Question 2 for the Thai massage managers’ group can be summarized as shown in Table 5.

**Table 5: The Competencies Required of Thai Massage Therapist by Thai Massage Shops**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Requirement Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health Competencies</strong></td>
<td>• Apply Anatomy and Physiology Principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply Kinesiology Principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply first aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Confirm the physical health status of the client</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Practice infection control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional Practice Competencies</strong></td>
<td>• Acknowledge the legal requirements of the massage therapy profession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply professional ethics in practice and conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication Competencies</strong></td>
<td>• Communicate effectively with customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Therapeutic Massage Competencies</strong></td>
<td>• Work within a framework of holistic therapeutic massage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Practice the principles and Thai therapeutic massage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Begin massage from the bottom (feet) and move towards the top (head)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Perform stretches, thumb press, palm press on the 10 Thai energy lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Massage the entire body by using rhythmic and rocking motions to increase the body’s energy flow for balance and relaxation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from the data collected by in-depth interviews.
3.3 Presentation Data of Interview Question 3 (IQ3)

IQ 3: Are there reasons why you think any of the above competencies should NOT be included in your masseurs’ training?

The aim of this question is to classify the competencies of Thai massage related to health, professional practice, clinical, communication and therapeutic massage competencies. In practice, the Thai spa industry might regard some aspects as inappropriate for Thai massage services.

The respondents of this group commented that applying hydrotherapy to client care and using nutritional concepts should not be included in Thai massage courses. They also noted that the use of competencies concepts depends upon the customer’s requirements.

As a result, the research findings for Interview Question 3 from this group indicate that the following competencies should not be included in Thai massage courses.

1) Apply hydrotherapy to client care.
2) Apply nutritional concepts.
3.4 Presentation of Data for Interview Question 4 (IQ4)

**IQ 4: Are there any skills, knowledge or attitudes that you think should be added to the above competencies?**

This question aims to identify competencies believed to be suitable for Thai massage services in areas such as health, professional practice, clinical, communication and therapeutic massage competencies – they may need to be implemented to assure the quality of the Thai massage industry.

The findings for this question show that the Thai massage managers pointed out that there is no need to add any competencies, skills, knowledge and attitudes for their staff. The managers also noted that therapists just need to love what they provide to their customers. However, some participants mentioned that therapists must have positive thinking, good manners, a good relationship with their colleagues while working and be highly skilled in advanced massage methods. Additionally, studying anatomy and physiology concepts, and foreign languages are essential for being therapists.

As a result, the findings of research into Interview Question 4 show that this group identified that significant issues for Thai massage courses may include:

1) All therapists have to love what they provide to customers.

2) Positive thinking, a great manner, and a good relationship with colleagues are important.

3) Learning anatomy and physiology principle and foreign languages are vital for being masseurs.
The aim of this question is to understand the current measures of competency and to study appropriate assessment processes for assuring the quality standards of Thai therapeutic massage services. The findings of this interview question will be employed to develop the implementation of therapeutic massage competencies for assuring quality standards in the Thai massage industry.

The data collected for Interview Question 5 from the Thai massage managers’ group to ensure quality standards of the TTM services being provided are as follows.

Interviewee M1 stated that

‘To evaluate their customers, masseurs would ask them directly how they felt. As manager, if there are issues between my employees and clients during massage operations, I would probably recommend to my staff to do the proper things’.

Interviewee M2 mentioned that

‘I think that the number of returning customers can be evaluated as reflecting successful Thai massage services. With most customers – I have known them before closely – I also ask them directly about massage services’.
Interviewee M3 pointed out that

‘For me, the returning customers and the number of booking services could be indicators to evaluate the success of Thai massage services. I also asked customers directly about how they felt’.

Interviewee M4 stated that

‘I think that the booking numbers of therapists can be applied as measures of the achievements of Thai massage services’.

Interviewees M5 and M6 also commented that they would ask clients directly about how they feel after Thai massage service.

Interviewee M7 stated that

‘As manager, I would see the number of bookings of therapists as an indicator of the success of treatment provided to customers. In the case of unsatisfactory services, the clients would inform me directly at the counter, and then the conversation would be recorded. In addition, if the clients asked to change from one therapist to another therapist without explanation during massage treatments that could be a sign of unsuccessful services’.

Interviewee M8 stated that

‘The customer would tell me directly, whether they like it or not. If they do not like it, a customer can request a new masseur. The number of bookings for therapists can be evaluated and observed as an indicator of the success of Thai massage services’.
Interviewee M9 mentioned that

‘For me, the number of bought programs and repeat services could be indicators of the success of services provided to clients. Most customers are very close to me and live near the shop; thus I asked my clients directly about Thai massage services. Also, if customers do not go back in the short term, I will call them to invite them to come again. In the case that the clients won’t come back permanently, I will investigate to find out what happened to make them dissatisfied. Further, if customers asked to change from one therapist to another therapist, this might be a sign of unsuccessful massage treatments’.

Interviewee M10 stated that

‘For me, I think that the number of customers could be the sign of the success of Thai massage services, and I also asked customers directly about how they feel’.

To sum up, the Thai massage managers’ group stated that they would talk directly to their customer about how they felt after their massage, to appraise the massage treatment provided by their staff. Some participants noted that they are very close to their customers as well. The number of booked services, buying massage programs and returning to a given shop could be used as key factors to evaluate the shop’s accomplishments. If customers do not go back within a given space of time, the shop will re-invite them. In some cases, if the customers don’t come back at all, the managers try to find out what happened. Additionally, changing one therapist to another, without reason, during the course of treatment could be a sign of unsuccessful services.
Consequently, the findings of the Interview Question 5 from the Thai massage managers can be summarized as follows.

1) To evaluate Thai massage services, Thai massage managers usually ask their customers directly how they feel.

2) The key indicators for evaluating the success of Thai massage services are as follows.
   - The number of booked massage services;
   - The number of buying services;
   - The number of returning customers.

3) Asking to change therapists without any reason during Thai massage treatment is a sign of unsuccessful services.

3.6 Presentation of Data from Interview Question 6 (IQ6)

IQ 6: How do you think your staff massage services might be improved?

This question seeks suggestions on ways to improve services, with implications for possible competency standards, given that the findings can be applied to the Thai massage industry.

The collected data from the Thai massage managers’ group related to the significant issues for improving Thai massage competencies of the TTM service are exemplified as follows.

Interviewee M1 stated that ‘I think that therapists are required to improve their skills and manners for providing a great massage service’.
Interviewee M2 commented that

‘For me, positive attitudes, skills and manners of Thai massage therapists are required to improve their service’s quality’.

Interviewee M3 commented that

‘In my opinion, great skills and attitudes are necessary to improve the service of therapists. To improve their skills, everyone in this shop is required to practise and to study more through self-study processes’.

Interviewee M6 stated that

‘Our shop is focused on improving the services of therapists including attitudes, manners, and skills for the customers’ satisfaction. I would be satisfied if our therapists want to improve their massage skills by practising advanced Thai massage courses’.

Interviewee M7 also pointed out that ‘I want therapists to improve their skills and attitudes for improving the quality of services’.

Interviewee M10 mentioned that

‘Some Thai massage shops employ therapists who came from neighbouring countries such as Myanmar for working in Thai massages shops. This is because the demand for Thai massage services is increasing rapidly, particularly in the Bangkok area. Thus, our therapists are required to improve their Thai massage skills and manners for ensuring the quality of massage services’.
To sum up, the participants of the managers’ group commented that therapists may need to improve their attitude, manners and skills to deliver a top quality massage service. Therapists should pay attention to what and how they serve to their customers. All Thai massage shops require positive customer responses, so they need to perform what customers want. It was found that the number of Thai massage therapists is inadequate, because of the growing demand for Thai massage services, particularly in the Bangkok area. The managers noted that some massage shops employ therapists who came from neighbouring countries such as Myanmar to work. This might lead to operational problems, such as quality control, communication problems with customers and colleagues, and poor service quality.

Consequently, these findings can be summarized through the suggestions to improve massage services, as follows.

1) Attitude, manners and skills are vital elements for therapists.
2) Therapists have to pay attention to their clients’ needs when they provide massage services.
3) Therapists have to recognize ways to assess customer satisfaction.

3.7 Presentation of Data from Interview Question 7 (IQ7)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IQ 7: Would you like to add anything about Thai therapeutic massage or comment further?</th>
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</table>

This question aims to investigate the present measures of competency and proper competency standards for Thai therapeutic massage services in the key areas of health, professional practice, clinical, communication, therapeutic massage
competencies, and other aspects. The findings of this research will be useful when seeking to implement competency standard systems, designed to ensure quality Thai therapeutic massage.

The gathered data from the Thai massage managers' group are expressed as follows.

The interviewee M1 pointed out that

‘My therapists do not want to study advanced massage. They believe that the basic Thai massage course that they learnt before is enough for massage services. For me, I really want therapists to keep practising massage skills all the time’.

Interviewee M3 mentioned that

‘To improve their skills, everyone in this shop is required to practise and to study more by the self-study processes’.

Interviewee M5 commented that

‘For me, I noticed that the therapists really do not want to study anymore to improve their skills, because they believe that, if they provide massage services to their customers more often, so their massage skills will be improved’.

Interviewee M6 stated that

‘Our shop is focused on improving the services of therapists. I would like our therapists to improve their massage skills by practising advanced Thai massage courses’.
Interviewee M10 mentioned that ‘Therapists are required to practise their massage skills at all times’.

Hence, the manager-participants commented that most therapists did not want to study advanced massage skills, they therapists believed that study within basic Thai massage courses, from recognised massage schools, are enough for their services. However, the Thai massage managers highlight that therapists are required to usually practice the Thai massage services.

Accordingly, the research findings of Interview Question 7 can be summarized as follows.

1) Most Thai therapists did not learn advanced Thai massage.
2) Thai therapists are required to practise Thai massage performance in order to improve their skills.

