

**THE FACTORS INFLUENCING PEOPLE TO STAY AT
RETIREMENT HOME**

The logo of Mahidol University is a circular emblem. It features a central golden figure, likely a deity or a royal figure, set against a blue background. The figure is surrounded by a golden border containing Thai script. The entire emblem is rendered in a light, semi-transparent style.

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RETIREMENT HOME**

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ABSTRACT

Due to the increasing aging society, the retirement home seems to be a promising trend in the future. Many people do not plan to get marry or to have kid, and they prepare to stay at retirement home when they are retired. Presently the retirement home concept is already popular in many countries especially in Europe. For Thailand, this concept is relatively new but starting to be accepted gradually. The purpose of this qualitative study is to understand the factors influencing Thai people to stay at the retirement home. The data collected through interviewing three retirement home owners and seven people who have an intention to stay at retirement home. The findings suggest several influencing factors which could be grouped as pushing and pulling factors. Pushing factors are including health problem, need of friend/community, and cannot get help. Pulling factors were security, quality of facilities and personnel, location, and cost. The findings resemble some research results in other countries such as USA and Australia. The result further ensures that Thai society is becoming more open to this concept due to various factors, and the retirement home could be a popular trend and interesting investment in Thailand.

KEY WORDS: Retirement home/ Nursing home/ Residential home/ Recovering center/
Aging society

28 pages

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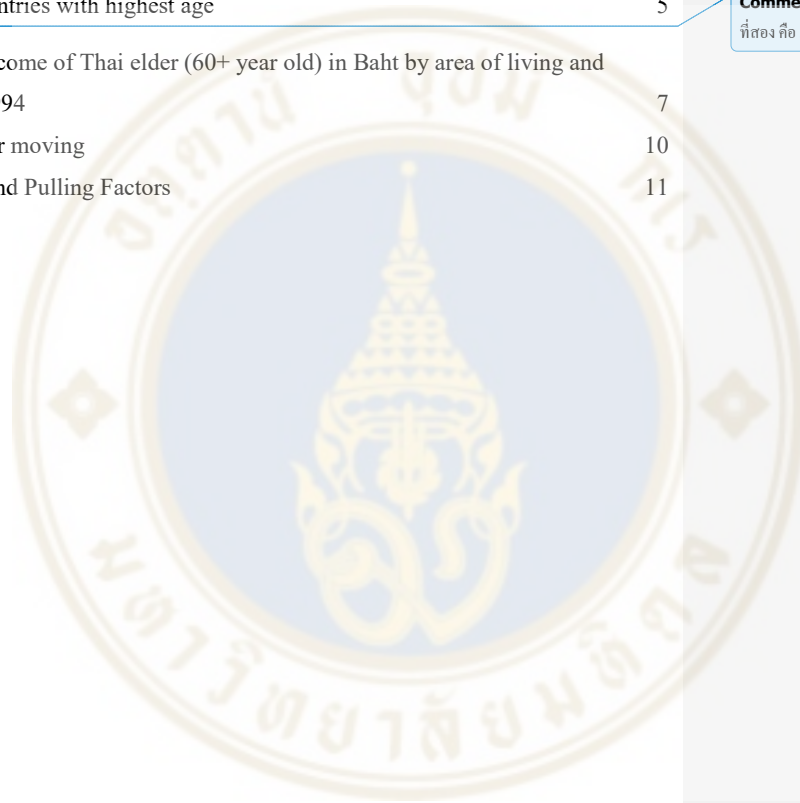
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 History and Emerging Trend

Presently the world is facing with population aging. The research of World Health Organization showed that one in nine of world's population are people aged 60 years old or older (Nonnarit, 2019). Every countries in the world have growth in the number of elderly people, most of the countries become aged society start with developed countries follow by developing countries especially Thailand. Thailand will be the first developing country entry to hyper-aged society in 2035 (Chittinandana et al, 2017). The main cause of population aging is decline in fertility rate, Thailand fertility rate is 1.3 per cent per year. Thailand are one of ten countries, which have low fertility rate in 2017 (Gallagher, 2018). According to the article from The Nation dated November 30, 2018 found that 18 per cent of Gen-Y single people did not want to have their own families. They are prefer to live independently and pay attention to their job. Moreover, 20.5 per cent of Gen-Y who already have their own family but they did not have a baby and did not want to. They also prefer to focus on their job rather than children and enjoy with current life. If they have a baby, they have to concern on cost of raising children, which using a huge amount of money (The Nation, 2018).

Since to the number of elder people are growing, it created a new business opportunity such as caregiver, financial advisor for retirement, and retirement home. The research conducted by Kasikorn research showed that the development of retreatment home or community is growing rapidly related to the increasing of aging population. The total investment in Thailand for this kind of businesses is around 27,000 MB baht in 2020 and tends to be higher (Team Weekly, 2018). Now, Thailand is shifting the focus to elder market, many companies are choosing elder-friendly material, facilities, and building for safety concern. Even though, the trend of retirement home in Thailand tends to grow up, most of the people still recognize it as the old version (Nursing home), not the luxury ones with convenient facilities. Currently, the majority

of elder people stayed in the nursing home (old version) because their families are unable to take care of them, or they need the help of skilled personnel. For some cases, one can even say that they are not willing to stay there, but they have no choice.

