

Measurement of Municipal Performance Achievement: A Comparative Study of Three Municipalities¹

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งานวิจัยฉบับนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาตัวแบบการวัดผลสัมฤทธิ์ในการทำงานของเทศบาลและทำความเข้าใจความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างตัวแบบในตัวแบบซึ่งจะใช้วัดผลสัมฤทธิ์ในการทำงานของเทศบาลไทยและทดสอบตัวแบบที่ได้รับการพัฒนาขึ้นกับข้อมูลจากเทศบาลตัวอย่าง นอกจากนั้น งานวิจัยฉบับนี้ยังมีวัตถุประสงค์ที่จะพัฒนาตัวแบบที่เหมาะสมเพื่อวัดผลสัมฤทธิ์ในการทำงานของเทศบาลไทยด้วย

กรอบแนวความคิดการวิจัยได้รับการพัฒนาจากตัวแบบ barangวัสดุคุณภาพแห่งชาติของสหรัฐอเมริกาและได้รับการทดสอบทางสถิติเพื่อตรวจสอบความเหมาะสม

ผลสัมฤทธิ์ในการทำงานของเทศบาลซึ่งถูกวัดจากตัวแบบ 7 ตัวประกอบด้วย ภาวะผู้นำของผู้บริหารระดับสูง การวางแผนเชิงกลยุทธ์ การให้ความสำคัญต่อประชาชนในท้องถิ่น การจัดการระบบสารสนเทศ การสร้างความ

¹ Note: The three municipalities are among central Thailand's town municipalities, comprising the Suphanburi municipality, the Bangbuathong municipality, and the Sena municipality. They are different in terms of their size as stipulated by the Central Committee of Municipal Officials. Suphanburi is a large municipality, Bangbuathong, a large medium-sized municipality, and Sena, a small medium-sized municipality.

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พึงพอใจให้แก่เจ้าหน้าที่และลูกจ้าง กระบวนการจัดการ และผลงานของเทศบาล แสดงให้เห็นว่า ผลสัมฤทธิ์ในการทำงานของเทศบาลเมืองสุพรรณบุรีอยู่ในระดับสูง (ร้อยละ 79.1) เทศบาลเมืองบางบัวทองและเทศบาลเมืองเสนาอยู่ในระดับค่อนข้างสูง (ร้อยละ 68.6 และ 68.2 ตามลำดับ) สำหรับภาวะผู้นำของผู้บริหารระดับสูงนั้น เทศบาลเมืองสุพรรณบุรีและเทศบาลเมืองบางบัวทองได้รับผลสัมฤทธิ์ในการทำงานจากบัวจันนี้อยู่ในระดับสูง ในขณะที่เทศบาลเมืองเสนาอยู่ในระดับค่อนข้างสูง ในด้านการวางแผนเชิงกลยุทธ์ เทศบาลเมืองสุพรรณบุรีได้รับผลสัมฤทธิ์ในการทำงานจากบัวจันนี้อยู่ในระดับที่สูงมาก ในขณะที่เทศบาลเมืองสุพรรณบุรีและเทศบาลเมืองเสนาอยู่ในระดับสูง

ในด้านการส่งผลกระทบของปัจจัยต่างๆ นั้น พบว่า การวางแผนเชิงกลยุทธ์ และการจัดการระบบสารสนเทศส่งผลกระทบโดยตรงต่อการให้ความสำคัญต่อประชาชนในท้องถิ่น การจัดการระบบสารสนเทศส่งผลกระทบทางอ้อมต่อการให้ความสำคัญต่อประชาชนในท้องถิ่นและการวางแผนเชิงกลยุทธ์ การให้ความสำคัญต่อประชาชนในท้องถิ่นส่งผลกระทบโดยตรงต่อความพึงพอใจของประชาชน ในท้องถิ่น ภาวะผู้นำของผู้บริหารระดับสูงส่งผลกระทบทางอ้อมต่อความพึงพอใจของประชาชนในท้องถิ่นผ่านทางการให้ความสำคัญต่อประชาชนในท้องถิ่น กระบวนการจัดการส่งผลกระทบโดยตรงต่อการสร้างความพึงพอใจให้แก่เจ้าหน้าที่ และลูกจ้าง ในขณะที่การพัฒนาความพึงพอใจให้แก่เจ้าหน้าที่และลูกจ้างส่งผลกระทบทางอ้อมต่อความพึงพอใจของเจ้าหน้าที่และลูกจ้างผ่านทางกระบวนการจัดการ