3.8 Summary of Research Findings for Thai Massage Managers Group

The research findings of Thai massage managers group from interview questions (IQ1 – IQ7) can be recapitulated as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Findings of IQ1 – IQ7 for Thai Massage Managers Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IQ</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Thai massage shops’ requirement for Thai therapists as follows:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The certificates of Thai massage from Thai massage schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Hours of Thai massage training which expected therapists to have practice experience in Thai massage services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Thai massage shops also provided the basic training to new staff who did not have any experiences, skills or education from Thai massage schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The competencies required of Thai massage therapists by Thai massage shops as shown in Table 5.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6: Findings of IQ1 – IQ7 for Thai Massage Managers Group (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IQ</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 3  | The competencies of Thai massage courses should not be included as follows.  
     | - Apply hydrotherapy to client care.  
     | - Apply nutritional concepts. |
| 4  | The significant issues of Thai massage courses should be added as follows.  
     | - All therapists have to love what they provide to customers.  
     | - Positive thinking, a great manner, and a good relationship to colleague are important.  
     | - Learning anatomy and physiology principle and foreign languages are vital for being masseurs. |
| 5  | The significant issues for assessments of Thai massage services as follows.  
     | - For evaluate Thai massage services, Thai massage managers usually ask their customers directly after finished Thai massage performance about how customers feel to their services.  
     | - The key indicators for evaluating the success of Thai massage services are as follows.  
       | 1) The number of booking massage services;  
       | 2) A number of buying service;  
       | 3) A number of returning customers.  
     | 4) Asking to change therapists without any reason during Thai massage treatment is a sign of unsuccessful services. |
| 6  | The suggestions for improve competency standards in Thai therapeutic massage services as follows.  
     | - Attitude, manners and skills are vital issues for being great therapists.  
     | - Therapists have to pay attention when they provide Thai massage performance to their clients.  
     | - Therapists have to recognize clues to customers’ satisfaction.  
     | - Some Thai massage shops employ therapists who came from neighboring countries for working in Thai massage shops that might be lead to the causes of operation problems in Thai massage services such as quality and communication problems with customers and colleagues. |
| 7  | The commendations for improving the quality standards of Thai therapists as follows.  
     | - Most Thai therapists did not want to learn more about advanced Thai massage.  
     | - Thai therapists are required to practice Thai massage performance to improve their skills. |

Source: Adapted from the data collected by in-depth interviews.
4. Data Collection and Analysis for Health Specialists Group

The following section presents the data collected from interviews with health specialists regarding Thai massage schools. In-depth data was collected for each interview question (IQ1 – IQ7) as follows.

4.1 Presentation Data of Interview Question 1 (IQ1)

| IQ 1: What training or educational qualifications should Thai therapeutic masseurs have? |

The purpose of this interview question is to investigate the educational qualification requirements of masseurs, in the areas of health, professional practice, clinical communication and therapeutic massage competencies. This interview question enabled the respondents as specialists to describe the current training and to select appropriate competency standards for assuring the quality of Thai therapeutic massage services.

The participating health specialists mentioned that therapeutic masseurs should have good ethics, morality, provide great services, possess massage certificates, demonstrate practical massage experiences and gain a greater number of training hours. There is no need for basic education. Morals and ethics are most important to be a therapist – by recognising and observing the rules provided by the founders of massage. The participants believed that providing a great service can be one of the key factors to achieving a successful business. Participating health specialists noted that therapists must complete at least 150 hours of basic training; special therapists require about 200 hours of training. Thai massage experience is required for any
massage shop. Therapists must keep up their knowledge, skills and practice at all
times. All masseurs should study both basic and advanced Thai massage courses;
anatomy, philosophical concepts and law enforcement are necessary for being
special Thai masseurs.

Accordingly, the findings for Interview Question 1 for the health specialists group can
be summarized as follows.

1) No need to study basic education for Thai massage courses;
2) Great service is the one of the key factors for business success;
3) The education qualification of Thai therapeutic masseurs are required
   consist of factures:
   - The ethics and morality;
   - Massage experiences;
   - The number of training hours such as at least 150 hours for basic
     training and 200 hours for special therapists;
   - All therapists should be required to study Anatomy, Philosophical
     concepts and law enforcement.

4.2 Presentation of Data for Interview Question 2 (IQ2)

IQ2: Which of the following competencies do you think Thai therapeutic
masseurs should possess? (Refer to a set of competencies in Table 1)

This question aims to examine the current competencies required for Thai massage
therapists, and identify the desirable competencies and standards to guarantee the
quality of Thai therapeutic massage.
Regarding Health Competencies, the health specialists commented that the following capabilities should be possessed by all Thai massage therapists: anatomy; physiology; first aid; kinesiology theories; confirmation of the physical health status of customers, and infection control. Everyone should study these concepts which are currently only compulsory courses for advanced massage training; relaxing massage therapists do not require those capabilities at present. 60% of the specialists noted that applying nutritional concepts is unnecessary for health competency, but the other 40% regarded application of nutritional concepts as essential.

Professional Practice Competencies require legal knowledge related to massage therapy profession; moreover, professional ethics are needed for all Thai masseurs.

Regarding Clinical Competencies, 60% of health specialists observed that offering hydrotherapy within client care is not important for Thai massage services; in contrast, the other 40% believed that hydrotherapy is necessary for special cases. 60% of interviewees believed that it is necessary to apply therapeutic exercise to customer treatment, but 40% of participants of this group stated that it is not essential. 60% of health specialists held the opinion that there is no need for pain and stress management techniques to be included in massage therapy training, but the other 40% were in favour of including this knowledge in massage courses. Most specialists (80 %) pointed out that drawing up a client case management plan is not required, but 20% of the see it as useful within Thai massage services. 40% of health specialists commented that it is beneficial to recommend health care to clients, once clients indicate their past experiences (it may contribute to knowing
what each customer really wants). However, 40% of interviewees disagreed with recommending health care to clients.

Most specialists recommended that all staff should work effectively with each other in a communicative team approach. Effective communication with clients is essential, but therapists do not need to use medical or academic terminology.

As for Therapeutic Massage Competencies, participating health specialists stated that masseurs should begin their performance from the bottom position (feet) and move towards the top position (head), working along the 10 Thai energy lines with stretches, thumb and palm pressing. Rhythmic and rocking motions are used to raise the body’s energy flow for balance and relaxation. Those activities had to work and be practised on holistic therapeutic principles. Massage techniques such as finger press Iliopoas, the king cobra and locust variations are used infrequently as they are risky and dangerous; but advanced neck stretching and advanced stretches are often chosen as they benefit muscle pain relief and stress derived from routine work. Applying Thai herbs must be used with a compress ball; however it is rarely used and is costly. These activities may require a Thai massage specialist service due to the effects it may have on the skin and body.

As a result, the research findings of the interview question 2 for the health specialists group can be summarized as shown in Table 7.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Requirement Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health Competencies</strong></td>
<td>• Apply Anatomy and Physiology Principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply Kinesiology Principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply Nutritional Concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply first aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Confirm the physical health status of the client</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Practice infection control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional Practice Competencies</strong></td>
<td>• Acknowledge the legal requirements of the massage therapy profession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply professional ethics in practice and conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clinical Competencies</strong></td>
<td>• Apply Hydrotherapy to client care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply therapeutic exercises to client care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply pain and stress management techniques to client care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Draw up client case management plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Recommend health care referrals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication Competencies</strong></td>
<td>• Work effectively with other staff in a Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Communicate effectively with customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use basic medical terminology appropriately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Therapeutic Massage Competencies</strong></td>
<td>• Work within a framework of holistic therapeutic massage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Practice the principles and Thai therapeutic massage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▶ Begin massage from the bottom (feet) and move towards the top (head)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▶ Perform stretches, thumb press, palm press on the 10 Thai energy lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▶ Massage the entire body by using rhythmic and rocking motions to increase the body’s energy flow for balance and relaxation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▶ Advanced Neck Stretch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▶ Advanced Stretches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▶ Apply Thai herbs and massage.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from the data collected by in-depth interviews

### 4.3 Presentation Data of Interview Question 3 (IQ3)

**IQ 3: Are there any skills, knowledge or attitudes that you think should be added to the above competencies?**

The aim of this question is to classify the proper competencies for Thai massage related to health, professional practice, clinical, communication and therapeutic massage competencies. These aspects could be used to suggest suitable Thai massage competencies for the Thai massage industry.
The participating health specialists pointed out that male massage therapists must have moral principles and good attitude to be seen as good therapists. Female therapists have a bad image, with implications of sexual services; thus they must have good moral standards too. Regarding the actual occupation, massage therapy depends on having good therapists, so every staff member must be a good person and they have to uphold good practices at all times. Most Thai massage institutes offer just basic courses such as basic practice, special courses and healing classes. Thus, they have to learn advanced massage courses from other schools. The therapist should recognize what they have learned about core Thai massages. This approach assists with examinations undertaken to upgrade their careers. Thai massage has grown in foreign markets, so all therapists should study foreign languages for working aboard.

As a result, the findings for Interview Question 3 suggest that significant competencies may need to be added as follows.

1) Moral principles and great attitude are important for Thai massage therapists.
2) Therapists should be required to keep up practical Thai massage skills.
3) Learning advanced Thai massage courses and foreign languages are vital to boosting therapists’ careers.
4.4 Presentation of Data for Interview Question 4 (IQ4)

IQ 4: How do you evaluate the Thai therapeutic massage training provided to Thai therapeutic masseurs by Thailand’s massage institutions?

The purpose of this question is to investigate the current measures used relative to Thai massage competency and to identify additional appropriate competency standards. These could be used to implement improved quality standards for the Thai therapeutic massage industry.

According to the data collected for Interview Question 4 from the health specialists’ group, most therapists are asked to undertake a hands-on test with the manager or owners prior to work. Some organizations provide paper tests, with 50-100 questions related to Thai massage concepts, to the 10 major lines concepts (10 Sen) on human bodies, to anatomical theories and to clinical places for examination by the Ministry of Public Health and Labour department. During working hours, the evaluation of ethics and morals are required for therapists. All therapists would be directly observed by health specialists, or customers would be interviewed after therapy, by managers.

The findings of this interview question for the health specialists group contended that the examination of the Ministry of Public Health and Labour department used the following methods to evaluate Thai massage courses provided by Thai massage schools.
1) Prior to starting to work, therapists would be asked for hands-on tests.
2) Paper tests consisting of 50-100 questions address Thai massage concepts, the 10 main lines concepts, anatomy theories and clinical processes.
3) The ethics and good morals are required.
4) During training hours, all masseurs will be observed by health specialists.
5) Customers will be interviewed by managers.

4.5 Presentation of Data related to Interview Question 5 (IQ5)

IQ 5: How do you ensure that the quality standards of Thai therapeutic massage meet the requirements of clients?

This question aims to identify the key competencies required of Thai massage therapists to achieve customers’ requirements. The findings will assist in developing key competencies for Thai massage therapists, to achieve customer requirements and assure the quality of Thai massage services.

The collected data from the health specialist group related to the competencies required of Thai massage therapists to achieve customers’ requirements indicated the following.

Interviewee H1 mentioned that

‘Therapists must be nice and friendly to their clients and must know how to do massage well. I think that the most important rule of massage is to provide healing and relaxing services’.
Interviewee H2 commented that

‘I think that therapists have to clearly understand the legal aspects and ethics of massage therapists. The professional code of ethics must be considered as setting quality standards in Thailand’.