1.2 Motivation to the Topic

The incident that triggered my interest in this topic came from my personal experience of visiting one nursing home to look for a place for a relative. Most of them categorized the guests/the patients into three groups, which are A) those who can walk and move by themselves, B) those who need some assistance to move, and C) those who are bedridden. This made the place more like the hospital, not 'home'. The places were also decorated in a hospital-like fashion and were not giving a cheerful atmosphere. Moreover, each places had many regulations to follow, making it more like a boarding school with no freedom. After visited all candidate places, my relative eventually changed her mind because of the places' general conditions and rules and continue staying with the family even though she may not like it. As a result, the author became interested in exploring how to make retirement homes more attractive, e.g. equipped with modern facilities, medical assistance, and a peaceful community for the elders.

1.3 Research Question

What are factors influencing people to stay at retirement home?

1.4 Research Objective and Scope

Hence, the author spotted the business opportunity on this growing market and would like to carry a study about the factors making people want to stay at the retirement home. The research will be exploring factors, that may affect the intention to stay in the retirement home. The author will be asking opinions from two groups of people. One is the retirement home's owner in Thailand. They will be able to give an insight information about how to run the business, who are their target customers, how

can they attract their customers, and what should be the key success factor of the business. The other group are people who are interested to stay in retirement home in the future, such as a single people or a married couple who do not have kid aging around 40-50 years old. They could reveal the factors affecting their decision, what do they expect from the place and what is a must have and a should have. Moreover, the finding could point out the target customer's lifestyle which will be benefiting the business owner in the future.

1.5 Expected Benefits

- To identify the new business opportunity of elder market in Thailand
- To provide insights for the current nursing home/retirement home owner to make their homes more attractive to future customers
- To assist the people who may decide to stay at a retirement home in the future

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 World Aging Society

Nowadays, people could notice that the world is facing many problems such as environmental pollution, declining natural resources, the repeatedly pandemic or even the political conflict of the leading countries. Out of many problems that the world is facing, not many people notice that the world is entering an aging society, another problem that could be fatal without a proper arrangement. Some statistics reported that by 2040, over 14% of the global population will be over 65 years old (Chittinandana et al, 2017). The region that is likely to most suffer with this problem is Europe (could harbor 26 percent of the world elders) following by North America (22 percent), Oceania (17 percent), Latin America (16 percent), Asia (15 percent) and Africa (5 percent) (Ibid). The countries, which have this problem, could face an economy issue from the declining working-age population.

In Asia, the country who has already considered as ‘hyper-aged’ society (have population aged 65+ over 20% of the total population) is Japan. This is the first country in the world that has reached this stage. The research indicated that Japan would have 29 percent and 34 percent of population aged over 65 years old in 2020 and 2040 respectively. Another country who already reached the ‘aged’ society (have population aged 65+ over 14 percent of the total population) is Korea. They tend to inhabit 16 percent of the elders in 2020 and 31 percent in 2040. For countries like Thailand and Vietnam they are still in ‘aging’ countries which has elder population more than 7 percent but not yet over 14 percent (Ibid).

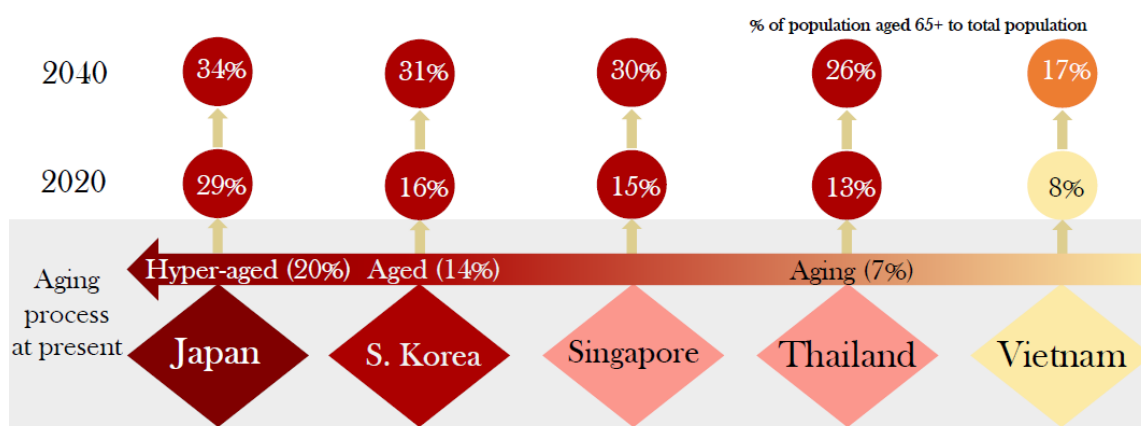


Figure 2.1 Asian countries with highest age

Source: Chittinandana D. et al. (2017)

The reason to this aging problem is said to be, firstly, the low fertility rate. Many Asian countries have fertility rate between 1.2 to 1.4 children per woman which are even lower than most of developed countries (Ibid). Due to the increasing cost of living and increasing overall expenses for growing a baby, many families nowadays decided not to have a baby. There is an emerging trend of living as a couple and enjoy the life to its fullest until getting old. This belief pushes down the fertility rate of people of new generation. Second factor is the longevity. Because of the improved health service and significant growth of the medical knowledge and materials, people tend to live longer. With the advancement of the technology, the elder can get access to medical easier and get treatment that is more effective. Lastly, the Baby Boomer generation is turning old. With the proportion approximately equal to 19 percent of the world population, the generation with the highest growth rate is turning into the elders (Ibid).

2.2 Thai Aging Society

There is one interesting statistic saying that it will take Thailand only 20 years to be 'aged' society (Chittinandana et al, 2017). This speed is the fastest among the developing countries. Moreover, the report further says that in 2035 Thailand will become the first developing country who enter 'hyper-aged' society (Ibid). That means at least one out of five people in each family will have an elder who are 65+ years old. In the economical viewpoint, the country will lose one fifth of the working manpower.