Abstract

This paper examines a model for the measurement of municipal performance achievement in order to understand the relationships among the variables in a model constructed for the measurement of municipal performance achievement.

of municipal performance achievement in Thailand and to test the developed model with selected municipalities. This study is also aimed at creating an appropriate model for the measurement of municipal performance in Thailand.

The conceptual model was developed based on the criteria of the American Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award and tested through statistical analysis.

The results of the overall municipal performance achievement from seven variables, those being leadership of senior executives, strategic planning, local resident focus, information system management, development of official and employee satisfaction, the management process, and municipal results reveal that the performance achievement of the Suphanburi municipahty overall is high (79.1%), that of the Bangbuathong municipahty is fairly high (68.6%), and that of the Sena municipahty is also fairly high (68.2%). Regarding the leadership of senior executives, the performance achievements of the Suphanbun municipahty and the Bangbuathong municipality are high, and that of the Sena municipahty is fairly high. With reference to strategic planning, the performance achievements of the Suphanburi municipahty is very high, and those of the Bangbuathong and Sena municipahties are high.

Both strategic planning and information system management exert direct influences upon local resident focus, and information system management exerts an indirect influence upon local resident focus through strategic planning. Local resident focus exerts direct influences upon local resident satisfaction and the leadership of senior

executives exerts an inductive influence upon local resident satisfaction through local resident focus. The management process exerts a direct influence over municipal official and employee satisfaction, whereas development of official and employee satisfaction exerts an indirect influence over municipal official and employee satisfaction through the management process.

General Background

Municipal administration is one of the major local administrative organizations the government uses to manage urban communities. The communities accommodate city residents, many of whom are knowledgeable and capable, with economic, political and cultural potentials. Despite the aforementioned facts, previous academic findings reveal that Thailand's municipalities have encountered problems and obstacles in program implementation, such as having numerous responsibilities while being allocated with limited financial support. Municipal laws and regulations are uncertain and ineffective; thus officials are unable to provide effective services for the people. Central and provincial government bodies often exercise close supervision and unnecessary control over the municipalities, resulting in lack of freedom, discretionary power, and initiatives by the municipalities, negatively affecting the administration of municipalities (Nanthawat Baramanant, 2000; Kowit Puang-ngam, 2000; and Thanet Jareonmuang, 2001). After the promulgation of the 1997 Constitution, there have been considerable changes in terms of the decentralization of power from central and provincial governments to local authorities, aimed at creating greater local autonomy and future self-containment. Since then, the government and

the citizens alike have placed more emphasis on local administration and regard it as a major task of the government. The government has formulated 14 articles as legal mechanisms to help solve problems and to reform local government administration. The Constitution further facilitates legal amendment on municipal laws and regulations regarding direct election of municipal mayors, for instance the Municipal Act 2546 B.E., the Plan Formulation and Decentralization Procedure for Local Administration Act 2542 B.E., and the Impeachment of Members of Council and Local Administration Act 2542 B.E.

Decentralization initiatives from policy-level agencies to implementation units, as well as the expansion and growth of the municipalities into various types such as tourist attractions, business hubs, and industrial areas, have convinced both politicians and administrators that the lack of policy formulation as a framework for local administration, the paucity of guidelines for policy implementation to achieve intended performance, and an inadequate measurement system for municipal performance will exacerbate existing problems of most of Thailand's municipalities. Such problems as traffic congestion, pollution, and crime, which affect people's well-being, will continue to plague urban areas.

