

# The Development of Operational Achievements in the Elderly Quality of Life Development and Career Promotion Centers of Thailand

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## Abstract

The objectives of this mixed method research were 1) to examine the operational achievements level of EQCCs, 2) to investigate the factors affecting the operational achievements level of EQCCs, 3) to study the problems and obstacles in the operation of EQCCs, 4) to propose approaches to solving the operational problems and developing the operational achievements of EQCCs, and 5) to confirm the suitability of the proposed approaches to solving the operational problems and developing the operational achievements of EQCCs. The respondents of this research were 160 committee members of EQCCs. The research instrument was a questionnaire. The data analysis was carried out using frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, Pearson's correlation coefficient, and multiple linear regression. The Delphi method was used to conduct qualitative research. The data was collected from 32 key informants using both interview and questionnaire techniques. The obtained data were analyzed using the content analysis, grouping, and statistical methods, including median and interquartile range. The results indicated that the overall operational achievements of EQCCs were at a low level. There were 8 factors that had an effect on the operational achievements of EQCCs. The operational problems and obstacles of EQCCs in physical environment, activity and service, and mechanism and management. The approaches to developing the operational achievements of EQCCs could be divided into a provincial, district, and sub-district/community level which were suitable for developing the operational achievements of EQCCs with the median values of 4.16 - 4.93 and the interquartile range of 0.50-1.00.

**Keywords:** Operation, Achievement, Elderly Quality of Life, Career Development Center

## Introduction

Thailand has already become an aging society since 2013 with the elderly population accounting for 11.3% of the total population. The country is expected to become an aged society, in which the elderly population accounts for 20.2% of the total population, in 2030. This situation has an impact on the country's economic system, as the government has to increase the budget allocation for elderly care and welfare, which may result in the financial burden of the next generation (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council, 2012). Thailand has prepared for the impact of an aging population by enacting the Act on Older Persons B.E. 2546, providing the elderly with professional protection and support, and encouraging the elderly to develop themselves, participate in social activities, and join a community network (Hutanon and Nakwibulwong, 2017). The Thai government led by General Prayut Chan-o-cha (2014 - present) has established an administrative policy that focuses on "reducing social inequality, creating opportunities to access public services,

and developing a quality aging society.” In compliance with this policy, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security together with the Ministry of Interior and the Senior Citizens Council of Thailand initiated the establishment of Elderly Quality of Life Development and Career Promotion Centers (EQCCs) in 2014 with the aims to promote activities of various elderly clubs and provide places for holding elderly activities, career promotion workshops, and local wisdom training, which can contribute to the development of the elderly’s physical, mental, and social health. The Elderly Quality of Life Development and Career Promotion Centers have their own elderly care volunteers and community elderly information systems. The project has been operating for 3 years, starting from 2014 (Department of Older Persons, 2017).

Elderly Quality of Life Development and Career Promotion Centers (EQCCs) are considered as a form of community-based social welfare services. The elderly, local leaders, volunteers, communities, and public and private network organizations are allowed to take part in and drive the operations of EQCCs, while the local administrative organization plays a role in providing additional support to comprehensively enhance the provision of elderly service, protection, and quality of life development and respond to the problems and needs of the elderly and communities (Hutanon and Nakwibulwong, 2017).

However, based on the past operational achievements during the fiscal years 2014 - 2019, it was found that EQCCs’ activities were not strongly implemented and still did not cover all related areas (Department of Older Persons, 2017), although the key performance indicators of EQCCs were already determined after 3 years of operation. Moreover, there is still a lack of systematic and comprehensive research on the operational achievements of EQCCs, including the guidelines for the operational development (Office of Promotion and Protection of the Elderly, 2017). In order to develop the operational achievements of EQCCs according to the prescribed policy, all related factors as well as the problems and obstacles affecting the operation of EQCCs must be taken into account and used to develop appropriate guidelines for the development of EQCCs’ operational achievements in the future.

## Research Objectives

The objectives of the present research were 1) to examine the operational achievements level of EQCCs, 2) to investigate the factors affecting the operational achievements level of EQCCs, 3) to study the problems and obstacles in the operation of EQCCs, 4) to propose approaches to solving the operational problems and developing the operational achievements of EQCCs, and 5) to confirm the suitability of the proposed approaches to solving the operational problems and developing the operational achievements of EQCCs.

## Literature Review

**Literature Review on the Independent Variables:** Policy implementing is the study that responsible organizations can lead and encourage administrative resources and mechanisms performing tasks in accordance with the specified policies or implement policies to pay attention to the ability to push all work to achieve the goals. Scholars have proposed a model of policy implementation to be divided into top-down and bottom-up models. The study follows the top-down approach, which considers that the policy is an input and policy implementation as outputs. The study according to this approach gives priority to policy decisions. Sometimes it is seen as is a model that emphasizes the role of using the power of leaders. The study of scholars in this group, such as the study of Pressman and Wildavsky, Van Meter and Van Horn, Bardach, Sabatier and Mazmanian. For the bottom-up, policy implementation is a bargaining process that occurs in the network of policy leaders. The studies are in this group, such as Lipsky, Elmore, Hjern. Since the policy implementation

model from a top down and bottom up is an academic argument for many years, the scholars and the researchers have tried to synthesize both theories like Elmore, Goggin. The study of policy implementation focuses on the study of factors affecting policy implementation. The concepts, theories, research, and documents related to the factors affecting organizational policy implementation were thoroughly studied and synthesized in order to find out the independent variables influencing the operational performance of EQCCs, which included 1) policy clarity, 2) operational resources, 3) macro-environment, 4) participation, 5) communication, 6) organizational characteristics, 7) administrator and 8) employee (Van Meter and Van Horn, 1975; Edwards III, 1980; Cheema and Rondinelli, 1983; Yavaprabhas, 2009; Chantarasorn, 2011; Whangmahaporn, Simmonds and Whangmahaporn, 2018). The definition and details of each variable were described below.