Interviewee H3 stated that

‘I think that the moral and merit theories need to be added in massage performance for assuring the quality standards of Thai therapeutic massage. Additionally, therapists must be friendly to their customers’.

Interviewee H4 pointed out that

‘I think that the quality standard for Thai massage is quite low. Therapists must know how to do massage well and have to be nice to their customers’.

Interviewee H5 mentioned that

‘In my opinion, all therapists are required to clearly understand their legal and ethical obligations to clients’.

Hence, to ensure quality standards are maintained while meeting customers’ requirements, the health specialist participants group identified that the characteristics for satisfying customers are as follows: 1) Being friendly and nice to their customers (that is, being kindness to their clients; 2) Remembering important massage rules (to provide a relaxing and healing massage). Additionally, the professional code of ethics should be the significant for massage therapy in Thailand. It intends to provide a massage therapist with a clear understanding of their legal and ethical obligations to clients.
This question aims to study the plans and suggestions related to improving competency standards for Thai therapeutic massage, from the perspective of health specialists as Thai massage stakeholders. The research findings of this interview question can be applied to develop competency standards addressing the international therapeutic tourism market.

The collected data from this group related the plans and suggestions to improve competency standards for Thai therapeutic massage, as follows.

Interviewee H1 mentioned that

‘For me, I recommend that competition in Thai massage therapy is important as an efficient way for Thai massage therapists to review their skills, similar to the competition between Thai food in each part of Thailand. Currently, the Thai massage courses have many standards for each organization, particularly in assessment, practice and course syllabus. Thus, these need to improve. Therapists and shop owners never come back to review their skills after they have finished and received certificates from Thai massage schools. The massage standards building
and ability is based upon their practices in massage treatments. Additionally, all therapists need to love their careers’.

Interviewee H2 stated that

‘Therapists and shop owners never come back to review their skills after they have finished and received certificates from Thai massage schools. The massage standards building and ability is based upon their practices in massage treatments. Additionally, all therapists need to love their careers’.

Interviewee H3 commented that

‘Currently, the organization involved does not support setting up the system. There are no graduate follow-up reports for students who have graduated. I think that the organizations involved should assist Thai massage schools to set up the systems for follow-up reports for graduated students’.

Interviewee H4 discussed that

‘Thai massage curriculums of Thai massage schools are very different. There are many standards for assessment across Thai massages institutions. The examinations also use different indicators to evaluate’.

Interviewee H5 pointed out that

‘The Thai massage industry still has no plans to encourage therapists through competitions to improve their massage skills’.

To sum up, responses to this question revealed that there was no plans for competitions in Thai massage therapy; but it was felt that contests for therapists
would be very efficient in helping therapists to review their skills and knowledge. Thai massage contests might be a great way to identify the proper massage therapists in the Thai massage market as well. Currently, the curricula of Thai massaged institutions are different and there are also had many standards; thus, particularly, assessment, practice, and course syllabuses need to improve. There are further significant problems which need to be fixed – for example, after graduating, Thai therapists have never had to review their knowledge again. But realistically, they need to periodically review their knowledge and skills. For graduating students, Thai massage schools did not do a follow-up survey with them. It was believed that the organizations involved should support Thai massage schools to set up systems for follow-up reports for graduates.

As a result, the research findings from the health specialists’ group regarding improvements to competency standards for Thai therapeutic massage services can be summarised as follows.

1) There were no plans for competitions in Thai massage industry.

2) There are some problems in the Thai massage operation system.

3) There are many standards for Thai massage institutions, and the curricula and examinations are also different.

4) Thai therapists do not review their knowledge after graduating; thus Thai masseurs should be required to periodically review their skills and knowledge.

5) Thai massages institutions require survey systems and centralised institutions of Thai massage services to support their management roles.
4.7 Presentation of Data for Interview Question 7 (IQ7)

IQ 7: Would you like to add anything about Thai therapeutic massage or comment further?

The aim of this question is to investigate the commendations and suggestions for improving quality standards for Thai massage from stakeholders to be implemented competencies standards in the Thai massage industry.

The data collected from this group related to commendations and suggestions for improving quality standards for Thai massage is as follows.

The interviewee H1 stated that

‘The policy is good enough but the operational management is still having problems. There is also no central organization for consulting by Thai massage businesses about their management problems. I think that a central organization is required to assist the Thai massage industry’.

Interviewee H3 suggested that

‘The Thai massage businesses are still having operational management problems. For me, I think that a central organization is required for consulting by Thai massage businesses about their management problems’.

Interviewee H4 also pointed out that

‘The Thai massage policy is good, but there are still problems about the operational management. The budget for supporting activities of the Thai massage industry is insufficient’.
Interviewee H5 mentioned that

‘There are many kinds of herbal products in Thailand, thus, these providers need the support of the government’.

Hence, the health specialists highlighted that the Thai massage policy is good but the operational system is still having problems. Participants also noted that the budget for supporting Thai massage activities is insufficient and there is still no central organization to consult about management problems. In Thailand, there are so many different kinds of herbal remedies and supplements so a central organization is needed to support providers.

As a result, the research finding of health specialists’ group regarding recommendations for improving Thai therapeutic massage services are summarised as follows.

1) There are some problems in the Thai massage operation systems that need to be solved.
2) The budget for supporting Thai massage activities is inadequate.
3) A central association is required, for consultations about management problems in the industry.

4.8 Summary of Research Findings for Health Specialists Group

The research findings of the health specialists group for interview questions (IQ1 – IQ7) can be recapitulated as shown in Table 8.
Table 8: Findings of IQ1 – IQ7 for Health Specialists Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IQ</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1  | The current measure related to educational qualification requirement of masseurs and competencies of Thai massage training programs are as follows.  
  - No need to study basic education for Thai massage courses;  
  - Great services as one of the key factors for businesses’ achievement;  
  - The ethics and morality;  
  - Massage experiences;  
  - The number of training hours such as at least 150 hours for basic training and 200 hours for special therapists;  
  - All therapists should be required to study about Anatomy, Philosophical concepts and law enforcement. |
| 2  | The competencies required of Thai massage therapists by Thai massage schools as shown in Table 7. |
| 3  | The significant competencies of Thai massage courses should be added as follows.  
  - Moral principles, merit, and great attitude are important for Thai massage therapists.  
  - Therapists should be required to maintain practice in Thai massage skills.  
  - Learning advanced Thai massage courses and foreign languages are vital to upgrading therapists’ career. |
| 4  | The following methods are used to evaluate Thai massage courses provided in Thai massage schools by the Ministry of Public Health and Labour department.  
  - Prior to starting work, therapists must undertake hands-on tests.  
  - Paper tests consisting of 50-100 questions should address Thai massage concepts, the 10 main lines concepts, anatomy theories and clinical processes.  
  - The ethics and moral are required for evaluations.  
  - During training hours, all masseurs would be observed by health specialists.  
  - Customers would be interviewed by managers. |
| 5  | The key requirements of Thai massage services for Thai massage therapists to assure the quality of Thai massage services as follows.  
  - All therapists should be friendly and nice to their customers;  
  - Understanding about law and ethical obligations involved in Thai massage services is important;  
  - Practicing massage and remembering rules of Thai massage are important to provide a relaxing and healing massage. |
| 6  | The significant issues to improve Thai therapeutic massage services as follows.  
  - There was no plans about competitions in Thai massage industry.  
  - There are many types of standards for Thai massaged institutions, and the curriculum and examination are also different.  
  - The Thai therapists had never reviewed their knowledge again, thus Thai masseurs should be required to review their skills and knowledge once after they graduated.  
  - Thai massage institutions required the survey system and centre institutions of Thai massage services for supporting their management. |
| 7  | The commendations for improving quality standards in Thai therapeutic massage services as follows:  
  - Some problems in the Thai massage operation system are needed to be solved.  
  - The budget for supporting Thai massage activities is inadequate.  
  - There is no central association for consulting management problems in Thai massage services. |

Source: Adapted from the data collected by in-depth interviews.
5. Data Collection and Analysis for Government Officials Group

The following section presents the data collected from government officials of the Ministry of Public Health by interview. In-depth data is reported by each interview questions (IQ1 – IQ7) as follows.

5.1 Presentation of Data for Interview Question 1 (IQ1)

| IQ 1: What training or educational qualifications should Thai therapeutic masseurs have? |
|                                                                                          |

The aim of this question is to investigate the existing training and educational requirements of Thai therapeutic massage courses provided in the Thai massage industry and also to understand the educational qualifications required for being Thai massage therapists. The research findings of this interview will assist in identifying the significant competencies of Thai masseurs in the Thai massage industry.

The participants highlighted that no specific educational background is required for Thai massage therapists. Therapists are required to take a minimum number of hours of massage training. For the Royal Thai massage and the ancient massage, all therapists are required to complete their basic training in Thai massage courses for between 100-150 hours, at the least. Regarding foot reflexology massage, massage shops require all masseurs to complete 80 hours at least. To be a specialist requires completion of a minimum of 330 - 1,300 hours of advanced training and have at least 1 year massage experience. Other features needed to be a therapist includes morality principles, good manners, a healthy body and being service-minded.
As a result, the research finding of this interview question for the government officials’ group contended that the current training and educational qualifications required for being Thai massage therapists are as follows:

1) No required educational background for studying Thai massages programs.

2) All therapists are required to take a minimum number of training hours as follows:
   - Basic Thai massage courses require 100-150 hours of Thai massage training;
   - Advanced Thai massage courses require 330 - 1,300 hours of advanced training and 1 year massage experience;
   - Foot reflexology massage require at least 80 hours training.

5.2 Presentation of Data for Interview Question 2 (IQ2)

IQ2: Which of the following competencies do you think Thai therapeutic masseurs should possess? (Refer to a set of competencies in Table 1)

The aim of this question is to investigate the required competencies, training and education of Thai masseurs in Thai massage schools regarding health, professional practice, clinical, communication therapeutic massage competencies. The research findings will assist in the implementation of quality standards in the Thai massage industry.

Regarding Health Competencies, the research findings of this group contended that the three crucial competencies are described as follows. Most interviewees
mentioned that all masseurs had to study anatomy, physiology and kinesiology principles before graduating from their schools. These subjects must be compulsory for people who want to be a masseur. The depth of content depends upon the number of hours of study (generally there are minimum hours required for basic Thai massage courses and advanced courses). The numbers of hours for basic classes are less than advanced principles so the contents of basic courses are much lighter than for advanced courses. 60% of the interviewees commented that masseurs do not need to apply nutritional and first aids concepts to clients but 20% of participants would like to apply these concepts to Thai massage courses. All participants mentioned that masseurs need to do the confirmation of the client’s physical health status prior to performing massage – such status includes, for example, blood pressure testing. 60% of participants believe masseurs must perform this step. Separately, 40% of respondents noticed that infection control practices are not required in Thai massage courses.