In addition, the Plan Formulation and Decentralization Procedure for Local Administration Act 2542 B.E. indicates mission transfer, a public service management system, inter-local personnel transfer, and tax and revenue proportion modification between local administration bodies and other government re-organization will increase pressure on local authorities. For instance, in the year 2544 B.E., local revenues were to rise to 20% of those of the central government, and by the year 2549 B.E. they

will be as high as 35%. This implies that the municipality will have a greater budget and more opportunity to self-administer with more freedom. It is therefore imperative that the municipalities utilize their resources and opportunities in order to maximize their efficiency and effectiveness in providing services to people.

In order to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the government administration as a whole and to ensure the well-being of the people, the government has issued the National Administrative Act (5th Revision) 2545 B.E., which indicates that the government administration be carried out through the new government administration system and new budget system (result-based budgeting system). According to these new systems, mission analysis has to be performed prior to the formulation of vision, policies, targets, intended achievement, achievement indicators, outputs and outcomes. The units then will transform policies into clear strategies and detailed operating plans which will facilitate transparent and accountable coordination. This government initiative has encouraged some policy-level agencies to develop, study, and search for standard systems of management and performance achievement of public organizations. For example, Thailand's International Standard for Public Sector Institute of the Office of Civil Service Personnel has introduced Thailand's international Public Sector Standard Management system and outcomes (Thailand International PSO) as guidelines for public organizations to carry out functions with definitely stated achievements as end results. The guidelines cover such crucial factors as service coverage, people satisfaction, efficiency of units, economy, quality, public interest preservation, well-being, and quality of life. It is advisable that public agencies respond to government policy by resorting

to these guidelines in measuring organizational performance achievement, which will help them accomplish concrete results.

With regard to municipal administration, there have already been some guidelines on specific dimensions and missions, for instance the performance efficiency of public utility services. In the near future, it is expected that central and provincial agencies will transfer more functions and responsibilities to local governments. In order that municipalities acknowledge their own performance achievement and use the information as guidelines to improve implementation and eventually achieve objectives and respond to people's requests in concrete terms, it is imperative that some guidelines be provided for the measurement of municipal performance achievement according to the processes and work categories which, as a consequence, will determine the success of municipal work.

This study aims at answering the following questions:

- 1) What does a model for the measurement of municipal performance achievement in Thailand look like?
- 2) What are the performance achievements of the municipalities selected for a case study?
- 3) What are the relationships among the variables in the model for the measurement of municipal performance achievement in Thailand?

Formulation of a Conceptual Framework

The researcher has adopted the American Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (Baldrige National Quality Program, 2003), which has been used by many countries as a fundamental model to create their own national quality awards, as a conceptual framework. However, some

internal components of the Malcolm Baldrige model are not practical to be adopted directly to the study of Thai municipalities. One reason is that the model has been designed to evaluate overseas business organizations which have different structures and work processes from those of Thailand's local administrative and public agencies. The researcher, therefore, has conducted a review of municipal administration and working patterns in order to adjust the model to be appropriate for an evaluation of the selected Thai municipalities. The adjusted framework is illustrated in figure 1.