Policy clarity refers to the accuracy and precision of EQCCs' operating policy as well as the clear understanding of EQCCs' operating policy, objectives, and standards among EQCCs' administrators and employees.

Operational resources refer to receiving sufficient budget, providing with adequate operational facilities, equipment, durable goods, media, and materials that are needed for the operations of EQCCs, and having an appropriate place of operation.

Macro-environment refers to the public's understanding and good feelings towards the operation of EQCCs, the support from the private sector and local people, and the compatibility between EQCCs' policies and the context of surrounding areas.

Participation refers to serious and continuous participation of government agencies, civil society organizations, local administrative organizations, and communities in the operations of EQCCs.

Communication refers to effective communication and notification of EQCCs' operations and activities that enable all community members to clearly understand EQCCs' operations and on-going activities.

Organizational characteristics refer to EQCCs' abilities to appropriately manage operational resources, to perform various tasks according to operational standards, and to establish an operational structure that is appropriate, flexible, and easy to follow.

Administrator refers to the leadership ability of EQCCs' chairman to determine the operational goal and implementation plan that can drive each working group towards the same direction; to maintain integrity, honesty, trustworthiness, and operational transparency; to lead employees at all levels and give them opportunities to participate in vision development, and to efficiently define a resource management plan.

Employee refers to the motivation, capability, attitude, and development potential of EQCCs' employees, which are associated with enthusiasm, concentration, commitment to good results, knowledge, ability, readiness, and positive attitude towards their work. This factor also includes EQCCs' training and activities that are carried out to develop the knowledge, ability, and attitude of the employees on a regular basis.

**Literature Review on the Dependent Variables:** Operational achievement means the operation of the organization which will be achieved by considering the comparison of actual output and results with the target set by the product, the activity, work or service that has been completed to send to the public. The output is the result of the activities of the government directly and the result means the impact or condition arising from the product, therefore the result has a direct relationship with the public, service recipients and the public.

Approach for measuring achievement of the organization's operation, in this study has adopted a variety of achievement measures, including the approach for goal attainment approach which has the definition that effectiveness depends on the ability of the organization to achieve its goals. Internal process approach is evaluating the effectiveness of the organization by taking into account the goals and the ability to maintain the well-being of

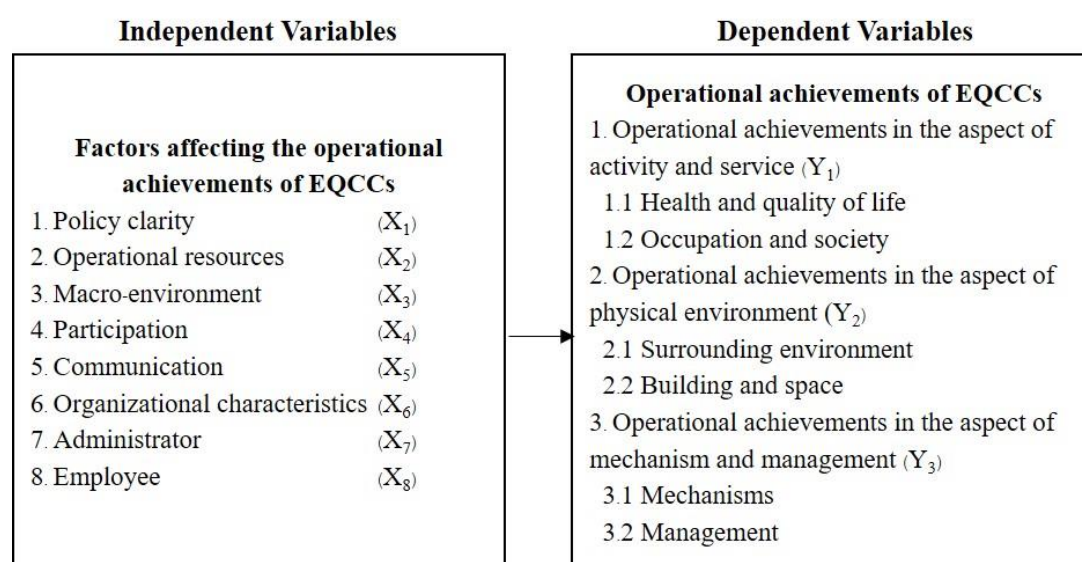
the person along the way consisting of performance measurement and good health criteria of the organization. And system resource approach which is the ability to procure or import external resources to change the condition into a product or service. Also, the researcher integrated EQCCs achievements evaluation concept of the Department of Older Persons (2017). It was found that the achievements evaluation based on the EQCC's operating standards could be divided into 3 aspects, 6 elements, and 45 indicators. The details are as follows.