With respect to Professional Practice Competencies, all participants from the government officials’ group mentioned that law enforcement, morals, and ethics are very significant and must be properly practised by Thai masseurs.

In the area of Clinical Competencies, most interviewees noted that performing hydrotherapy as part of client treatment was not as imperative as clinical competencies. 80% of this group of participants mentioned that applying therapeutic exercise to customer care should be a skill possessed by therapists. 60% suggested that offering pain and stress management should be done by therapists. (To relieve stress, most therapists provided the “Thai hermit exercise”, head, neck and shoulder
massage within client treatment.) Furthermore, these participants pointed out that drawing up a client’s case management plan is necessary for advanced Thai massage. 60% of participants highlighted that the recommendations about health care are important.

Regarding Communication Competencies, working effectively with others in a shop is a key factor for therapists but participants believed that there were very few problems between colleagues. 60% of participants mentioned that communication between client and therapist is important. 60% of interviewees also noted that using the correct fundamental medical terminology should be required for advanced Thai massage treatment only; 40% of this group mentioned that it is not necessary for relaxed Thai massage as most therapists are poor in fundamental education.

For Therapeutic Massage Competencies, the research findings indicate that all therapists follow the holistic therapeutic massage framework in which massage therapists begin to massage from the bottom (feet) through to the top (head). They perform stretches, thumb presses and palm presses on the 10 Thai energy lines. The Thai massage service is provided along the entire body by using rhythmic and rocking motions to increase the body’s energy flow for balance and relaxation. The following should not be attempted by therapists: pressing by finger on Iliopsoas; the king cobra styles; advanced variation massage and “locust variation” massage, because these activities are quite dangerous and risky for basic Thai massage treatments. However, those styles are needed for specialists. Advanced neck stretching, advanced stretches and applying herbal massage are still required of therapists.
As a result, the research findings for interview question 2, for government officials, can be summarized as shown in Table 9.

Table 9: The Competencies Required of Thai Massage Therapists by Government Officials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Requirement Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Health Competencies                 | • Apply Anatomy and Physiology Principles  
• Apply Kinesiology Principles  
• Confirm the physical health status of the client  
• Practice infection control |
| Professional Practice Competencies   | • Acknowledge the legal requirements of the massage therapy profession  
• Apply professional ethics in practice and conduct |
| Clinical Competencies               | • Apply Hydrotherapy to client care  
• Apply therapeutic exercises to client care  
• Apply pain and stress management techniques to client care  
• Draw up client case management plans (necessary for advance Thai massage)  
• Recommend health care referrals |
| Communication Competencies          | • Work effectively with other staff in a Team  
• Communicate effectively with customers  
• Use basic medical terminology appropriately (necessary for advance Thai massage) |
| Therapeutic Massage Competencies    | • Work within a framework of holistic therapeutic massage  
✓ Begin massage from the bottom (feet) and move towards the top (head)  
✓ Perform stretches, thumb press, palm press on the 10 Thai energy lines  
✓ Massage the entire body by using rhythmic and rocking motions to increase the body’s energy flow for balance and relaxation  
✓ Advanced Neck Stretch  
✓ Advanced Stretches  
✓ Apply Thai herbs and massage. |

Source: Adapted from the data collected by in-depth interviews.

5.3 Presentation of Data for Interview Question 3 (IQ3)

IQ 3: Are there any skills, knowledge or attitudes that you think should be added to the above competencies?

The aim of this question is to investigate possible competencies for Thai massage therapy in the five competencies areas. The research findings could be applied to the Thai spa industry for assuring the quality of Thai therapeutic massage.
According to the findings, the government officials commented that masseurs should study advanced healing massage concepts in order to become specialists. This is a higher massage style, where therapists increase the number of training hours and work experience. English language skills are important for masseurs who want to work aboard and Thailand also is preparing for its role as one of the countries in the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). Additionally, a code of ethics for massage must be applied to all therapists.

As a result, the findings of research of the interview question 3 from the government officials group contended that significant competencies to be added are:

1) Studying advanced healing massage is essential to be a specialist.
2) Building substantial training hours in Thai massage is necessary.
3) Learning the English language is important.

5.4 Presentation Data of Interview Question 4 (IQ4)

IQ 4: How do you evaluate the Thai therapeutic massage training provided to Thai therapeutic masseurs by Thailand’s massage institutions?

The purpose of this question is to identify the current measures used to assess competency and to study proper competency standards for Thai therapeutic masseurs, related to the five areas of competencies. The competencies assessment will be valuable in implementing a quality massage industry.
The participants of this group pointed out that most therapists must undertake examinations prior to starting their actual work. The tests focus on the energy line theories within the ten main Sen Lines (of major significance in Thai massage). Assessment can be divided up as: formal, subjective tests; 80-120 multiple-choice questions; and hands-on tests with organizational experts after 1-3 months. However, evaluation indicators for massage shops differ, depending on where each examination centre is located.

As a result, the findings of this interview question for the government officials group indicate that examinations used to evaluate courses at massage schools show:

1) Most masseurs are required to be evaluated before starting employment.
2) The tests should involve the ten main lines on the human body.
3) The formal test should include 80-120 multiple-choice questions.
4) Hands-on tests are required prior to starting actual performance.
5) The evaluation indicators for massage shops differ depend on the examination centre location.

5.5 Presentation of Data for Interview Question 5 (IQ5)

IQ 5: How do you ensure that the quality standards of Thai therapeutic massage meet the requirement of clients?

The purpose of this question is to discover the existing measures of Thai massage competency and to investigate proper competency standards. The significant issues derived from this interview question can be used for quality therapeutic massage.
According to the data collected from government officials, to ensure quality standards for Thai massage services for clients requires that the massage therapy examinations are governed by the Ministry of Public Health. All masseurs must be assessed before they graduate. Massage policy must be clear and specific. Courses syllabus, guidance, locations and number of customer beds must be strictly organized by the Ministry of Public Health.

As a result, the research findings for interview question 5, for the government officials’ group, show that significant issues related to assessment of services are as follows.

1) To ensure quality standards, examinations of Thai massage services need to be governed by the Ministry of Public Health;

2) Before therapists graduate, they must be assessed for the quality of their training;

3) Thai massage policy must be clear and specific;

4) The Ministry of Public Health must manage and control course syllabus, and provide guidance for training, massage principles, the location of Thai massage shops, and the numbers of customers’ beds.
5.6 Presentation of Data for Interview Question 6 (IQ6)

**IQ 6: How do you plan to improve the quality standards of Thai therapeutic massage for practitioners to ensure Thai therapeutic massage for the international therapeutic tourism market?**

This question aims to investigate the implementation of Thai massage service to ensure quality standards for Thai therapeutic massage. It considers the five areas of competencies and other related aspects. The research findings will be used to help identify proper competencies for masseurs to improve standards and ensure the quality of Thai therapeutic massage services for the international therapeutic tourism market.

The following data is gathered from the government officials related to the implementation of Thai massage service to ensure quality standards for Thai therapeutic massage.

Interviewee G1 mentioned that

‘In my point of view, Thai massage courses have many different standards. Many educational institutions have offered Thai massage courses including the relaxing massage and healing massage. Thus, to improve the quality standards of Thai massage services, Thai massage institutions are required to use a national curriculum and they also have to ask for permission for their services location from the Ministry of Public Health. Currently, they are beginning the process of changing the name of Thai massage to “Nuad Thai”. They are also trying to set clear standards such as a minimum qualification required for Thai massage therapists. Thai massage therapists who finish Thai massage programs receive certificates. In my opinion, to
ensure the quality of standards in the Thai massage industry, a license for Thai
massage therapists should be required as well’.

Interviewee G2 commented that

‘Most people think that Thai massage is related to sexual services. It is for this
reason that the name of massage and the logo are going to change from Thai
massage to Nuad Thai’.

Interviewee G3 stated that

‘There are various Thai massage curricula provided by Thai massage institutions.
For assessment of Thai massage performance, they have many different standards
where the policy and standards criteria are not clear as well. Thus, the government
organizations are trying to make clear standards and criteria related to the quality of
Thai massage services.

Interviewee G4 pointed out that

‘At present, there are many Thai massage schools providing different kinds of Thai
massage courses. For me, I would like Thai massage institutions to be required to
use a national curriculum to improve the quality standards of Thai massage services.
In addition, for setting standards about a minimum qualification required for Thai
massage therapists, a minimum of 100 hours of relaxing massage training must be
required before starting to work in Thai massage shops’.

Interviewee G5 mentioned that

‘There are many standards provided for massage businesses, it depends on the
units to be used in each department. Thus, I would like to make a national curriculum
by meeting people involved to discuss a minimum number of massage training hours and to develop the necessary content related to Thai massage courses. Further, Thai massage businesses are seen as related to sexual services. Thus, the name of massage services and the logo are going to change from Thai massage to “Nuad Thai” as well.

Hence, the participants of this group pointed out that Thai massage courses have many different standards in the educational institutions offering Thai massage courses (in relaxing massage and healing massage). Thus, to improve service quality, massage schools must use a single central national curriculum and also obtain approval for services locations, from the Ministry of Public Health. The participants mentioned that they are beginning the process to change the name of Thai massage to “Nuad Thai” and are also trying to set clear standards such as a minimum qualification for masseurs. For instance, a minimum of 100 hours of training in relaxing massage must be completed before starting to work in Thai massage shops. Currently, Thai masseurs finishing Thai massage programs receive only certificates – licensing of therapists should be required to ensure quality standards across the industry. Regarding facilities, massage shops must be shown as offering the unique Thai massage services. Participants noted that most people think that Thai massage is related to sexual services; thus the name and logo should be changed from “Thai massage” to “Nuad Thai” and the name and logo should be registered officially with the Department of Intellectual Property (DIP) which is responsible for providing trademark patents and copyright in Thailand.

In summary, the research findings for Interview Question 7 identify the following issues as required to improving quality standards for Thai massage services:
1) Thai massage performance must meet the standards and style of Thai traditional massage.

2) There are many standards used to examine Thai massage services where the key issues depend on the assessors’ departments.

3) Identification cards for therapists who have completely passed the training need to be shown during Thai massage performance to ensure the quality of the trained masseurs.

4) Building a Thai massage logo and additional significant standards are needed.

5) A minimum of 100 hours of relaxing massage training must be satisfied before starting to work in Thai massage shops.

6) The traditional Thai massage curriculum should be provided with clear contents and be set as the national curriculum.

5.7 Presentation Data of Interview Question 7 (IQ7)

IQ 7: Would you like to add anything about Thai therapeutic massage or comment further?

The aim of this question is to revise the recommendations for improving competencies for Thai massage services, leading to implementation within the industry.
The data collected from the government officials related to the recommendations for leading to implementation to improve the competencies of Thai massage services within the TTM industry are reflected as follows.