Hence, this problem should be addressed seriously for a future preparation. Several countries who have the same aging pace with Thailand has already escaped the middle-income threshold, however, Thailand is still not doing well on that.

In 2017, the population growth rate in Thailand is 0.3 percent, which is four times lower than the world growth rate at around 1.2 percent (Ibid). Moreover, the total fertility rate of Thailand has been dropped down from over six births per woman in mid-1960s to below two in mid-1990s (Older Population and Health System, n.d.). However, because of the advancement of medical industry during the same timing, the life expectancy increased from 55.2 years to 69.9 years for men and 61.8 years to 74.9 years for women (Ibid). This trend is expected to keep going, and Thailand will certainly reach an aged or hyper-aged society someday unless there is a significant changing point.

The aging group of Thai people is indeed growing at a very fast pace. However, the statistics say that this sector is still not economically self-dependent. One research pointed out that 41 percent of Thai people do not have a saving plan for retirement, and 29 percent of Thai people, who are over 60 years old, still have a debt (Chittinandana et al, 2017). In addition, 43.9 percent of Thai elder (aged over 60 years old) have income less than 10,000 Baht or 227 US\$ (1 US\$ = 44 Baht) per year (Older Population and Health System, n.d.). There is only very limited group of Thai elders, around 11.5 percent, who had income more than 50,000 Baht or 1,136 US\$ per year. The table below illustrated that elders in urban areas had much higher income than those in rural areas. In term of gender, the males tend to get higher than the females especially in urban areas and in the group who make more than 50,000 Baht per year. The economic condition of unmarried women is significantly lower than others because women tend to get financial support from their children than the men do. And for the elders who still had job, 65.2 percent had income less than 24,000 Baht per year, and 20.8 percent had income between 24,001-48,000 Baht per year (Ibid).

<u>Baht</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Urban area</u>			<u>Rural area</u>		
		<u>male</u>	<u>female</u>	<u>all</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>all</u>
<10,000	43.9	15.7	21.6	19	43	55.3	49.7
10,000 19,999	- 22	15.8	22.7	19.7	22.9	22.3	22.6
20,000 29,999	- 10.2	9.4	12.7	11.2	12.1	8.1	9.9
30,000 39,999	- 7.7	9.3	13.4	11.6	7.6	6.1	6.8
40,000 49,999	- 3.1	5.2	4.8	5	3.8	1.6	2.6
>50,000	11.5	41.2	22	30.4	9.6	5.1	7.1
Missing	1.6	3.4	2.8	3.1	1	1.5	1.3

Figure 2.2 Annual income of Thai elder (60+ year old) in Baht by area of living and gender, 1994

Source: Older Population and Health System, (n.d)

Regarding the way of living, 98 percent of Thai elders live with the families (spouses and/or children) while there is only two percent living in the nursing home (Ibid). The number proved that Thai people are still not familiar with staying in nursing home/retirement home.

2.3 Nursing home/Retirement home in Thailand

According to the study from Sasat et al. (2009) on the retirement home in Thailand, they defined the institutional long-term care as “a place where the alternative services are provided according to the life style in order to serve the care needs and needs of older persons throughout the ageing process.” The institution must be able to provide service for at least three months. They could be the government or private sector (both profit and non-profit organization). The types of retirement home could be classified into five categories (Sasat, 2013);

1. *Residential home* (or the independent living communities or the retirement communities) are the places, which serve the independent elders who can walk by themselves or be able to walk with the cans, crutches or walkers. There is no necessity to get assistant in bathing or dressing from the nurses or helpers.

2. *Assisted living setting* refer to the residence for elders with physical limitation due to age or disability. This group of people will be needing assistant in the daily activities otherwise it could be dangerous to their well-being, however, they still want to live as normally as possible. Anyway, not very skilled nursing personnel is needed. There would be common facilities such as the dining rooms available.

3. *Nursing home* is for the elder people who are not very ill (not need the hospital-base care) but need a long-term assistant. For this case, the skilled personnel needs to be on standby 24 hours a day. They will be helping in taking medicine, having a meal and other daily activities. The patients could have chronic diseases, or physical or mental impairment.

4. *Long-term care hospital* refer to a hospital that provides a general long-term care for the patients continuously for more than 3 months.

5. *Hospice care* refer to a place where the very ill patients are given end-of-life care to lower their pain or other side effect symptoms. The main goal is to give happiness and to prolong the chance to stay with the families and friends. The assistant will be focusing on the patients' quality of life to let them pass away peacefully without pain or further medical treatment. For this job, the skilled personnel is essential to provide technical support.

Currently, the types which are common in Thailand are Assisted living setting, Nursing home and Long-term care hospital. Some examples are;

Table 2.1 List of nursing homes and long-term care hospitals

Name	Starting costs (THB)		
	Per month	Per year	Per 20 years
Ban Bang Kae	1,500	18,000	360,000
Ban Yen Jit	10,000	120,000	2,400,000
Grandpa Grandma Nursing Home	16,000	192,000	3,840,000
Sansiri Homecare	16,000	192,000	3,840,000
Elderly Club Nursing Home	16,000	192,000	3,840,000
Taozihome	20,000	240,000	4,800,000
Ditsara Nursing Home	26,500	312,000	6,240,000
Kluaynamthai Hospital	30,000	360,000	7,200,000

Source: Pricelist of Eight Nursing Home (2021)

For the Residential home or Retirement home type, it is still relatively niche market and targeting high-income elders. Usually, the main target are the retired foreigners from other countries such as England, Australia or countries in Northern Europe, for example (Sale Here Editor, 2020). Some examples are;