Operational achievements in the aspect of activity and service refer to the management of health and quality of life promotion activities aiming to create enjoyment as well as physical and mental relaxation. EQCCs are expected to organize activities that can enhance both physical and mental health, promote the learning process, improve self-value awareness, and develop occupational ability to generate income. The operational achievements in the aspect of activity and service is composed of 2 components: 1) health and quality of life and 2) occupation and society.

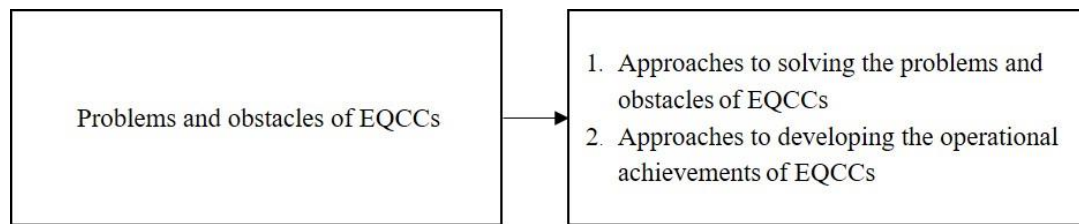
Operational achievements in the aspect of physical environment refer to the physical conditions of EQCCs, which include building, location and space, floor plan, accessibility, and other usability factors such as temperature, brightness, humidity, ventilation, safety, and convenience that can positively and negatively affect the usage of a building. The operational achievements in the aspect of the physical environment is comprised of 2 components: 1) surrounding environment and 2) building and space.

Operational achievements in the aspect of mechanism and management refer to the management efficiency of EQCCs, the achievement of providing elderly welfare service to the elderly in the local community, and the ability to function as an essential base and a gathering place for all kinds of elderly activities and services. The operational achievements in the aspect of mechanism and management are comprised of 2 components: 1) mechanism and 2) management. Based on the review of the concepts, theories and related research, the researchers set the conceptual framework of the research as follows:

### Research Framework



**Figure 1** Conceptual Framework for Quantitative Research



**Figure 2** Conceptual Framework for Qualitative Research

## Research Methodology

**Population and Samples:** The target population of the quantitative research was 1,391 EQCCs in Thailand. The multi-stage random sampling was used to select the samples according to the following steps.

### Step 1 Determine the Unit of Analysis

(1) The researcher applied the simple random sampling by lottery to select representative provinces from each 4 regions in Thailand. The 4 provinces selected were Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya, Nan, Buriram, and Phang Nga.

(2) The researcher prepared the list of EQCCs in each selected province. Then a total of 16 EQCCs (4 centers per province) were randomly selected using systematic randomization. The selection details are as follows.

(2.1) A sampling interval was calculated using the following formula:  $k = N/n$ . Then a random start (R) was made with a number between 1 and k. After that, the samples were drawn from the research units with R, R+k, R+2k... until reaching the sample size needed.

(2.2) Once N was not divisible by n, the researcher would use 3 decimal places. When k had a decimal point, it would be rounded to the nearest integer according to universal math principles.

(2.3) The list of EQCCs that were finally selected from each province and region was shown in Table 1.

**Table 1** List of Selected Elderly Quality of Life Development and Career Promotion Centers

Region	Province	List of EQCCs (Research Units)		Number
Central	Phra Nakhon	- Tha Din Daeng EQCC	- Hantra EQCC	4
	Si Ayutthaya	- Ban Phaen EQCC	- Talat Kriap EQCC	
North	Nan	- Muang Jang EQCC	- Thum Tong EQCC	4
		- Du Tai EQCC	- Fai Kaew EQCC	
Northeast	Buriram	- Khok Klang EQCC	- Buriram EQCC	4
		- Thamen Chai EQCC	- Ban Dan EQCC	
South	Phang Nga	- Takua Pa EQCC	- Khok Charoen EQCC	4
		- Nop Pring EQCC	- Tak Daet EQCC	
A total of 16 Elderly Quality of Life Development and Career Promotion Centers				

### Step 2 Determine the Sample Size

The sample size was determined using the G\*Power program with the “Linear multiple regression: Fixed model,  $R^2$  deviation from zero” option (effect size = 0.02, error prob. = 0.05, and power (1-B error prob.) = 0.95). As the previous parameter estimates were unknown, the effect size was automatically set at 0.15 (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, and Buchner, 2007: 124-125). The reliability value was set at 0.95 with an acceptable error probability of 0.05. The resulting sample size required for the quantitative research was shown in Table 2.