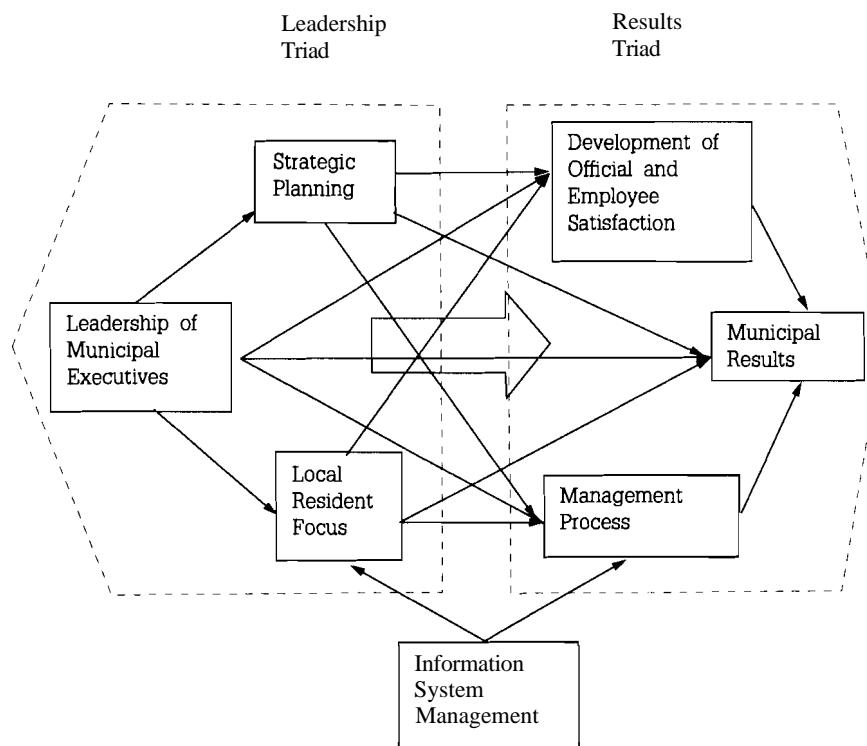


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Development of the Model for the Measurement of Municipal Performance Achievement

None of the previous research studies has examined all seven criteria together. Hence, in order to provide a holistic framework for the application of the Malcolm Baldrige Award model, an attempt should be made to examine all seven categories combined. This would require empirical research to identify the items associated with the seven categories and to investigate specific linkages between them. Better understanding of the interdependence among the variables will help practitioners and researchers identify the factors that are critical for successful implementation of the Malcolm Baldrige Award model.

Evaluation of quality improvement efforts in an organization should be an ongoing process. Thus far, only a few empirical studies have proposed instruments to evaluate the effectiveness of Malcolm Baldrige Award constructs. Furthermore, most research studies did not identify all of the important constructs. Hence, in order to monitor the progress of quality management variables, the elements of critical measures of performance should be identified and operationalized.

Further, it is important to know how and why various Malcolm Baldrige Award variables exert an impact on the quality of goods and service provision. Moreover, the relationships between the Malcolm Baldrige Award variables and traditional measures of an organization's performance are inter-correlated and difficult to identify.

The impact of external variables, such as organizational size, technological change, and culture on the effectiveness of the Malcolm Baldrige Award variables, also needs to be explored.

An international comparison study of the Malcolm Baldrige Award application should explore corporate culture issues. It is also important to examine the strategies identified by firms in order to manage and incorporate technological changes into the Malcolm Baldrige Award environment.

Considering the diversity of the Malcolm Baldrige Award variables and the interdependence among them, the research agenda will be well-served by interdisciplinary research teams. For example, customer satisfaction has long been considered the domain of marketing. However, the Malcolm Baldrige Award philosophy requires an interdisciplinary approach, linking marketing with design, production planning, production, and distribution to delight customers. Also, as pointed out by industry leaders and academicians, it is equally important for the business community and academia to work together when exploring these issues.

Therefore, the proposal of the Malcolm Baldrige Award model for Thailand's municipal administration is useful as guidance for further implementation and application of the model in order to enhance organizational performance and service provision effectiveness.

The conceptual framework yields the following major seven variables and minor variables within each of them for further analysis, as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Major Variables and Minor Variables for the Study

Major Variables	Minor Variables
Leadership of senior executives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formulation of vision, targets, and approaches to municipal work - Communication of vision, targets, and approaches to municipal work - Municipal administration for local residents' benefit - Participation of stakeholders - Good public relations - Working with initiatives - Relationship between senior executives and local residents
Strategic planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Characteristics of strategic plan - Development of strategic plan - Implementation of strategic plan
Local resident focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collection of local residents' requests - Distribution of local residents' requests to municipal officials and employees - Development of services in relation to local residents' requests - Development of public relations with local residents - Enhancement of local resident participation
Information system management	