The interviewee G1 mentioned that

‘Many Thai massage schools offer various Thai massage courses. I think that they should have to follow a national Thai massage curriculum for assuring the quality standards of Thai massage courses. Therapists should be required to complete a minimum of 100 training hours for the relaxing massage and a minimum of 300 training hours for Thai massage specialists. Further, if therapists would like to go abroad to work, they must get a proper license for Thai massage services; thus if foreigners would like to work in Thailand, they should be required to get and display the Thai massage license as well. Nowadays, people are interested in Thai massage treatment. People think that the use of herbal ingredients and massage treatments are safe and useful’.

Interviewee G2 pointed out that

‘In my point of view, currently, the Thai massage services and Thai herbal ingredients are very popular in the spa industry. In the future, I think that Thai massage and modern treatments should be combined together to serve their customers’.

Interviewee G3 commented that

‘In my opinion, I would like to have obvious regulations and marketing brands. The stability of policy is also important. Thus, Thai massage must have a unique identification and unique logo’.
Interviewee G4 stated that

‘There are many massage schools offering different kinds of Thai massage courses. The Thai massage schools should have to provide the Thai massage curriculum which is the same as the ancient Thai massage. I would like to see the traditional Thai massage provided being clear and matched to a national curriculum. I think that there are very few scientific studies of Thai massage treatment. For me, I think that all therapists should be required to earn and display a licence for Thai massage services. The Thai government should be issuing the licence for Thai massage therapists who have completed Thai massage courses and also passed the assessment of Thai massage training, to assure the quality of Thai massage services. In addition, I recommend that case studies are important for healing masseurs; and researching Thai massage is also necessary’.

Interviewee G5 mentioned that

‘For me, Thai massage standards are still not clear. There are problems about the indicators of standards and evaluation tools employed for the traditional Thai massage and Royal Thai massage because the Board of Examiners come from different institutions. I recommend that indicators of standards as a national standard for assessing Thai massage therapists should be developed. The responsible organizations have to discuss with educational institutions, businesses, and people involved in the Thai massage industry for resolving the problems of Thai massage standards. In my opinion, Thai massage courses and training should proceed in the same direction. Thai massage therapy has to be covered in the whole training process such as Thai massage courses and evidence-based training. The Thai massage certification has to reflect therapists’ skills, so therapists need to be examined and registered to classify the levels of their Thai massage skills. Further, there is very little research about Thai massage treatments’.
Hence, the government officials pointed out that, currently, there are various massage curriculums provided by public and private schools where the main aims and areas of study are different. There should be a national curriculum. Furthermore, both Thai therapists and foreigners who want to work in Thailand should be required to obtain a license for Thai massage services. Currently, Thai therapeutic massage and Thai herbal ingredients are very popular in the spa industry; in the future, it may be that both Thai massage therapy and modern therapy could be combined as an alternative remedial system. The interviewees noted that Thai herbal ingredients and treatments are useful and safe for customers. The Thai government should ensure precise laws (and enforcement), clear policies and marketing brands to define Thai massage.

Further, the interviewees also mentioned that therapists are required to complete a minimum of 330 hours of Thai massage training to become specialists. But for Thai massage therapy, there are very few scientific studies of local Thai massage therapy in this area. There appear to be problems with the indicators of standards and assessment tools for Royal Thai massage and ancient Thai massage because the Board of Examiners is derived from different institutions. Thai massage standards are still not clear; thus responsible organizations need to discuss these issues with all industry participants, to resolve the problems of Thai massage standards. One goal, for instance, may be to find a way to make the Thai massage services as unique as possible. Thai massage courses and training must work in the same direction. Thai massage courses and evidence-based Thai massage therapy need to be covered in the whole process of training. Certification of Thai therapeutic
massage skills must reflect each masseur’s skills, so masseurs need to be tested and registered to classify their skill levels. Additionally, the case studies are important for healing masseurs and Thai massage research must be undertaken continuously.

The findings for this interview question assert that the significant issues for improving the quality standards of Thai massage services are as follows.

1) There are various massage curriculums provided by public and private schools where the aims of study are different; thus there should be a national Thai massage curriculum.

2) Training of Thai massage courses and evidence-based Thai massage therapy need to be covered. For developing a national Thai massage curriculum, organizations must discuss the minimum number of training hours and identify the necessary contents.

3) Thai therapists should be required to obtain their license for Thai massage services.

4) Thai masseurs need to be tested and registered to classify their skill levels.

5) The Thai government should provide precise laws and enforcement, a clear policy and develop marketing brands to define Thai massage.

6) For Thai massage specialists, therapists are required to practise a minimum of 330 training hours.

7) For Thai massage therapy, there are very few scientific studies of local Thai massage therapy undertaken in this area.
8) There are some problems with the indicators of standards and assessment tools for Royal Thai massage and the ancient Thai massage because the Board of Examiners is derived from different institutions.

9) Thai massage courses and training must work in the same direction

10) Thai massage standards are still not clear; thus the organizations involved need to discuss ways of resolving the problems of Thai massage standards.

11) Continuous Thai massage research is necessary.

12) Case studies are important for healing masseurs.

5.8 Summary of Research Findings for Government Officials Group

Accordingly, the research findings of government officials group from interview questions (IQ1 – IQ7) can be summarized as shown in Table 10.

**Table 10: Findings of IQ1 – IQ7 for Government Officials Group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IQ</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The current training and educational qualifications required for being Thai massage therapists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Not required educational background for studying Thai massage programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• All therapists required to take a minimum number of training hours as follows:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1) Basic Thai massage courses required 100-150 hours of Thai massage training;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) Advanced Thai massage courses required 330-1,300 hours of advanced training and 1 year massage experience;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) Foot reflexology massage qualified at least 80 hours training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The competencies required of Thai massage therapists by government officials as shown in Table 9.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The significant competencies of Thai massage courses should be added as follows.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Studying advanced healing massage to be specialist is essential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Collecting of training hours in Thai massage is necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Preparing an English language is important.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10: Findings of IQ1 – IQ7 for Government Officials Group (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IQ</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 4 | The examination methods are used to evaluate Thai massage courses provided in Thai massage schools by the Ministry of Public Health and Labour department as follows.  
- Most masseurs are required for evaluations before starting their real work.  
- The tests should be involved the ten main lines on human body.  
- The formal test should be included 80-120 multiple-choice questions.  
- Hand test are required prior starting actual performance.  
- The evaluation indicators for Thai massage shops were so different which depended on the examination centre located. |
| 5 | The significant issues related to the assessment of Thai massage services are as follows.  
- To ensure the quality standards, the examinations of Thai massage services are need to be governed by the Ministry of Public Health;  
- Before therapists graduated, all therapists are required for assessment of Thai massage training.  
- Thai massage policy must be clear and unique;  
- The following issues required for the Ministry of Public Health to manage and control include the courses syllabus of Thai massage training, Thai massage guidance, the location of Thai massage shops, and numbers of customers’ beds. |
| 6 | The following issues are required for improving quality standards in the Thai massage services as follows:  
- Thai massage performance required a standard style of Thai traditional massage.  
- There are many standards used to examine Thai massage services where the key issues of examination are depended on the assessment’s departments.  
- Identification cards for therapists who completely passed the training need to be shown during Thai massage performance to ensure the quality of the trained masseurs.  
- Building a Thai massage logo and additional significant standards are needed to be concentrated.  
- A minimum of 100 hours of relaxing massage on training must be required before starting to work in Thai massage shops.  
- The traditional Thai massage curriculum should be provided in clear contents and be set as national curriculums. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IQ</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The significant issues for improving the quality standards of Thai massage services are as follows.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- There are various massage curriculums provided by public and private schools where the main aims of study were different thus they should have the national Thai massage curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Training of Thai massage courses and evidence-based Thai massage therapy need to be recovered in the whole processes. For developing a national Thai massage curriculum, the meeting of organizations involved to discuss about minimum number of Thai massage training hours and to identify the necessary contents for training of Thai massage therapists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Thai therapists should be required to identify the license for Thai massage services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Thai masseurs need to be tested and registered to classify their skill levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Thai government should provide the precise law enforcements; obvious policy and marketing brands to identify Thai massage definition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- For Thai massage specialists, therapists are required to practice a minimum of 330 training hours.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- For Thai massage therapy, there are very few scientific studies of local Thai massage therapy undertaken in this area.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- There are some problems with the indicators of standards and assessment tools on the Royal Thai massage and the ancient Thai massage because of the board of examiner derived from different institutions.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Thai massage courses and training must provide in the same direction</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Thai massage standard is still not clear thus the organizations involved need to discuss for resolving the problems of Thai massage standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The Thai massage research is necessary continuously.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Case studies are important for healing masseurs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from the data collected by in-depth interviews.
Appendix 2: The Interview Instrument (English Version)

Interview Instrument

“A Strategy to Implement Quality Assurance in the Thai Therapeutic Massage Industry for Economic Development”

Research Questions

The proposed research is underpinned by three basic research questions:

1. What is the current measure of competency for Thai therapeutic massage?
2. What competency standards are appropriate to assure the quality of Thai therapeutic massage?
3. How might competency standard of Thai therapeutic massage be implemented?
Group 1: Interview questions for Thai therapeutic masseurs

1) What training or educational qualifications have you completed to become a Thai therapeutic masseur?

2) Which of the following did your training include?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health Competencies</td>
<td>• Apply Anatomy and Physiology Principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply Kinesiology Principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply Nutritional Concepts</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply first aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Confirm the physical health status of the client</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Practice infection control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Practice Competencies</td>
<td>• Acknowledge the legal requirements of the massage therapy profession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply professional ethics in practice and conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Competencies</td>
<td>• Apply Hydrotherapy to client care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply therapeutic exercises to client care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply pain and stress management techniques to client care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Draw up client case management plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Recommend health care referrals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Competencies</td>
<td>• Work effectively with other staff in a Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Communicate effectively with customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use basic medical terminology appropriately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Therapeutic Massage Competencies</td>
<td>• Work within a framework of holistic therapeutic massage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Practice the principles and Thai therapeutic massage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td> Start the massage from the side of the body and then throughout the core of the body by twisting and flipping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td> Begin massage from the bottom (feet) and move towards the top (head)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td> Perform stretches, thumb press, palm press on the 10 Thai energy lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td> Massage the entire body by using rhythmic and rocking motions to increase the body's energy flow for balance and relaxation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td> Advanced Variation: Finger Press Iliopsoas</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td> Advanced Variation: The King Cobra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td> Advanced Variation for More Flexible Clients</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td> Advanced Locust Variation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td> Advanced Neck Stretch</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td> Advanced Stretches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td> Apply Thai herbs and massage.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Apfelbaum (2003); College of Massage Therapists of Ontario (2006); Department of Education and Training (2012); Salguero (2004); Salguero (2007); Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (2017).
3) Are there reasons why any of the above competencies that you think should NOT be included in your training?