**Table 2** Sample Size Calculated by the G\*Power 3.1.9.2 Program**Linear multiple regression:** Fixed model, R<sup>2</sup> deviation from zero**Analysis:** A priori: Compute required sample size

<b>Input:</b>	Tail(s)	= Two
	Effect size f <sup>2</sup>	= 0.15
	$\alpha$ err prob	= 0.05
	Power (1- $\beta$ err prob)	= 0.95
	Number of predictors	= 8
<b>Output:</b>	Non-centrality parameter $\lambda$	= 24.00
	Critical F	= 2.00
	Numerator df	= 8
	Denominator df	= 151
	Total sample size	= 160
	Actual power	= 0.95

G\*Power 3.1.9.2 Copyright © 1992-2014

From Table 2, the G\*Power program was used to calculate the sample size with the effect size of 0.15 and the number of predictors was set at 8. Finally, the actual reliability value was reported at 0.95 and the appropriate sample size of 160 was obtained. After 16 EQCCs were selected and the appropriate sample size of 160 was determined, the researcher used a non-proportional stratified random sampling technique and sampling by lottery to select the samples from each 16 EQCCs, as the details are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3** Non-Proportional Stratified Sampling and Number of Samples in each Stratum

Province	List of EQCC (Research Units)	Number of Committee Members (N)	Number of Samples (n)
Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya	- Tha Din Daeng EQCC	19	10
	- Ban Phaen EQCC	16	10
	- Hantra EQCC	23	10
	- Talat Kriap EQCC	12	10
Nan	- Muang Jang EQCC	18	10
	- Du Tai EQCC	25	10
	- Thum Tong EQCC	13	10
	- Fai Kaew EQCC	20	10
Buriram	- Khok Klang EQCC	13	10
	- Thamen Chai EQCC	12	10
	- Buriram EQCC	11	10
	- Ban Dan EQCC	17	10
Phang Nga	- Takua Pa EQCC	10	10
	- Nop Pring EQCC	20	10
	- Khok Charoen EQCC	17	10
	- Tak Daet EQCC	12	10
<b>Total Population and Samples</b>		<b>258</b>	<b>160</b>

Regarding the key informants of the qualitative research, the purposive sampling method was used to select 32 key informants that were comprised of 1) 16 chairmen/vice chairmen of EQCCs and 2) 16 chief executives/chief administrators of local administrative organizations.

**Data Collection:** In terms of the quantitative research, the data was collected using questionnaire, which was composed of 4 parts: 1) the general information of the respondents,

2) the factors affecting the operational achievements of EQCCs, 3) the operational achievements of EQCCs, and 4) the suggestions for the development of EQCCs. The research instrument was already passed the validity test with the IOC (Index of Item-Objective Congruence) values of 0.80-1.00 and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.94.

Considering the qualitative research, the researcher collected the data with the Delphi technique consisting of 2 research procedures. The research instrument of the first research procedure was open-ended questionnaire composed of 3 parts: 1) the problems and obstacles of EQCCs, 2) the approaches to solving those problems and obstacles, 3) the approaches to developing the operational achievements of EQCCs. As for the second research procedure, the research instrument was rating scale questionnaire, which was developed based on the results of the first research procedure concerning the approaches to solving the operational problems and developing the operational achievements of EQCCs.

**Data Analysis:** As for quantitative research, the data analysis was conducted using a statistical computer program. The descriptive statistics used were frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. The statistics used for hypothesis testing were correlation coefficient and multiple linear regression analysis (MLRA). The enter method was used with a statistical significance level .05.

Regarding the qualitative research, the Delphi technique was used to analyze the data. The data obtained from the first research procedure was analyzed with the content analysis and grouping method. For the second research procedure, the data was analyzed using median and interquartile range.

## Research Results

### Results of the Quantitative Research

**General Information of the Respondents:** Most of the respondents had worked at EQCCs for more than 2 years ( $n = 59$ , 36.88%), followed by 1-2 years ( $n = 55$ , 34.38%), and less than 1 year ( $n = 46$ , 28.74%). It was also found that 10 respondents from each 16 EQCCs participated equally in the study ( $n = 10$ , 6.25%).

**Order of the Factors Affecting the Operational Achievements of EQCCs:** The results showed that, overall, the studied factors had a low effect on the operational achievements of EQCCs in Thailand ( $\bar{X} = 2.24$ ). When considering each factor individually, it was found that the mean scores of employee ( $X_8$ ,  $\bar{X} = 2.61$ ), operational resources ( $X_2$ ,  $\bar{X} = 2.58$ ), policy clarity ( $X_1$ ,  $\bar{X} = 2.56$ ) were at a high level, whereas the mean scores of organizational characteristics ( $X_6$ ,  $\bar{X} = 2.081$ ), participation ( $X_4$ ,  $\bar{X} = 2.04$ ), administrator ( $X_7$ ,  $\bar{X} = 2.047$ ), macro-environment ( $X_3$ ,  $\bar{X} = 1.99$ ), and communication ( $X_5$ ,  $\bar{X} = 1.98$ ) were at a low level, as the details are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4** Analysis of the Order of Factors Affecting the Operational Achievements of EQCCs

Factors Affecting the Operational Achievements	Order	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Level
Policy clarity ( $X_1$ )	3	2.56	0.87	High
Operational resources ( $X_2$ )	2	2.58	0.89	High
Macro-environment ( $X_3$ )	7	1.99	0.66	Low
Participation ( $X_4$ )	5	2.08	0.66	Low
Communication ( $X_5$ )	8	1.98	0.59	Low
Organizational characteristics ( $X_6$ )	4	2.08	0.66	Low
Administrator ( $X_7$ )	6	2.04	0.62	Low
Employee ( $X_8$ )	1	2.61	0.92	High
<b>Overall Effect on the Operational Achievements of EQCCs</b>		<b>2.24</b>	<b>0.39</b>	<b>Low</b>

**Operational Achievements Level of EQCCs:** The results indicated that the overall operational achievements of EQCCs in Thailand was at a low level ( $\bar{x} = 2.18$ ). When considering each operational aspect individually, it was found that the mean scores of the physical environment ( $\bar{x} = 2.25$ ), activity and service ( $\bar{x} = 2.24$ ), and mechanism and management ( $\bar{x} = 2.06$ ) were at a low level, as the details are shown in Table 5.