Table 1: Continue

Major Variables	Minor Variables
Development of official and employee satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education, training, and development of municipal officials and employees - Enhancement of municipal official and employee satisfaction - Working styles of municipal officials and employees
Management process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning - Organizing - Leading - Controlling
Municipal Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Municipal service delivery according to the Municipal Act 2496 B.E. - Municipal service delivery according to the annual municipal development plan - Other service deliveries - Municipal official and employee satisfaction - Local resident satisfaction towards municipal services

Research Hypotheses

The aforementioned literature review on the theories, conceptual framework, and relationship between variables relating to the measurement of municipal performance achievement leads to the following research hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Large municipahties, medium municipahties, and small municipahties have different levels of performance achievement.

Hypothesis 2: Strategic planning and information system management have positive effects on local resident focus.

Hypothesis 3: The leadership of senior executives and local resident focus have positive effects on local resident satisfaction towards municipal services.

Hypothesis 4: Information system management has a positive effect on the leadership and result triad.

Hypothesis 5: Leadership of senior executives, strategic planning, local resident focus, information system management, development of official and employee satisfaction, and the management process of a municipahty affect the results of municipal performance achievement.

Research Methodology

This study is based on survey research, in which data are collected from samples representing the target population through both quantitative and quahtative research methods. This exploratory research attempts to measure municipal performance achievement of the Suphanburi municipahty, the Bangbuathong municipahty, and the Sena municipality and to explain the relationship among seven factors, constituting a conceptual framework for the measurement of municipal performance achievement, namely leadership of senior executives, strategic planning, local resident focus, information system management, development of official and employee satisfaction, the management process, and municipal results. Quantitative analysis is conducted through an SPSS program adopting multiple regression and path

analysis techniques. Quahtative analysis is conducted through observations and interviews with municipal clerks, officials, employees, and local residents.

Quantitative and qualitative techniques are conducted with the assumption that the two techniques will complement each other in providing reliable and vahd information for data analysis.

This study focuses on the measurement of municipal performance achievement using a conceptual framework derived from the Malcolm Baldrige Quahty Award model. It also attempts to propose a framework and the relationships among seven factors involved in municipal performance achievement. Hence, the quantitative approach is the main method employed in this study.

Apart from using questionnaires, as well as observation and interview techniques, to obtain primary data, the researcher also obtained related documents concerning municipal affairs from various sources. Altogether, these provided important insights into the data analysis phase.

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis of this research is the municipahty, which as a consequence affects the data collection process. Data collection from various sources, including municipal clerks, vice municipal clerks, heads of operational branches, municipal officials and employees, and municipal residents are integrated into the organization-level data in order to represent the information of the entire organization.

Selection of Municipalities for a Case Study

In order to select the sample municipahties for the case study, the researcher used the following process:

- 1) Documentary search from annual municipal development plans, annual budget plans, and municipal magazines.
- 2) Interview with officials of the Department of Local Administration and the Department of Provincial Administration, Ministry of Interior.
- 3) A search through an electronic information source
- 4) Media reports of municipal performance
- 5) Field trips to the municipalities

Information searches from various sources and field trips to actual municipal sites helped categorize the differences of municipahties based on municipal size. Accurate measurement of performance achievement will facilitate consideration for improvement of municipal performance in various areas. The researcher has adopted a purposive sampling technique in order to designate three town municipahties in central Thailand, namely the Suphanburi municipality, the Bangbuathong municipality and the Sena municipahty, for case study. These three local administrative bodies have the following characteristics suited for the study.

- 1) All three municipahties have administrative structures, which are appropriate for necessary data collection and which can be correlated with the conceptual framework.
- 2) All three municipalities are different in terms of the size stipulated by the Central Committee of Municipal Officials. Suphanburi is a large municipality, Bangbuathong, a large medium-sized municipahty,

and Sena, a small medium-sized municipality. This method of categorizing the municipal size has, as well, been used to designate the levels of municipal administrators and municipal internal structures.