4) Are there any skills, knowledge or attitudes that you think should be added to the above competencies?

5) How do you evaluate the success of massage treatment programs provided to clients?

6) How do you think your work as a masseur might be improved?

7) Would you like to add anything about Thai therapeutic massage or comment further?
Group 2: Interview questions for the Thai spa managers

1) What training or educational qualifications do you require your Thai therapeutic masseurs to have?

2) Which of the following do you require your Thai therapeutic masseurs to demonstrate?

<table>
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<td></td>
<td>• Confirm the physical health status of the client</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Practice infection control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Practice</td>
<td>• Acknowledge the legal requirements of the massage therapy profession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competencies</td>
<td>• Apply professional ethics in practice and conduct</td>
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Source: Adapted from Apfelbaum (2003); College of Massage Therapists of Ontario (2006); Department of Education and Training (2012); Salguero (2004); Salguero (2007); Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (2017).
3) Are there reasons why any of the above competencies that you think should NOT be included in your masseurs' training?

4) Are there any skills, knowledge or attitudes that you think should be added to the above competencies?

5) How do you evaluate the success of massage treatment provided to clients by your staff?

6) How do you think your staff massage services might be improved?

7) Would you like to add anything about Thai therapeutic massage or comment further?
Group 3: Interview questions for Health Specialists and Government Officials

1) What training or educational qualifications should Thai therapeutic masseurs have?

2) Which of the following competencies do you think Thai therapeutic masseurs should possess?

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<td>Thai energy lines</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and relaxation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td> Advanced Variation: Finger Press Iliopsoas</td>
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<td> Advanced Variation: The King Cobra</td>
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<td> Advanced Variation for More Flexible Clients</td>
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<td> Advanced Locust Variation</td>
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<td> Advanced Neck Stretch</td>
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<td> Advanced Stretches</td>
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<td></td>
<td> Apply Thai herbs and massage.</td>
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Source: Adapted from Apfelbaum (2003); College of Massage Therapists of Ontario (2006); Department of Education and Training (2012); Salguero (2004); Salguero (2007); Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (2017).
3) Are there any skills, knowledge or attitudes that you think should be added to the above competencies?

4) How do you evaluate the Thai therapeutic massage training provided to Thai therapeutic masseurs by Thailand’s massage institutions?

5) How do you ensure that the quality standard of Thai therapeutic massage meet the requirement of clients?

6) How do you plan to improve the quality standard of Thai therapeutic massage for practitioners to ensure Thai therapeutic massage for the international therapeutic tourism market?

7) Would you like to add anything about Thai therapeutic massage or comment further?
Appendix 3: The Interview Instrument (Thai Version)

เครื่องมือการวิจัย

“กลยุทธ์สำหรับการดำเนินการเพื่อการประกันคุณภาพในอุตสาหกรรมการนวดแผนไทยเพื่อการพัฒนาเศรษฐกิจ (A Strategy to Implement Quality Assurance in the Thai Therapeutic Massage Industry for Economic Development)”

คำถามเพื่อการวิจัย

การวิจัยครั้งนี้เป็นการศึกษาภายใต้คำถามวิจัยทั้งสามข้อ ดังต่อไปนี้

1. อะไรคือการวัดสมรรถนะขั้นพื้นฐานปัจจุบันของการนวดแผนไทย

2. อะไรคือมาตรฐานของสมรรถนะขั้นพื้นฐานที่เหมาะสมเพื่อสร้างความมั่นใจว่าการนวดแผนไทยมีคุณภาพ

3. ขั้นตอนปฏิบัติในการนำมาตรฐานของสมรรถนะขั้นพื้นฐานที่เหมาะสมเหล่านี้ไปใช้นั้นควรมีวิธีการดำเนินการอย่างไรบ้าง
กลุ่มที่ 1: คำถามเพื่อการสัมภาษณ์สำหรับพนักงานนวดแผนไทย

1) ท่านเคยได้รับการฝึกอบรมหรือเคยทำกิจกรรมเกี่ยวกับการนวดแผนไทยโดยทั่วไป มาก่อนที่จะมาเป็นพนักงานนวดแผนไทย

2) ข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับสมรรถนะต่างๆ ในตารางต่อไปนี้ ท่านเคยได้รับการฝึกอบรมหรือไม่

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ตัวอย่างต่อไปนี้คือเทคนิคการฝึกปฏิบัติในเบื้องต้นสำหรับการนวดแผนไทย:

- มีการเริ่มต้นการนวดจากด้านข้างของลำตัวของลูกค้า สู่ไหล่ไปจนตลอดร่างกาย โดยใช้หลักการจากแบบดีวิชัน นิวเคลียลส์
- มีการเริ่มต้นการนวดจากด้านข้างของลำตัวของลูกค้า สู่ไหล่ไปจนตลอดร่างกาย โดยใช้หลักการจากแบบดีวิชัน นิวเคลียลส์
- มีการใช้หลักการของทางกายภาพ การนวดด้วยมือ 10 หลักการ ของทางกายภาพ (The 10 Thai energy lines)
- มีการใช้หลักการของทางกายภาพ การนวดด้วยมือ 10 หลักการ ของทางกายภาพ (The 10 Thai energy lines)
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3) ท่านมีความคิดเห็นและเหตุผลอย่างไรเกี่ยวกับข้อมูลสมรรถนะต่างๆในตารางข้างต้น ที่ท่านคิดว่าไม่ควรนำมาใช้สำหรับการฝึกอบรมการนวดแผนไทยขั้นพื้นฐาน
4) ท่านมีความรู้ หรือทักษะที่ท่านคิดว่าควรจะมีเพิ่มเติมจากข้อมูลที่ท่านมีสมรรถนะต่างๆในตารางข้างต้นเพื่อใช้สำหรับการฝึกอบรมการนวดแผนไทยขั้นพื้นฐาน
5) ท่านมีวิธีการประเมินหรือวัดความสำเร็จสำหรับโปรแกรมการนวดแผนไทยที่ท่านให้บริการแก่ลูกค้าอย่างไรบ้าง
6) ในฐานะพนักงานนวดแผนไทย ท่านคิดว่าการนวดแผนไทยควรจะมีการพัฒนาหรือปรับปรุงอย่างไรบ้าง
7) ท่านมีความคิดเห็นหรือข้อเสนอแนะเพิ่มเติมเกี่ยวกับการนวดแผนไทยอย่างไรบ้าง
กลุ่มที่ 2: ค่าสมบัติการสัมภาษณ์สำหรับผู้จัดการร้านนวดแผนไทย

1) คุณสมบัติหรือการศึกษาที่วางที่ทำก่อนหน้าไว้ที่นั่นคือค่อยมีค่าสมบัติการเป็นพนักงานนวดแผนไทยของร้านนวดแผนไทย

2) ข้อมูลในตารางที่ไปนี้ ข้อไหนบางที่ทำเกิดความจำเป็นค่อยมีค่าสมบัติพนักงานนวดแผนไทยของร้านนวดแผนไทย

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<td>- มีการปฏิบัติตามกฎหมายอาชีพนวดแผนไทย&lt;br&gt;- มีการปฏิบัติตามระเบียบปฏิบัติที่กำหนดไว้</td>
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3) ท่านมีความคิดเห็นและเหตุผลอย่างไรเกี่ยวกับข้อมูลสมรรถนะต่างๆในตารางข้างต้น ที่ท่านคิดว่าไม่ควรนำมาใช้สำหรับการฝึกอบรมการนวดแผนไทยขั้นพื้นฐาน

4) ท่านคิดว่าควรทำอย่างไรบ้าง ที่ท่านคิดว่าควรที่จะต้องเพิ่มเติมจากข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับสมรรถนะต่างๆในตารางข้างต้นเพื่อใช้สำหรับการฝึกอบรมการนวดแผนไทยขั้นพื้นฐาน

5) ท่านมีวิธีการประเมินหรือวัดความสามารถของท่านให้บริการนวดแผนไทยแก่ลูกค้าของท่าน ที่ท่านว่าควรเพิ่มเติมจากข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับสมรรถนะต่างๆในตารางข้างต้นเพื่อใช้สำหรับการฝึกอบรมการนวดแผนไทยขั้นพื้นฐาน

6) ท่านคิดว่า พนักงานนวดแผนไทยของท่านควรจะมีการพัฒนา และปรับปรุงอย่างไรให้บริการอย่างไรบ้าง

7) ท่านมีความคิดเห็นหรือข้อเสนอแนะเพิ่มเติมเกี่ยวกับการนวดแผนไทย อย่างไรบ้าง
ข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับสมรรถนะต่างๆ ในการทำงานของพนักงานนวดแผนไทย คุณสมบัติทางการฝึกอบรมหรือการศึกษา อะไรบ้างสำหรับพนักงานนวดแผนไทยที่จำเป็นต้องมีก่อนที่จะไปประกอบอาชีพเป็นพนักงานนวดแผนไทย

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4) ท่านมีวิธีการประเมินหรือวัดความสำเร็จของผู้เข้ารับการฝึกอบรมการนวดแผนไทยสำหรับพนักงานนวดแผนไทยของสถาบันการศึกษาอย่างไรบ้าง

5) ท่านจะมีวิธีใดดีอย่างไรว่า การนวดแผนไทยมีคุณภาพมาตรฐานเพียงพอในการให้บริการที่ตรงกับต้องการของลูกค้า

6) จากความคิดเห็นของท่าน ท่านคิดว่า ควรมีกลยุทธ์หรือการวางแผนอย่างไรในการที่จะพัฒนาปรับปรุงคุณภาพมาตรฐานของการนวดแผนไทย สำหรับพนักงานนวดแผนไทย เพื่อสร้างความเชื่อมั่นในกับการนวดแผนไทยในตลาดการท่องเที่ยวสากล

7) ท่านมีความคิดเห็นหรือข้อเสนอแนะเพิ่มเติมเกี่ยวกับการนวดแผนไทยอย่างไรบ้าง
Appendix 4: Information Sheet & Consent Form (English Version)

INFORMATION SHEET

Name of project

A Strategy to Implement Quality Assurance in the Thai Therapeutic Massage Industry for Economic Development

Introduction

My name is Anuchit Sangthong, I am studying for a Doctor of Business Administration in School of Business at Southern Cross University, Australia. I am conducting research as part of requirement for a Doctor of Business Administration program. My research project is titled “A Strategy to Implement Quality Assurance in the Thai Therapeutic Massage Industry for Economic Development”.

What is this research?