Table 2.2 List of retirement homes

Name	Type	Starting Price (THB)	Period
Wellness City	Condominium	1,600,000	30 years
	House	2,400,000	30 years
Senior Complex	Condominium	1,800,000	30 years
MeeSuk Villa	Condominium	3,400,000	Entire life
	House	5,500,000	Entire life
Jinn Well Being	Condominium	4,100,000	Entire life
Sansara at Black Mountain	Condominium	6,900,000	Entire life
	House	21,000,000	Entire life

Source: Sale Here Editor (2020)

2.4 Potential Factors

The reasons motivating the elders to move to the nursing home could be categorized into pushing factors and pulling factors. Several studies pointed out into similar direction. According to Bekhet et al research conducted in Ohio, USA in 2009, they grouped interesting factors as follows;

2.4.1 Pushing Factors;

- a) Own or spouse's failing health (i.e. the elders with poor health condition and need the assistants.)
- b) To get rid of the responsibility (i.e. the house or the garden is too big to handle for the elders who live alone.)
- c) Cannot get help (i.e. the children have no time to take care of the elders.)
- d) Move from other facilities (i.e. another nursing home is closed, so need to look for a new one.)
- e) Loneliness (i.e. spend most of the time alone at home, so want to look for a friend.)

2.4.2 Pulling factors;

a) Location (i.e. the facility location is near to the family house, so the elders can expect the visit frequently.)

b) The familiarity and reputation (i.e. the facility is famous for its safety and convenience, so people want to move in.)

c) Security (i.e. the elders who want to be near the doctors in case of unexpected situation.)

Also, in 2002, Krout J. et al. asked the New York elders who moved in to ‘Continuing Care Retirement Community’ for their motives and got the results as below table. Some pushing factors such as ‘Did not want to be a burden’, ‘Size of residence’, ‘Respondent’s illness’, ‘Spouse’s illness’ and ‘Did not want to live alone’ resemble Bekhet et al findings. Plus, ‘Continuing care’, ‘Upkeep and maintenance’, and ‘Ability to get around’ were also similar to security and location of pulling factors.

<i>Reason for Moving</i>	<i>Percentage Mentioning</i>
Continuing care	84.6
Upkeep and maintenance	52.7
Did not want to be a burden	44.0
Size of residence	15.4
Ability to get around	13.2
Respondent's illness	11.0
Spouse's illness	11.0
Same-age setting	8.8
Spouse wanted to move	7.7
Did not want to live alone	5.5
Less isolated location	5.5
Crime and safety	4.4
Near family	4.4
Family encouraged move	3.3
Death of spouse	2.2

Figure 2.3 Reason for moving

Source: Krout J. et al. (2002)

Moreover, another research done in Australia also pointed out to similar things (Kupke, 2000). The group of respondents were divided into ‘couple’ and ‘widow/widower’ and were asked about their motivation to move to the retirement home. In push factors, both couple and widow answered that they wanted to plan their retirement life in advance when they still have the capabilities. Otherwise, if they had health problem, or the children could not take care of them when they are very old, they

could not fix the problem by themselves anymore. So, they wanted to avoid the uncertainty. The second important motive for the widow was the illness or death of their spouses while for the couple, it was the responsibility on their dwelling. The loss of their own health were also a significant factor as well. For pulling factors, the research found that the couple wanted more security. On the other hand, the widow wanted to be near the family, more safety and more friends, respectively.



Figure 2.4 Pushing and Pulling Factors

Source: Kupke. V. (2000)

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of Study

Since the retirement home concept is relatively new to Thai society, the researcher would like to study the attitudes of people toward this concept. Generally, Thai people still have a bad perception about the nursing home/retirement home, so we also would like to communicate with our participants that there are several kinds of nursing home available and make sure they understand our concept. Plus, we are looking for insights through personal experience. So, the research will be qualitative based interview hoping to get unexpected information that could be neglected.

The research will study the opinions from mainly two groups of individuals. The first group consists of three retirement home owners, and the second group consists of seven people who were selected because they have the intention to stay at retirement home. Since we would like to hear an opinion from people in different age and stage of life, the second group will be further divided into three sub-group to represent people who are 30-40 years old, 40-50 years old, and 50-60 years old. Hence, out of the seven, three people are the middle-ager (30-40 years old). Two people are at prime working age (40-50 years old), and the last two people are nearly retiring (50-60 years old). Both groups would be currently living and working in Thailand.

Table 3.1 List of interviewees

Code	Group	Sub-group	Age	Gender
1	Retirement home's owner		N/A	Female
2			N/A	Female
3			N/A	Male
4	People who have intention to stay at retirement home	30-40 years old	32 years old	Female
5			37 years old	Female
6			38 years old	Female
7		40-50 years old	41 years old	Male
8			41 years old	Female
9		50-60 years old	52 years old	Female
10			60 years old	Female

The research method will be an in-depth interview based on an open-end question encouraging the participants to express their opinion. With a probing technique to ask further questions from the interviewee's answer, the researcher try to keep main questions as broad and minimal as possible to avoid leading the participants and wasting time. The two groups of participants will be asked by two different sets of questions designed specifically for each group.