Results of Performance Achievement of Three Municipalities

The results of the overall municipal performance achievement of the three municipalities from seven variables reveal that Suphanburi municipality's overall performance achievement is high (79.1 percent), whereas the performance of the Bangbuathong municipahty and Sena municipahty are fairly high (68.6 percent and 68.2 percent, respectively).

Regarding leadership of senior executives, both the Suphanburi and Bangbuathong municipahty have high performance achievement in this area, at 79.6 percent and 71.3 percent, respectively, whereas the Sena municipahty has a fairly high performance achievement at 69.8 percent.

With strategic planning, the achievement of the Suphanburi municipahty is very high at 86.0 percent, whereas that of the Banguathong municipality and the Sena municipality is high (74.3 percent and 72.8 percent, respectively).

In local resident focus, both the Suphanburi and Bangbuathong municipahty have high performance achievement (75.6 percent and 72.2 percent, respectively). The Sena municipahty obtained a fairly high performance achievement at 64.4 percent.

Both the Suphanburi municipahty and the Sena municipality have high performance achievement (73.8 percent and 70.3 percent). In information system management, Bangbuathong municipahty's achievement is fairly high (at 62.1 percent).

The performance achievements of both the Bangbuathong municipality and the Sena municipahty in the development of official and employee satisfaction are fairly high (64.0 percent and 67.8 percent, respectively), while that of the Suphanburi municipality is high (78.1 percent).

Both the Suphanburi municipahty and the Sena municipahty obtained very high performance achievements at 83.1 percent and 82.1 percent, respectively, in the management process, while the Bangbuathong municipahty scored high in this area (71.4 percent).

With reference to municipal results, Suphanburi's achievement is high at 77.4 percent, whereas the achievements of both the Bangbuathong municipahty and the Sena municipality are fairly high (at 65.2 percent and 64.6 percent).

The Relationship among Variables in the Municipal Performance Achievement Model

This study presents a conceptual framework derived from the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award model. The finding reveals that the derived model can be applied to measure the performance achievement of municipalities in Thailand because the results of the quantitative analysis support this argument.

The quantitative analysis performed on the data obtained from the municipal clerks, vice clerks, and heads of operational branches shows that strategic planning, local resident focus, and information system management are significantly and highly correlated. The analysis result from the data obtained from local residents also shows a significantly moderate correlation among the leadership of senior executives, local resident focus,

and local resident satisfaction. The analysis of the data obtained from municipal officials and employees also confirms that the following factors, namely leadership of senior executives, local resident focus, information system management, development of official and employee satisfaction, the management process, and municipal official and employee satisfaction, have a significantly high correlation. The aforementioned relationships among variables within the model reflect the actual phenomena occurring within the sample municipalities.

Regarding the influence of variables upon one another, strategic planning and information system management highly affect local resident focus. The variation in the former two variables is capable of explaining the variation in the latter variable. This implies that the more effort a municipality puts into strategic planning and information system management, the more chances the municipality will have of identifying local residents' needs. Between information system management and strategic planning, the variation in the former is highly capable of explaining the variation in the latter. Thus it can be concluded that the more importance a municipality places on information system management, the more effective the municipality will be regarding strategic planning. In addition, both strategic planning and information system management have direct effects on local resident focus.

With regard to the influences of the leadership of senior executives, local resident focus, and local resident satisfaction upon one another, the more effort a municipality puts into the development of the leadership of senior executives and local resident focus, the greater the chance that local residents will be satisfied. As for direct effects, leadership

of senior executives exerts a direct influence on local resident focus, and local resident focus directly affects local resident satisfaction. Therefore, the more effort a municipality invests in developing the leadership of senior executives, the more the municipality will focus on local residents' needs. In addition, the municipality with better leadership of senior executives and higher local resident focus will have higher local resident satisfaction.