The purpose of this research is to develop quality standards for Thai therapeutic massage to be employed by the Thai spa industry across Thailand. Thus, the proposed research will utilize the relevance and application of core competencies of Thai therapeutic massage in luxury hotels in Bangkok. This research focuses on the quality control of the Thai massage industry to improve the quality outcomes of Thai therapeutic massage with the implementation of national Thai therapeutic massage competency standards for practitioners. It is anticipated that national Thai therapeutic massage competency standards might develop Thai therapeutic massage securely in the international therapeutic tourism market thereby enhancing the Thai economy.

What does this research involve?

The research will apply a qualitative research methodology to explore quality issues and concerns about Thai therapeutic massage and to define a set of Thai therapeutic massage core competencies for the diverse contexts of the Thai spa industry. The research will take place in the Bangkok area. The research will employ face-to-face in depth interviews to collect data from the key stakeholders in the Thai massage services. The researcher will use the semi-structure interview questions to gather in-depth information in the Thai Language.

The process of interview will be only one participant at a time in an interview session with the researcher. The interview process will take place in the interviewees’ offices or locations the interviewees think suitable. The interview procedure will take about 45 minutes to 1 hour. Information from the interview will be recorded in to a voice recorder if participants agree. Researcher hope to understand the significant information in terms of the overall performance and management which are concerned with competency standards of the Thai massage services in term of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The outcomes are expected to inform the Thai government of appropriate content and implementation for a framework of Thai therapeutic massage competencies to assure the quality of Thai therapeutic massage as an export industry for visitors to Thailand.
My responsibilities to my participants

Any information that is obtained in connection with this research and that can be identified with subjects will remain confidential and anonymous. Interviews will be tape recorded only after obtaining you approval. Tapes and transcription will be locked in a secure and safe location. The tapes will be erased and transcriptions will be shredded in the time prior determined by the ethics committee of this university. Finally, the researcher must respect the privacy, confidentiality and anonymity of subject, and protect the confidentiality of any sensitive information.

Your participants’ responsibilities for this research

Researcher would appreciate it if you would fully disclose any information, which could affect the value of the research. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue participants at any time. As this study is of a voluntary nature and a participant in the research you have decided to volunteer your time and assist in the research. The interview process will take time around 45 minutes to 1 hour and you may stop the interview at any time if you do not wish to continue. Any audio recording will be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study.

The likelihood and form of dissemination of the research results, including publication

The results of this study may be published in a peer-reviewed journal and presented at conferences, but only group data will be reported. Data obtained from this study will be kept in the researcher office and will be disposed of after 7 years retention as a University research material.

Participant’s Consent – Is consent to this research implicit or explicit?

All participants are required to return the consent form to the researcher before the interview is conducted.

Inquiries

If you have any questions, we expect you to ask us. If you have any additional questions at any time please ask:

Supervisor detail
Dr. Veerapppan Jayaraman

Researcher detail
Anuchit Sangthong

Feedback

All participants are entitled to receive feedback from this study. If you intend to receive a summary of the result of this study, please provide your email and address on the consent form.

Has this research been approved by Southern Cross University? (Include the following statement)

This research is conducted as part of the requirement of DBA program.
Complaints about the research/researchers

If you have concerns about the ethical conduct of this research or the researchers, the following procedure should occur.

Write to the following:

The Ethics Complaints Officer
Southern Cross University
PO Box 157
Lismore NSW 2480
Email: ethics.lismore@scu.edu.au

All information is confidential and will be handled as soon as possible.
The Consent Form is given to and retained by the Southern Cross University researcher for their records. The Information Sheet is kept by the participant.

The participant may request a copy of their consent form.

Title of research project: A Strategy to Implement Quality Assurance in the Thai Therapeutic Massage Industry for Economic Development

Name of researcher: Anuchit Sangthong

Tick the box that applies, sign and date and give to the researcher

I agree to take part in the Southern Cross University research project specified above. Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand the information about my participation in the research project, which has been provided to me by the researchers. Yes ☐ No ☐

I agree to be interviewed by the researcher. Yes ☐ No ☐

I agree to allow the interview to be *audio-taped and/or *video-taped. Yes ☐ No ☐

I agree to make myself available for further interview if required. Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand that my participation is voluntary and I understand that I can cease my participation at any time. Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand that my participation in this research will be treated with confidentiality. Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand that any information that may identify me will be de-identified at the time of analysis of any data. Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand that no identifying information will be disclosed or published. Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand that all information gathered in this research will be kept confidentially for 7 years at the University. Yes ☐ No ☐

I am aware that I can contact the researchers at any time with any queries. Their contact details are provided to me. Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand that this research project has been approved by the SCU Human Research Ethics Committee. Yes ☐ No ☐

Participants name: ____________________________________________

Participants signature: ____________________________________________

Date: _______________________________________________________

☐ Please tick this box and provide your email or mail address below if you wish to receive a summary of the results:

Email: _______________________________________________________

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Appendix 5: Information Sheet & Consent Form (Thai Version)

รายละเอียดข้อมูล (INFORMATION SHEET)

หัวข้องานวิจัย

“กลยุทธ์สำหรับการดำเนินการเพื่อการประกันคุณภาพในอุตสาหกรรมการนวดแผนไทยเพื่อการพัฒนาเศรษฐกิจ
(A Strategy to Implement Quality Assurance in the Thai Therapeutic Massage Industry for Economic Development)”

รายละเอียดของผู้วิจัย

กระแสชื่อ นายอนุชิต แสงทอง ปัจจุบันกำลังศึกษาปริญญาเอก ด้านการบริหารจัดการธุรกิจ ณ Southern Cross University ประเทศออสเตรเลีย ในการที่จะดำเนินการวิจัยในครั้งนี้ถือเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของโปรแกรมปริญญาเอกด้านการบริหารธุรกิจ ซึ่งกระแสชื่อจะศึกษาหัวข้อเรื่อง “กลยุทธ์สำหรับการดำเนินการเพื่อการประกันคุณภาพในอุตสาหกรรมการนวดแผนไทย ทั้งนี้เพื่อช่วยในการพัฒนาเศรษฐกิจของประเทศ

วรรณชาติของการวิจัย

การวิจัยในครั้งนี้ มีเป้าหมายเพื่อการพัฒนามาตรฐานคุณภาพ สำหรับ การนวดแผนไทยอันเป็นส่วนที่สำคัญของอุตสาหกรรมการนวดแผนไทย ซึ่งในหัวข้อเรื่องนี้จะมุ่งเน้นถึง สมรรถนะหลักขั้นพื้นฐาน ของการนวดแผนไทย (Core competencies of Thai therapeutic massage) ที่ให้บริการในร้านนวดแผนไทยที่ให้เปิดบริการในเขตพื้นที่กรุงเทพมหานครฯ โดยจะมุ่งเน้นและให้ความสำคัญในการควบคุมคุณภาพของอุตสาหกรรมนวดแผนไทย ทั้งนี้เป็นเป้าหมายเพื่อการปรับปรุงมาตรฐานอุตสาหกรรมนวดแผนไทย ซึ่งทำให้สามารถพัฒนา มาตรฐานระดับนานาชาติในอุตสาหกรรมการนวดแผนไทย ทั้งนี้เพื่อสนับสนุนให้การพัฒนาเป็นมาตรฐานระดับนานาชาติในอุตสาหกรรมการนวดแผนไทยในอนาคตต่อไป
กระบวนการวิจัย

ในการที่จะวิจัยครั้งนี้ มีการใช้กระบวนการวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพมาใช้เพื่อการศึกษาประเด็นที่สำคัญของเนื้อหาที่เกี่ยวข้องกับสมรรถนะหลักขั้นพื้นฐานของการนวดแผนไทยที่มีอยู่ในปัจจุบัน ซึ่งการวิจัยจะเก็บข้อมูลจากผู้ที่เกี่ยวข้องในเขตพื้นที่กรุงเทพมหานคร โดยใช้การสัมภาษณ์เป็นเครื่องมือในการเก็บข้อมูลครั้งนี้ โดยลักษณะของการสัมภาษณ์เป็นแบบเชิงลึกรายบุคคลในส่วนเด่น เป็นเวลาประมาณ 45 นาทีถึง 1 ชั่วโมง โดยประมาณ ซึ่งในการสัมภาษณ์ครั้งนี้จะเป็นคำถามที่ควรมั่นใจว่าความคิดเห็นของท่านในส่วนที่เกี่ยวข้องกับอุตสาหกรรมนวดแผนไทยในเขตกรุงเทพมหานครฯ ทั้งนี้ในการที่จะวิจัยครั้งนี้ ข้อมูลการสัมภาษณ์ดังกล่าวจะถูกเก็บและบันทึกในเครื่องบันทึกเสียง หากผู้ให้สัมภาษณ์ยินยอม

ผู้ที่ทำการวิจัยหวังว่าข้อมูลที่สำคัญดังกล่าวจะเป็นประโยชน์ต่อการพัฒนาทักษะ ความรู้ และทัศนคติ และคาดหวังว่าผลลัพธ์ที่ได้จากการสัมภาษณ์จะนำไปสู่การดำเนินการพัฒนาการนวดแผนไทยในส่วนที่เกี่ยวข้อง ทั้งนี้เพื่อการปรับปรุงคุณภาพของการนวดแผนไทยในฐานะที่เป็นอุตสาหกรรมสำคัญ