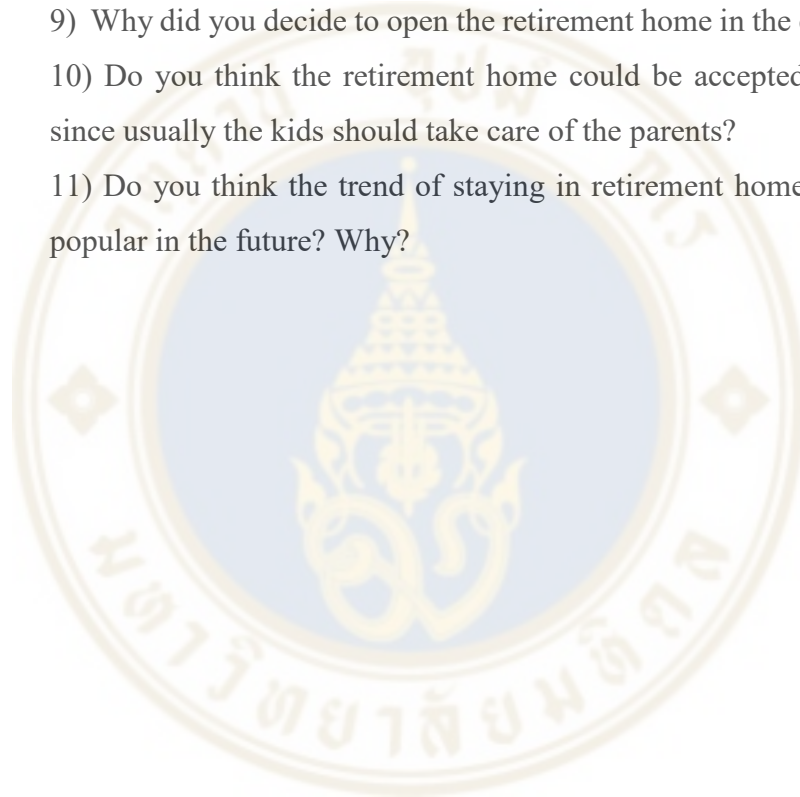
Question list for people who plan to stay at retirement home

- 1) What is the retirement home in your opinion?
- 2) What kind of service do you expect from the retirement home?
- 3) When did you start thinking about staying in the retirement home and why?
- 4) What would be the most important reasons why you choose to stay in the retirement home rather than at home? Why?
- 5) Could you give an example of the nursing home/retirement home that you know? And do you want to stay there? Why?
- 6) Do you have a friend or other relatives who is staying in the retirement home?
- 7) In your opinion, why would other people will decide to stay in the retirement home?
- 8) In term of location, what would be important to you and why?
- 9) Do you think the retirement home could be accepted in Thai culture since usually the kids should take care of the parents?
- 10) In your opinion, how much are you willing to spend for the retirement home?
- 11) Do you think the trend of staying in retirement home would be more popular in the future? Why?

Question list for retirement home's owner

- 1) Why did you start the retirement home business?
- 2) What do you think is the main reason for the customers to stay in your facility?

- 3) What is the main focus / value of your facility? And why are you focusing on these factors?
- 4) What is your strong point and weak point of your facility?
- 5) Could you describe your target customers and your current customers?
- 6) Who do you think is your main competitor? Who is currently dominating the market and why?
- 7) Could you describe the problem that you have faced in the past?
- 8) What is a must have for retirement home business?
- 9) Why did you decide to open the retirement home in the current location?
- 10) Do you think the retirement home could be accepted in Thai culture since usually the kids should take care of the parents?
- 11) Do you think the trend of staying in retirement home would be more popular in the future? Why?



CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Participant Profiles

The interviewees are classified into two groups, which are seven people who have intention to stay at retirement home and three retirement home's owners. For the first group, all of them are living in Bangkok area. Four of them (aged 32-41 years old) are single with no kid. One person got divorced with two kids, and two people (41 years old and 60 years old) are married with two kids. All of the interviewees are office workers except for one housewife.

Table 4.1 List of people who have intention to stay at retirement home

Code	Gender	Age	Marital Status	Number of Kids	Living area	Occupation
4	Female	32 years old	Single	0	Bangkok	Office worker
5	Female	37 years old	Single	0	Bangkok	Office worker
6	Female	38 years old	Single	0	Bangkok	Office worker
7	Male	41 years old	Married	2	Bangkok	Office worker
8	Female	41 years old	Single	0	Bangkok	Office worker
9	Female	52 years old	Divorced	2	Bangkok	Office worker
10	Female	60 years old	Married	2	Bangkok	Housewife

For the second group, three of them are the owners of retirement homes in Chiang Mai and Bangkok.

Table 4.2 List of retirement home's owner

Code	Gender	Retirement Home Location	Year of Experience
1	Female	Chiang Mai	14 years
2	Female	Bangkok	1 year
3	Male	Bangkok	2 months

4.2 General Information

4.2.1 Current perspectives toward retirement home

The interview result shows that the image of retirement home in Thai people's perception was totally different from the past. The group of interested people expressed their perception that it is the place which is very physically safe and offers a healthcare service such as a regular health checkup, a daily assistance for elders or a long-term care for the disable, under the responsibility of the doctors and nurses. Furthermore, the retirement homes are clean, generally decorated in the modern design, and surrounded with a good environment encouraging a peace of mind. It also offers a chance to meet new friends with similar age and enjoys the arranged activities. It appeared that most people in the interested group are very well-informed about the retirement home, and they already knew and were considering some candidate places.