**Table 5** Analysis of the Operational Achievements of EQCCs

Operational Achievements	Order	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Level
Activity and service	2	2.24	0.46	Low
Physical environment	1	2.25	0.44	Low
Mechanism and management	3	2.06	0.46	Low
<b>Overall Operational Achievements of EQCCs</b>		<b>2.18</b>	<b>0.40</b>	<b>Low</b>

**Factors Affecting the Operational Achievements of EQCCs:** The analysis results showed that the multiple correlations between the independent variables and the operational achievements of EQCCs were at 0.99. All 8 independent variables could jointly predict the variance of the operational achievements with a predictive power of 99%. The results also indicated that the 8 independent variables had an effect on the operational achievements of EQCCs at a statistical significance level of 0.01. The details are shown in Table 6.

**Table 6** Analysis of Factors Affecting the Operational Achievements of EQCCs

Model $x_1 - x_8$		Unstandardized		Standardized t		Sig.
		b	S.E.	$\beta$ (Beta)		
Operational Achievements of EQCCs	<b>Constant</b>	0.00	0.02	-	0.21	0.83
	<b>X<sub>1</sub></b>	0.05	0.01	0.11	7.73	0.00**
	<b>X<sub>2</sub></b>	0.10	0.01	0.23	16.49	0.00**
	<b>X<sub>3</sub></b>	0.16	0.01	0.27	28.81	0.00**
	<b>X<sub>4</sub></b>	0.17	0.01	0.28	25.94	0.00**
	<b>X<sub>5</sub></b>	0.03	0.01	0.04	3.89	0.00**
	<b>X<sub>6</sub></b>	0.17	0.01	0.28	29.69	0.00**
	<b>X<sub>7</sub></b>	0.20	0.01	0.31	31.52	0.00**
	<b>X<sub>8</sub></b>	0.11	0.00	0.26	30.73	0.00**

**a. Dependent Variable =  $\hat{Y}$   $R = 0.99$   $R^2 = 0.99$   $R^2_{Adj} = 0.99$**

### Results of the Qualitative Research

The results of the qualitative research, which applied the Delphi technique to collect data from 32 key informants, were summarized below.

**General Information of the Key Informants:** The key informants were composed of 16 representatives from local administrative organizations (50%) and 16 representatives from EQCCs (50%). The majority of the key informants worked at sub-district administrative organizations ( $n = 24$ , 75.00%). Most of them had a duty to deal with EQCCs established in 2014 and 2018 ( $n = 14$ , 43.75%).

**Operational Problems and Obstacles of EQCCs:** The operational problems and obstacles of EQCCs could be divided into 3 aspects: 1) organizing activities and services, the first three problems and obstacles are first, ie the budget is not enough for the activities of the elderly with a frequency equal to 32 ( $f = 32$ ), followed by the insufficiency of local government officials for public relations services, activities including the service with a frequency equal to 30 ( $f = 30$ ) and lack of expert speakers who are the main leaders in the activity with a