ความรับผิดชอบของผู้เข้าร่วมการวิจัย

ข้อมูลที่ได้มานั้นจะถูกนำมาเชื่อมโยงกับการวิจัยและถูกนำมาระบุเพื่อการวิเคราะห์เท่านั้น โดยในส่วนของรายละเอียดการสัมภาษณ์จะไม่มีการระบุชื่อของผู้ให้สัมภาษณ์ลงในเอกสารหรือทำการใดๆ ที่เป็นการรวบรวม เกี่ยวกับเรื่องส่วนตัว และในการสัมภาษณ์นั้น การบันทึกเสียงจะถูกกระทำภายใต้การอนุญาตของผู้ให้สัมภาษณ์เท่านั้น ซึ่งการบันทึกเสียงจะขัดหลักธรรมชาติที่เกี่ยวข้องกับสถานที่ที่ปลอดภัย หากผู้ให้สัมภาษณ์ยินยอม ข้อมูลการบันทึกเสียงระหว่างการสัมภาษณ์จะถูกเก็บไว้ในสถานที่ที่ปลอดภัย หากผู้ให้สัมภาษณ์ยินยอม ข้อมูลการบันทึกเสียงระหว่างการสัมภาษณ์จะถูกเก็บไว้ในสถานที่ที่ปลอดภัย หากผู้ให้สัมภาษณ์ยินยอม ข้อมูลการบันทึกเสียงระหว่างการสัมภาษณ์จะถูกเก็บไว้ในสถานที่ที่ปลอดภัย หากผู้ให้สัมภาษณ์ยินยอม ข้อมูลการบันทึกเสียงระหว่างการสัมภาษณ์จะถูกเก็บไว้ในสถานที่ที่ปลอดภัย หากผู้ให้สัมภาษณ์ยินยอม ข้อมูลการบันทึกเสียงระหว่างการสัมภาษณ์จะถูกเก็บไว้ในสถานที่ที่ปลอดภัย หากผู้ให้สัมภาษณ์ยินยอม ข้อมูลการบันทึกเสียงระหว่างการสัมภาษณ์จะถูกเก็บไว้ในสถานที่ที่ปลอดภัย หากผู้ให้สัมภาษณ์ยินยอม ข้อมูลการบันทึกเสียงระหว่างการสัมภาษณ์จะถูกเก็บไว้ในสถานที่ที่ปลอดภัย หากผู้ให้สัมภาษณ์ยินยอม ข้อมูลการบันทึกเสียงระหว่างการสัมภาษณ์จะถูกเก็บไว้ในสถานที่ที่ปลอดภัย หากผู้ให้สัมภาษณ์ยินยอม ข้อมูลการบันทึกเสียงระหว่างการสัมภาษณ์จะถูกเก็บไว้ในสถานที่ที่ปลอดภัย หากผู้ให้สัมภาษณ์ยินยอม ข้อมูลการบันทึกเสียงระหว่างการสัมภาษณ์จะถูกเก็บไว้ในสถานที่ที่ปลอดภัย หากผู้ให้สัมภาษณ์ยินยอม ข้อมูลการบันทึกเสียงระหว่างการสัมภาษณ์จะถูกเก็บไว้ในสถานที่ที่ปลอดภัย หากผู้ให้สัมภาษณ์ยินยอม ข้อมูลการบันทึกเสียงระหว่างการสัมภาษณ์จะถูกเก็บไว้ในสถานที่ที่ปลอดภัย หากผู้ให้สัมภาษณ์ยินยอม ข้อมูลการบันทึกเสียงระหว่างการสัมภาษณ์จะถูกเก็บไว้ในสถานที่ที่ปลอดภัย หากผู้ให้สัมภาษณ์ยินยอม ข้อมูลการบันทึกเสียงระหว่างการสัมภาษณ์จะถูกเก็บไว้ในสถานที่ที่ปลอดภัย หากผู้ให้สัมภาษณ์ยินยอม ข้อมูลการบันทึกเสียงระหว่างการสัมภาษณ์จะถูกเก็บไว้ในสถานที่ที่ปลอดภัย หากผู้ให้สัมภาษณ์ยินยอม ข้อมูลการบันทึกเสียงระหว่างการสัมภาษณ์จะถูกเก็บไว้ในสถานที่ที่ปลอดภัย หากผู้ให้สัมภาษณ์ยินยอม ข้อมูลการบันทึกเสียงระหว่างการสัมภาษณ์จะถูกเก็บไว้ในสถานที่ที่ปลอดภัย หากผู้ให้สัมภาษณ์ยินยอม ข้อมูลการบันทึกเสียงระหว่างการสัมภาษณ์จะถูกเก็บไว้ในสถานที่ที่ปลอดภัย หากผู้ให้สัมภาษณ์ยินยอม ข้อมูลการบันทึกเสียงระหว่างการสัมภาษณ์จะถูกเก็บไว้ในสถานที่ที่ปลอดภัย หากผู้ให้สัมภาษณ์ยินยอม ข้อมูลการบันทึกเสียงระหว่างการสัมภาษณ์จะถูกเก็บไว้ในสถานที่ที่ปลอดภัย หากผู้ให้ส้
ความเป็นไปได้ของรูปแบบการเปิดเผยผลการวิจัยในสาธารณะประกอบไปด้วย

ผลการวิจัยในครั้งนี้อาจถูกเปิดเผยในวารสารหรืองานการประชุม ซึ่งจะรายงานเฉพาะข้อมูลรายกลุ่ม ข้อมูลจากการเก็บข้อมูลในการวิจัยในครั้งนี้จะถูกเก็บรักษาในสำนักงานของผู้วิจัย และจะถูกทำลายภายใน 7 ปี ในฐานะเป็นทรัพย์สินของทางมหาวิทยาลัย

การยินยอมของผู้เข้าร่วมการวิจัย

ผู้เข้าร่วมการวิจัยทุกคนจะต้องส่งคืนเอกสารการยินยอมเข้าร่วมการวิจัยให้กับผู้วิจัยก่อนการดำเนินการสัมภาษณ์ทุกครั้ง

สอบถามข้อมูล

ถ้าคุณมีข้อข้องใจหรือคำถามใดๆ ก็ตามสามารถสอบถามผู้สัมภาษณ์ได้ตลอดเวลา

รายละเอียดเกี่ยวกับอาจารย์ที่ปรึกษา

ดร. วีระพัน จายารามัน (Dr. Veerappan Jayaraman)
โทรศัพท์: (61) 2 81142500 หรืออีเมล์ vjayaraman@scbit.edu.au

รายละเอียดเกี่ยวกับผู้วิจัย

นายอนุชิต แสงทอง (Mr. Anuchit Sangthong)
โทรศัพท์: (61) 2 81142500 หรือ อีเมล์ a.sangthong.10@student.scu.edu.au

ข้อสรุปผลการวิจัย

ผู้เข้าร่วมการวิจัยทุกท่านมีสิทธิ์ขอรับผลการวิจัยจากการศึกษาในครั้งนี้ หากผู้เข้าร่วมการวิจัยมีความประสงค์จะขอรับผลการวิจัยในครั้งนี้ กรุณากรอกและลงลายมือชื่อในเอกสารยินยอม (Consent form)
การวิจัยในครั้งนี้ได้ผ่านการเห็นชอบจากคณะกรรมการมหาวิทยาลัยแล้ว

งานวิจัยนี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของโปรแกรมปริญญาเอกด้านบริหารธุรกิจ ซึ่งงานวิจัยได้ผ่านการตรวจสอบและยอมรับจากคณะกรรมการด้านการวิจัยด้านสิทธิมนุษยชนจาก Southern Cross University เรียบร้อยแล้ว หมายเลขที่ผ่านการตรวจของงานวิจัย (Approval Number) คือ ECN-12-309

ข้อร้องเรียนเกี่ยวกับงานวิจัย / ผู้วิจัย

หากท่านกังวลเกี่ยวกับการจัดการทางจริยธรรม หรือข้อมูลของงานวิจัยในครั้งนี้ สามารถเขียนข้อร้องเรียนที่เกิดขึ้นและส่งมาที่ต่อไปนี้

The Ethics Complaints Officer
Southern Cross University
PO Box 157
Lismore, NSW 2480
Email: ethics.lismore@scu.edu.au

ข้อมูลทั้งหมดจะถูกถือเป็นความลับ และจะเก็บไว้หันที่สามารถเป็นไปได้
The Consent Form is given to and retained by the Southern Cross University researcher for their records. The Information Sheet is kept by the participant.

The participant may request a copy of their consent form.

Title of research project: A Strategy to Implement Quality Assurance in the Thai Therapeutic Massage Industry for Economic Development

Name of researcher: Anuchit Sangthong

Tick the box that applies, sign and date and give to the researcher

I agree to take part in the Southern Cross University research project specified above.

I understand the information about my participation in the research project, which has been provided to me by the researchers.

I agree to be interviewed by the researcher.

I agree to allow the interview to be *audio-taped and/or *video-taped.

I agree to make myself available for further interview if required.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and I understand that I can cease my participation at any time.

I understand that my participation in this research will be treated with confidentiality.

I understand that any information that may identify me will be de-identified at the time of analysis of any data.

I understand that no identifying information will be disclosed or published.

I understand that all information gathered in this research will be kept confidentially for 7 years at the University.

I am aware that I can contact the researchers at any time with any queries. Their contact details are provided to me.

I understand that this research project has been approved by the SCU Human Research Ethics Committee.

Participant name: _______________________

Participants signature: _______________________

Date: _______________________

If you wish to receive a summary of the results, please tick this box and provide your email or mail address below:

Email: _______________________

Southern Cross University
Appendix 6: Ethical Considerations

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HREC)
HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS SUB-COMMITTEE (HRESC)

NOTIFICATION

To: Dr Veerappan Jayaraman/Anuchit Sangthong
Southern Cross Business School
vjayaram@sccit.edu.au, a.sangthong.10@student.sou.edu.au

From: Secretary, Human Research Ethics Committee
Division of Research, R. Block

Date: 11 December 2012

Project name: A Strategy to Implement Quality Assurance in the Thai Therapeutic Massage Industry for Economic Development

Approval Number ECN-12-309

The Southern Cross University Human Research Ethics Committee has established, in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research – Section 5/Processes of Research Governance and Ethical Review, a procedure for expedited review and ratification by a delegated authority of the HREC.

Thank you for your expedited ethics application. This has been considered by the HRREC, Gold Coast/Tweed Heads campus and is approved.

All ethics approvals are subject to standard conditions of approval. These should be noted by researchers as there is compliance and monitoring advice included in these conditions.

Ma Sue Kelly
HREC Administration
T: (02) 6626 9139
E: ethics.labor@scu.edu.au

Professor Bill Boyd
Chair, HREC
T: (02) 6620 3569
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HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HREC)
HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS SUB-COMMITTEE (HRESC)

STANDARD CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL FOR ALL ETHICALLY APPROVED RESEARCH PROJECTS

The following standard conditions of approval are mandatory for all research projects which have been approved by the HREC or a HRESC and have received an ethics approval number.

All reporting is to be submitted through the Human Research Ethics Office, either at Lismore, Coffs Harbour or Grafton. The email addresses are:
ethics.lismore@scu.edu.au
ethics.coffs@scu.edu.au
ethics.grafton@scu.edu.au

Forms for annual reports, renewals, completions and changes of protocol are available at the website;

Standard Conditions in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (National Statement) (NS).

1. Monitoring
   NS 5.5.1 – 5.5.10

   Responsibility for ensuring that research is suitably monitored lies with the institution under which the research is conducted. Mechanisms for monitoring can include:
   (a) reports from researchers;
   (b) reports from independent agencies (such as a data and safety monitoring board);
   (c) review of adverse event reports;
   (d) random inspections of research sites, data, or consent documentation; and
   (e) interviews with research participants or other forms of feedback from them.

2. Approvals
   (a) All ethics approvals are valid for 12 months unless specified otherwise. If research is continuing after 12 months, then the ethics approval MUST be renewed. Complete the Annual Report Renewal form and send to the ethics office.

   (b) NS 5.5.5

   The researcher’s will provide a report every 12 months on the progress to date or outcome in the case of completed research including detail about:
   (Maintenance and security of the research data.)