Table 4.3 The perception of retirement home

Perception	Interviewee Code						
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Beautiful, Nice environment		√				√	√
Same age setting	√		√			√	
Convenient	√			√		√	
Healthcare service from professional	√	√	√	√	√		√

Table 4.4 The candidate places which are known to the interested group

Name	Interviewee Code						
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Ban Bang Kae	√						
Kluaynamthai Hospital					√		
Sawangkanives						√	√
Wellness City					√	√	√
Jin Wellbeing	√			√			
The Sennizens						√	

Three most popular facilities are Wellness City, Jin Wellbeing, and Sawangkanives. Wellness City is located in Ayutthaya province and is well known for their ‘living with the nature’ style. The resident is surrounded by trees and river. They are offering both condominium type and the standalone house type, which the latter is very popular and became the signature of the place. For Jin Wellbeing, it is located, nearer to Bangkok, in Pathumthani province offering the luxury condominium type. One of their strengths is that they also have their hospital within the same area to take in urgent cases with fully equipped facilities. Sawangkanives, lastly, is the condominium type located in Samutprakarn province for middle class people. This is the cost-effective choice with reasonable buying price and no monthly fee. The service and the facilities, however, are not any lower than the standard. They can also help in delivering the patients to the nearby hospital (400 meter away) for cases they cannot handle.

4.2.2 The turning point to retirement home

Interesting finding from the interested group say that four out of seven made decision to stay at retirement home in their mid-30, which is quite early. Two out of seven made decision when they are 41 and 45 years old. The last one made decision when she was approaching her 60 (However, she thought that it might be too late because she did not prepare enough saving for the costs). The trigger reasons are significantly similar as shown below.

Table 4.5 Starting point to consider retirement home

Code	Current Age	Age made decision	Kid	Reason
4	32	30	0	Get older, no chance to have kid
5	37	35	0	No intention to have kid
6	38	35	0	Not married, no kid
7	41	39	2	Visited one facility and got interested
8	41	41	0	Not married, no kid
9	52	45	2	Divorced
10	60	55-57	2	Daughter got married and moved aboard

As for the owner side, two (person #1 and person #3) saw the opportunity from the rising number of aging population in Thailand. However, there is still, no high quality facility in Thailand like in developed countries such as Japan, so they decided to start this business. In addition, the sister of one owner (person #3) is a doctor. Utilizing her medical expertise, he invited his sister to open the nursing home together. Interestingly, another owner (person #2) started the business initially because her husband got sick. While taking care of him for some times, she gained an experience to take care of the patient with chronic disease. Hence, she applied her knowledge to the work and opened the facility to take care of her husband and other people at the same time.

4.2.3 The offer and the expectation

Generally, we asked the customer side what do they expect and the supplier side what do they think they should offer. For the potential customers, they all agreed that, firstly, retirement home should offer a standby doctor and a professional nurse / assistant. Secondly, the facility should be convenient for them to proceed daily tasks (i.e. to walk, to eat, to sleep or to exercise). Almost half of them care about the building's design and materials especially the floor and the stair which should reduce the risk of accident. Two people value the quality of the serving food. And two people think the place should be always clean.

Table 4.6 Expectations of potential customers toward retirement home

Expectation	Interviewee Code						
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Standby doctors and nurses	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Convenient to live in	√	√	√	√		√	√
Building can reduce accident	√	√		√			
Quality of the meal				√		√	
Cleanliness		√		√			

For the owner side, they are mainly focusing on two things which are the environment (including the public utility) and the personnel because the patients have to interact with these two factors all the time. For example, they will make sure that the health center, the common entertainment room, the bathroom, the canteen and the garden are always in the top condition. This is to respond to the patients' vary needs in daily life making them feel like being at home. The personnel are also very important because they believe that the emotion of the staffs could be transferred to the patients. If any staff seems to be under stress, they will not be allowed to work. Moreover, all personnel must be trained to take care of the elder, not only physically but mentally as well.

4.3 Factor Influencing People to Stay at Retirement Home

In order to answer the research question, the author asked the customer side about the reason/factor influencing them to stay at retirement home. The most answered is associated with the individual's health. Four out of seven participants said that they would stay at the retirement home if they have a health problem. Another four out of seven added that having a standby doctor and nurse made them consider to stay because they think that they are less likely to take care themselves when they get old, and they might have some diseases. Therefore, it is better to stay in the place where the doctors and nurses can reach them in time. Thirdly, three out of seven said that they want companions. Staying at home could feel lonely because they live alone or live with their pet. They prefer to stay with friends or in group of people who have the same age in

order to have interaction with other people such as talking and doing a group activity together. They believed that people who are in similar age will have a smooth conversation as they shared some similarities and interested in the same topic. There would be no gap of age like between the grandmother/grandfather and the grandchild. Fourthly, one person (person #7) mentioned about the quality of the services and the facilities. If the place can provide a service and facilities which is better than their home, it seems like they give the reward to their retiring life. He described further that it is like living in the hotel for the rest of his life. Plus, (person #1) one of the seven mentioned that the retirement home should be located nearby the reliable hospital. For example, she usually goes to Thonburi Hospital, so she has intention to stay at Jin Wellbeing because Thonburi Hospital is located right in Jin Wellbeing area. It can guarantee that she will get a good service from the doctors and nurses which she trusted and is already familiar with. Lastly, one participant (person #8) said that she wants to plan her retiring life in advance to get rid of the worry about how to live, how to get food, who will take care of her, and who will clean the house, for example.

Table 4.7 Reason/Factor influencing people to staying at retirement home

Reason	Interviewee Code						
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Health problem	√	√	√				√
Standby doctors and nurses			√	√	√		√
Need friend/Community		√	√			√	
Services and facilities				√			
Located nearby the hospital	√						
Future plan					√		

Furthermore, the author asked the interviewees about reasons why would other people decide to stay at retirement home as the author would like to hear their opinions as a third party. The result shows in table below. The participants think that other people tend to stay at retirement home because they have no family or kid to take care of them. Moreover, some people may need friends, want to be self-reliant, or have a health problem. One thing to notice is that the answers to this question are quite similar and confirmed the answers in previous question.