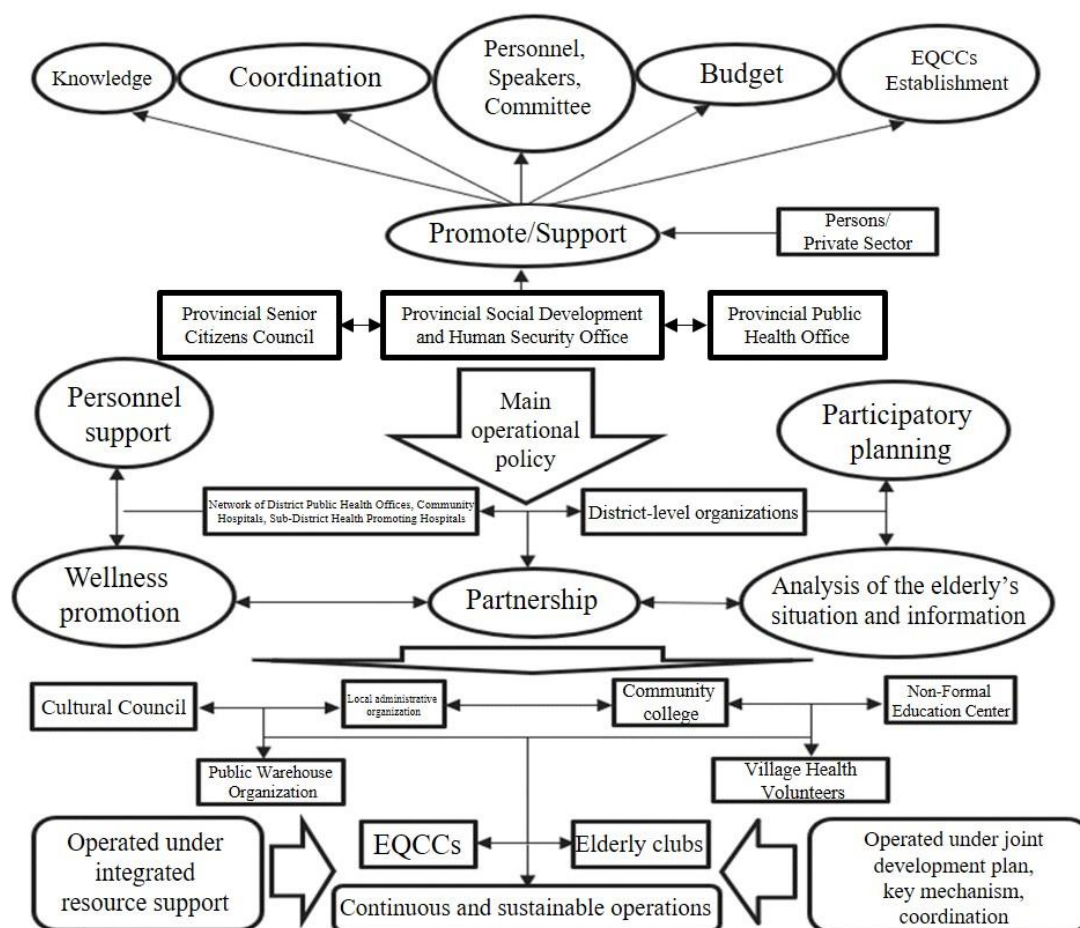


frequency of 28 ( $f = 28$ ). 2) physical environment, the first three problems and obstacles are first, ie the problem of the location of some activities is far from the village, travel inconvenience, unable to attend the event with a frequency equal to 4 ( $f = 4$ ), the problems of locations and equipment or exercise tools with the frequency value equal to 4 ( $f = 4$ ) and the problem of personnel who care about the physical environment is not enough has a frequency equal to 3 ( $f = 3$ ). 3) Mechanism and management, the first three problems and obstacles are first, ie budget shortages in management with a frequency equal to 19 ( $f = 19$ ), followed by lack of planning including problems of lack of integration of collaboration with a frequency equal to 12 ( $f = 12$ ) and a shortage of experts to help manage projects, especially specialized personnel in specialized management with a frequency equal to 11 ( $f = 11$ ).

**Approaches to Solving the Operational Problems and Obstacles of EQCCs:** The approaches to solving the operational problems and obstacles of EQCCs in 3 aspects were as follows: 1) activity and service: providing professional expert speakers and trainers and providing more materials and equipment for organizing activities related to traditional cultures. 2) physical environment: developing an environment that is suitable for the elderly and should consider the location of EQCCs to be convenient to travel 3) mechanism and management: assigning regional government agencies or local administrative organizations to be a mentor that gives useful management guidance on improving elderly screening system and creating a database of the elderly that want to work.

**Approaches to Developing the Operational Achievements of EQCCs and Suitability of the Proposed Approaches**

The approaches to developing the operational achievements of EQCCs were comprised of 3 development mechanism levels: 1) provincial level, 2) district level, and 3) sub-district/community level. Regarding the suitability of the proposed approaches, it was found that the proposed approaches in all 3 development mechanism levels were suitable for developing the operational achievements of EQCCs with the median values of 4.16 - 4.93 ( $Med = 4.16-4.93$ ) and the interquartile range of 0.50-1.00 ( $IQR = 0.50-1.00$ ). The results were used to create a pattern for developing the operational achievements of EQCCs in Thailand as shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 3** A Pattern for Developing the Operational Achievements of EQCCs

From figure 3, the approaches for each level of the EQCCs were comprised of 3 development mechanisms levels 1) provincial level: Provincial Social Development and Human Security Office, Provincial Public Health Office, Provincial Senior Citizens Council, Persons/Private Sector are a mechanism to implement by supporting the establishment of EQCCs, supporting the budget for organizing activities to improve the quality of life and promote the occupation of the elderly and providing knowledge on the welfare of the elderly under the Elderly Act. 2) district level: the network of District Public Health Offices, Community Hospitals, Sub-District Health Promoting Hospitals and District-level organizations are a mechanism to implement by acting as support personnel in the area of caring for care and maintain the health of the elderly. 3) sub-district/community level: Local Administrative Organization, Elderly clubs, Community Club, Cultural Council, Non-Formal Education Center, Non-Formal Education Center and EQCCs are a mechanism to implement by participating in activities of the elderly club in the area, driving operations and collaborate, providing support for leaders / speakers in the activities of the elderly and supporting the budget for the elderly activities in the area.