Table 4.8 Reason/Factor influencing other people to staying at retirement home

Reason	Interviewee Code						
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No family/Cannot get help	√					√	√
Need friend/Community		√		√			
Self-reliant	√		√				
Health problem		√					
Future plan		√					
Increase of unmarried rate					√		
Services and facilities				√			
Standby doctors and nurses				√			

On the other side, the retirement home's owner shared that the main reason the customers choose their facility is the quality of the staff which should be doctors, nurses or experts which can standby 24 hours per day. The owner (person #1) added that they are not focusing only on staffs who has medical knowledge, but the staff should also have a service mind and willing to take care of the elders. Another reason is the environment which includes the building with a good decoration and the quality of the provided facilities. The environment should be good for both physical and mental health. In addition, the cost is another deciding factor for the customers. Retirement home 1 provides several packages in order to service different target groups. Then customers can choose the package which they are comfortable with. Retirement home 2 said that the customers choose their facility, again, because of the environment. Their place is surrounded by greenery, have plenty of space (16,000 square meter), and has design specifically for elders and patients. For Retirement home 3, they mentioned that the affordable price could reach more customers. Lastly, the customers also concern on location. They prefer to stay in a good environment, surrounding with trees and good atmosphere.

Table 4.9 Reason/Factor customer want to stay in your facility

Reason	Interviewee Code		
	1	2	3
Staff	√	√	√
Environment	√	√	√
Cost	√		√
Location			√

In term of location, all participants from both groups agreed that the retirement home should be located close to the environment, surrounding with garden, trees, flowers and good atmosphere. The retirement home's owners also have the same thinking. They also choose the location close to the nature as much as possible. Moreover, interestingly, the customer group did not mention the price as their concerns, but everyone has the target price range in their mind, as we can see from table below. So, it is undeniable that the price indeed affects their decision. Four of seven participants prefer to pay monthly rent because they think that they can change or switch to another retirement home easily if the place is not suitable for them. Three participants (aged 41-60 years old) are willing to pay at 10,000-20,000 baht because at old age, they will have no income and this is the acceptable price range for them. Whereas, only one person is willing to pay at 40,000 baht and expects to get the service above the standard. On the other hand, three of the seven think that they are more comfortable to pay one-time cost for the entire life with a small monthly fee. For this case, three of them are willing to pay at 4,000,000 bath to get the assets.

Table 4.10 Price range

Reason	Interviewee Code						
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Entire life							
4,000,000 baht or below	√		√	√			
Per month							
10,000-20,000 baht					√	√	√
30,000-40,000 baht		√					

4.4 Retirement Home vs Thai Culture

All participants from the interested group believe that the retirement home can be accepted in Thai culture because the society and social value have already changed. In present, they think that Thai people became more individualist. They do not seek for marriage but instead spend time and money on themselves. Unlike in the past that the society expected women to get married before 30 years old, the women in present are not bind with that idea anymore. They are confident to stay alone and enjoy their freedom. Moreover, the fertility rate has dropped because a great number of

married couples do not plan to have kids anymore. One participant, who has plan to get married but does not want to have kids, commented that raising a child in present costs a lot of money. She is not confident if she can raise her kid properly, so she decided not to have one, and planned to spend her retirement in the facility with her spouse. The mentioned emerging trends are encouraging people to plan their retirement life in advance. Plus, surprisingly, two out of seven think that sending the parents to the retirement home is another way of repaying a favor to the parents. One participant interestingly gave the comparison that if the kid is not good at cooking, there is no benefit in cooking a bad taste food for their parents while they can go out and buy delicious meal for them. Likewise, if the kid is no expert like the doctor or the nurse, they should leave the job to the professional. However, they expect the kids to pay for the costs and visit them regularly.

For the owner side, they also agreed that retirement homes could be accepted in Thai culture. No arguing, they believed that taking care of the parents is indeed the responsibility of the children. However, in present world, people have to work against the time, so sometimes the children could not take care of their parent properly. For many cases, they have to hire the assistant to help in the house errand and assist their parents. Hence, retirement home could be one of the options. Retirement home #2 owner added that actually, everyone wants to take care and stay with their parents, but we have to look at the fact that there is just not enough time. According to the owner of Retirement home #1, the number of the customer is increasing every year, and overall industry is growing up. There are many new investors (both Thai and foreigners) every year unlike in the past decade which no one is interested in this field. The trend implied that the retirement home is getting more accepted in Thai culture.

4.5 Future Trend

At the end of interview section, the author asked both groups about the trend of retirement home in the future. All of them are quite confident that this trend will be popular because the society and social value have changed, and it re-shaped the mindset of Thai people. Most people are still unaware that there are already a lot of the middle 30 years old who are thinking about this topic. As mentioned, the new generation tends

to stay alone, have no kid and plan things in advance. Many interviewees also mentioned that there are at least three to five friends or relatives around them who have the same thinking. Some of them not only have the intention to stay but already made a research and preparation to get in after they retire. In the past, the traditional belief of Thai people is to get job, get married, have kid and let the kid take care of them after retiring. In other word, they totally relied on their children. However, as Thai society became more individualist, the middle ager now wants to write their own fate and chooses the best choice based on their preference. Furthermore, by doing this, they also think that they give a freedom to their kids so that the kids do not need worry about them. Plus, the perception toward retirement home has already changed as well. It is no longer the place for poor elders with no relative surrounding with sadness and loneliness atmosphere. It has even become the target of life for certain individual who wish for safety, convenience, and friendship when they get old.