## Discussion

According to the research results, the overall operational achievements of the Elderly Quality of Life Development and Career Promotion Centers (EQCCs) was at a low level. Moreover, the EQCCs' operational achievements in 3 related aspects were found to be at a low level as well. This was probably because EQCCs still lacked appropriate elderly-exercise activities, career development activities led by local experts or senior volunteers, database

improvement, comprehensive activities, engagement in career promotion and social activities, and support from related agencies. It was also found that the frequency of EQCCs' external and internal activities was lower than determined (3 times per week) and that EQCCs had organized less than two additional activities. The present research results are in line with the findings of the results of the policy implementation of Provincial Police Region 2 of Siripokha (2009), which suggest that the overall policy implementation results of Provincial Police Region 2 are at a low level. Among all 3 related aspects, the implementation results in one aspect are at a moderate level, whereas those in the other two aspects are at a low level. The research results indicated that there were 8 factors affecting the operational achievements of EQCCs, which is consistent with the research hypothesis. This may be because an administrator plays a key role in driving the implementation of plans and determining practical visions. Participation is a factor that can contribute to the success of policy implementation, bring about support from political, legal, central, and local agencies, and lead to efficient and quick coordination and effective cooperation. Macro-environment covers economic, social, and political environment at the regional and local levels. It refers to the public's understanding and good attitude towards the policy implementation as well as the private sector's and local communities' willingness to support the implementation of the policy that is appropriate to each area. An employee is an important element in building organizational cooperation, creativity, morale, problem-solving and decision making culture, work-conducive atmosphere, operational flexibility. It is also an essential factor for the achievement of every organization, including the public sector. Operational resources have an influence on the overall performance of EQCCs, as they are associated with having sufficient operational budget, suitable operational facilities, appropriate tools and equipment, adequate durable goods and operational media and materials, and appropriate place of operation. Operational resources are considered an important element in driving the implementation of government policies according to the prescribed standards or achievement indicators. Policy clarity is a factor affecting the overall performance of EQCCs because clear, concise, and consistent policies can make administrators and employees better understand their operational goals. Communication also has an effect on the overall performance of EQCCs because a clear communication of EQCCs' operations and activities helps make the public understand EQCCs' compliance with government policies and continuously recognize EQCCs' operational activities, which will lead to better understanding between the government, private, and public sector, efficient collaboration among related agencies, and achievement of standards or policy indicators. This is consistent with a study titled "Implementation of the Policy on the Promotion and Development of the Quality of Life of the Disabled in Thailand" of Chumrom (2013), which suggests that the factors statistically significantly affecting the implementation of the policy on the promotion and development of the quality of life of the disabled are human resources, budget, materials and equipment, and compliance with schedule. The research results are in line with a research study titled "Factors Impinging upon the Success of Narcotics Suppression Bureau in Implementing Narcotics Resolution Policy" of Makchuay (2015), which indicates that the factor impinging upon the success of the Narcotics Suppression Bureau at a statistical significance level is budget. This is also similar to a study titled "Policy Implementation Model of Kalasin Provincial Administrative Organization" of Lortrakul (2017), which suggests that the factors influencing the policy implementation of Kalasin Provincial Administrative Organization include responsible agencies, personnel, budget, and materials and equipment, which are considered important elements for the success of policy implementation.

### **Research Results and Public Administration Knowledge**

According to the research results, it was found that the overall operational achievements of

the Elderly Quality of Life Development and Career Promotion Centers (EQCCs) was at a low level. EQCCs are generally aimed to provide community-based social welfare service for the elderly in local areas. The elderly, local leaders, volunteers, communities, and public and private network organizations are allowed to take part in and drive the operations of EQCCs, while local administrative organizations play a role in providing additional support. However, in reality, the Department of Older Persons has tried to increase the number of EQCCs and focused on constructing or renovating EQCCs' buildings rather than paying attention to the quality of EQCCs' management and activities. This reflects that the EQCCs' policies were determined by the Department of Older Persons and the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security based on the "Elite Model" without taking into account the opinions of other related parties, especially the elderly and local volunteers, who are the main mechanism to drive the operations of EQCCs. The Department of Older Persons tends to understand the problem of ageing population in Thailand and realize that poor elderly people in rural areas are comprised of both bed-bound, home-bound, and socially active elders. The establishment of EQCCs allows the members of various elderly clubs to do activities together. The chairman of each EQCC is selected from the presidents of elderly clubs. Although the problems and current situation of the elderly are recognized by the Department of Older Persons and the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, other operational possibilities of EQCCs are still not comprehensively taken into account. This makes EQCCs become the burden to local administrative organizations, as they have to act as a mentor or a secretary that provide various advice and assistance to EQCCs, for example, helping EQCCs write a proposal to ask for budget from related agencies such as the National Health Security Office, which finally results in policy implementation problems.

Considering the operations of EQCCs, it was found that all operations of EQCCs are managed through the committee organization structure. The advantage of this approach is that it can prevent a monopoly of power or dictatorial management. Moreover, setting up a committee comprising people from various fields makes every committee member understand and recognize the problems that others are facing, which can contribute to smooth coordination. However, the weakness of this approach is that it can result in a waste of management resources, especially when the committee members spend most of their time arguing about solutions until some problems cannot be solved in time. Additionally, most EQCCs' committee members are volunteers that work without pay, whereas the members of EQCCs are mostly older people with different backgrounds such as government pensioners, farmers, laborers, and the unemployed. This can possibly lead to many problems such as economic readiness of the committee members, limitation of time and travel, limited management knowledge, coordination issues, proposal writing, and meeting difficulties.

In addition, due to a lack of budget, EQCCs could not organize activities for the members according to the predetermined goals. In order to obtain a budget from other financial sources such as the Division of Older Fund Administration, Social Welfare Promotion Fund, Thai Health Promotion Foundation, and National Health Security Office, the committee members need to have knowledge and ability to write a proposal or ask for help from local administrative organizations. Each external organization seems to have different budget allocation criteria, for example, the National Health Security Office will provide financial support to a project that aims to promote good health solely. Therefore, obtaining budget from other organizations is not as easy as expected. Moreover, local administrative organizations can provide only limited support to EQCCs because of a lack of local personnel.

Regarding EQCCs' goal to become a career development center for the elderly, it was found that there was no Elderly Quality of Life Development and Career Promotion Center that could achieve this goal due to the age of elderly members that had an effect on their physical

health such as shivering hands and poor eyesight. Moreover, there was no labor market for elderly people. This made EQCCs unable to achieve the goal of becoming a career development center for the elderly.

The present research results, which indicated that the factors affecting the operational achievements of EQCCs were an administrator, participation, organizational characteristics, macro-environment, employee, operational resources, policy clarity, and communication, helped confirm that the theories of policy implementation could be used to explain the operational performance of EQCCs.

In order to achieve good operational achievements, EQCCs have to build a “network” to integrate efforts and operations of all related departments in a systematic and practical manner so that all of them can fulfill the missions of EQCCs and complete their own duties at the same time. This is considered a new paradigm, where the relationship between people within and across organizations shifts from hierarchical to networking. The main condition of networking is that EQCCs’ members and other related organizations must continually communicate with each other through a coordinator, who should be a committee member with knowledge to write a proposal, coordinating skills, creativity, and ability to facilitate networks at the provincial, district, and community levels. In this way, EQCCs will be able to achieve operational efficiency and effectiveness.

In addition, the knowledge about the evaluation of the achievement of the organization which found that the measurement of achievement should be used in a variety of approaches, such as the goal attainment approach, although evaluating the effectiveness of the organization with the goal criteria, it is an important tool in creating administrative efficiency for the collective organization. But the aim of the final goal alone may be the problem of using resources not worth it, lack of attention to the various activities of the organization, which should be careful in implementing this approach. The goals must be clearly identified and understood. The target must have an appropriate amount of management and such goals must be accepted or agreed to all parties. The approach for evaluating the effectiveness of goal attainment and systematic organizations are not much different. Actually, it is the goal of the organization as being more related to the environment. Assessment of effectiveness according to the approach, especially the evaluation of that internal process, organizational effectiveness and employee satisfaction are the tools of the organization's long-term existence. Another advantage of this method is to help executives assess the progress of activities. And system resource approach, the effectiveness of the organization may not be considered only the final achievement criteria. System resource approach is a criterion that connects various systems together, especially the provision or import of external resources to change the condition into a product or service.

## **Recommendations**

### **Recommendations from the Research Results**

The overall operational performance of EQCCs was at a low level and the achievements in the aspect of the physical environment were higher than other aspects. Therefore, the Department of Older Persons should place importance on developing the quality of management mechanisms and activities instead of increasing the number of EQCCs.

The overall operational achievements of EQCCs was at a low level and communication was a factor that gained the lowest mean score. Thus, EQCCs should continuously and clearly promote their operations and activities in order to make community members better understand the operations of EQCCs, acquire more members, and obtain cooperation and support. If EQCCs’ members rarely participate in provided activities, the establishment of EQCCs will be useless.

Regarding the problems of EQCCs in the aspect of the physical environment, it was found that some activity places were far from a community and not easily accessible and there was a lack of equipment for organizing activities. Therefore, the Department of Older Persons should review the criteria for budget allocation and seriously consider the establishment location of EQCCs before approving the budget.

The problems of EQCCs in the aspect of mechanism and management included a lack of budget, work planning, cross-organizational coordination, integrated cooperation, and management experts. The Department of Older Persons should provide EQCCs with an initial management budget, limit the expansion of EQCCs, and pay more attention to improving the management ability to exist EQCCs so that they can rely on themselves, establish strong internal management, and have the readiness to build their own cooperative network.

The problems of EQCCs in the aspect of activity and service included the insufficient budget for organizing activities. Therefore, in the short term, EQCCs should use activities of an elderly club until receiving enough budget to organize their own activities. At the same time, EQCCs should coordinate with other organizations at the provincial, district, and community levels in order to build a working network and obtain the budget and expert speakers to enhance their organizational strength.

Local administrative organizations and EQCCs should use the proposed model for solving operational problems and developing operational achievements of EQCCs to determine their operational plans in order to solve related problems and obstacles and improve the operational performance of EQCCs in the future.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

Future research should be carried out to assess the operational achievements of EQCCs after applying the achievements development model resulting from this research and examine the lessons learned from the application of this development model. The target population of future research should be EQCCs' committee members. A mixed method approach, including both group discussions and interviews, should be used to collect data. Moreover, the operational achievements of EQCCs in the perception of elderly members should also be examined in order to ensure the consistency of research results.

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