For the owner side, they also believe that this industry will grow because the market is continuously getting bigger. The people is living longer from the advancement of the medical technology. However, the government has the regulation that the elders cannot stay long at the hospital unless they are ill. Hence, the elders who are not ill but seek for medical assistance need to consider retirement home as an option. Sooner or later, the owners believed that the demand will definitely increase.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion

In conclusion, from the data collected through interviewing three retirement home owners and seven people who have an intention to stay at retirement home, there are several influencing factors which could be grouped as pushing and pulling factors as below.

Table 5.1 Conclusion of the research findings

Pushing Factors	Pulling Factors
a) Health problem	a) Security
b) Need of friend/Community	b) Quality of facilities and personnel
c) Cannot get help	c) Location
	d) Cost

For pushing factors, the interested group straightly answered that having a health problem would make them consider to stay at the retirement home. They think that having a health problem at old age is quite serious. Even though one is living with the family or children, they would prefer to stay close to the health experts in case of urgent needs. Secondly, they would like to stay with friends who have similar age and belong to the same community. Humans are social animals by nature, and psychologically, we would seek for the group which we share similarity. Hence, seeking for companion in old age was mentioned many times during the interview. The last but not least pushing factor is the fear that they could not get help during the old age. To the question about when and why the potential group started to think about retirement home, the reasons from five out of seven were associated with having no kid to take care of them. This reason did not appear when directly asked, but when being asked as a third party, the potential group mentioned about the possibility of ‘cannot get/expect help’

from the family or children. The owners also agreed that the children in these days may not be able to fully take care of their parents due to the very tight time schedule. This encourages people to consider staying at the retirement home where there are properly assigned personnel.

For pulling factors, the very outstanding one is need of the security both mentally and physically. When asking about the expectation of the retirement home from the interested group, all of them demanded the standby doctor, nurse or professional assistant to give them a peace of mind in case unexpected situation happens. Again, when directly and indirectly asked the participants about the influencing factors, four out of seven said that having a standby doctor, nurse, or professional would make them or other people to consider staying at the retirement home. One participant also commented that if the retirement home is located near or cooperating with the hospital, she would consider to stay. The mental security is also applied to people who wanted to do future planning. One participant would like to make sure that she arranges everything now so that she will be living in a safe environment in the future. The physical security of the facility is also important for certain respondents. One participant said that when she gets old, she wishes to stay in the place where its design and building materials can reduce the chance of having an accident. As for the second pulling factor, the qualities of the service, the equipment and the personnel are also the key point. Six out of the seven participants expected 'convenience' from the facility. One participant straightly answered that the quality of the service would help him to decide whether or not he wish to stay at retirement home. The owners also put a lot of value in this aspect. They believed that the customers chose the facility based on the environment (including the building's decoration, quality of the common properties, and quality of the equipment) and the quality of the personnel. All the interviewed facilities genuinely focused on developing their personnel. Thirdly, the location also makes the difference. Some participants already made a research on the interested facilities. When asked what is the strength of that facility, most of the times, the location was mentioned (for example, located near river, trees or hospital). The owner also agreed that the nearer to the nature, the better. Lastly, the deciding factor is the cost. Each individual already had their acceptable price range in mind. The facility will be judged based on how reasonable the price is comparing with the quality.

The table below shows the comparison between the research findings and the past findings from the literature review. For pushing factors, our findings are quite similar with the past findings (health problem and own or spouse's failing health, need of friend/community and loneliness, and cannot get help). Two of the pulling factors are following the same direction (security and location). The quality of the facilities and personnel and the cost are new and powerful for Thai people while the familiarity and reputation is still not significant enough probably because there is still not widespread information and advertisement of the facilities in Thailand.

Table 5.2 Comparing factors from the research findings and past findings

	Findings	Past Findings
Pushing Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Health problem b) Need of friend/Community c) Cannot get help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Own or spouse's failing health b) To get rid of the responsibility c) Cannot get help d) Move from other facilities e) Loneliness
Pulling Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Security b) Quality of facilities and personnel c) Location d) Cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Location b) The familiarity and reputation c) Security

5.2 Recommendation

Based on the research findings, the retirement home business is likely to grow in the future, and it could be gradually accepted in Thai culture because the perception about the retirement home had already changed as well as Thai society became more open and individualist. Therefore, the author provided certain

recommendations for people who are currently doing (or have an interest to do) the retirement home and people who have an intention to stay at retirement home as below:

For current and potential retirement home owners

- Provide the doctors, nurses or the experts at their facilities for 24 hours a day. In addition, all staffs should be trained to have service mind and be able to take care of both physical and mental health.
- Create a reliable and trustworthy image. The facility should do a co-branding with the famous hospital or doctors in order to guarantee the quality of their services.
- Select a good location in upcountry such as Chiangmai, Chonburi, or Phuket because the customers prefer to stay with the nature but near to the reliable hospitals.
- Expand more branches for the customers to relocate to other locations in order to get new experience. For example, they might mainly stay at Chonburi but can choose to relocate to Phuket branch for three months.
- Provide good services and variety of activities to match with the individual life style in order to make the patients feel like staying at home.
- Provide an after-life service (for example, preparation for the funeral or the testament). According to the interview with one participant, certain individual wants to prepare their funeral or the testament in advance, and they wished retirement homes to have this service.
- Provide a variety of package/cost by the combination of different initial investments and monthly fees.

For people who have an intention to stay at the retirement home

- Set target and save money early! Based on the standard cost of retirement home, the customers should save at least 4,800,000 baht for staying in a quality home for 20 years (20,000 baht per month * 12 months * 20 years = 4,800,000 baht). For some places, they offer paying by installment. This is a chance to make an early investment for people who really have an intention to stay.

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