With reference to the influences among the six variables (namely, leadership of senior executives, local resident focus, information system management, development of official and employee satisfaction, the management process, and municipal official and employee satisfaction), both leadership of senior executives and local resident focus exert an influence on information system management. Therefore, the more effort a municipality puts into developing the leadership of senior executives and local resident focus, the better the information system management will be.

As regards development of official and employee satisfaction, the model shows that leadership of senior executives, local resident focus, and information system management exert an influence, either directly or indirectly, on the development of official and employee satisfaction. This means that the higher interest a municipality shows in the three variables, the higher the chance that the municipality will invest in developing official and employee satisfaction. The model demonstrates further influences, either directly or indirectly, of leadership of senior executives, local resident focus, information system management, and development of official and employee satisfaction on the management process. The municipal enhancement of the leadership of senior executives, local resident focus, information system

management, and development of official and employee satisfaction will result in increased achievement in the management process.

Finally, the management process, development of official and employee satisfaction, information system management, local resident focus, and leadership of senior executives altogether directly and indirectly affect municipal official and employee satisfaction. As a result, the effort which a municipality puts into the management process, development of official and employee satisfaction, information system management, local resident focus, and leadership of senior executives helps the ability of a municipality to increase municipal official and employee satisfaction.

The above-mentioned relationships among the seven variables in the model confirm the suitability of using this model to study and measure the performance achievement of a municipality.

The Results of the Municipal Performance Achievement from each Variable

Leadership of Senior Executives

The senior executives of the three municipalities do not provide opportunities for municipal officials and employees to participate in vision formulation. The senior executives of the Suphanburi and Banagbuathong municipality have formulated targets and approaches in most issues and have allowed the participation of their subordinates in some issues, whereas those of the Sena municipality have formulated targets and approaches in some issues and their subordinates do not participate in those undertakings.

Most municipal officials and employees are familiar with the executives' visions, targets, and approaches to some extent and are sometimes

able to put the approaches provided by the executives into practice to achieve targets. However, the senior executives of the Sena municipality do not communicate their visions, targets, or approaches extensively; therefore, most officials and employees do not understand these issues.

Most senior executives sometimes allow municipal officials and employees to participate in decision-making. The Suphanburi senior executives have adopted a decentralized format, while those in the Bangbuathong municipality centralize power with some issues. In the Sena municipality, the senior executives centralize and decentralize their power at an equal proportion, depending on circumstances.

The senior executives of the Suphanburi and Sena municipalities participate extensively in problem-solving activities for officials and employees. In the Bangbuathong municipality, the participation is less extensive.

All three municipalities have played a vital role in creating a good working atmosphere, with the Suphanburi municipality being the most active organization. The senior executives of the Suphanburi and Sena municipalities are very friendly to their subordinates, and sometimes consult with them about work problems they may have.

The senior executives sometimes exercise initiatives and provide support in finding and improving new working methods, as well as learning to adjust themselves in relation to the environment. In particular, the executives of the Suphanburi and Bangbuathong municipalities have formulated new rules and regulations to facilitate their work.

The outstanding achievements of the senior executives of the Suphanburi municipality comprise: 1) maintenance of community, market, gutter, and street cleanliness; 2) travel convenience through street and road

construction; and 3) gutter construction, flood prevention, trouble relief, and temple development.

The outstanding achievements of the senior executives of the Bangbuathong municipality comprise: 1) travel convenience through street and road construction; 2) maintenance of community, markets, gutters, and street cleanliness; and 3) paying attention to community welfare.

The outstanding achievements of the senior executives of the Sena municipality comprise: 1) maintenance of community, markets, gutters, and street cleanliness; 2) travel convenience through street and road construction; and 3) bridge construction during flood periods.

Strategic Planning

All three municipalities have formulated strategic plans or other similar plans, and have focused on prioritizing municipal problems or the needs of local residents. However, they do that in a discontinuous and unsystematic fashion.

The Suphanburi municipality and the Bangbuathong municipality have frequently designated objectives and strategies aimed at upgrading municipal work standards, as well as environmental analysis, to estimate organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, but the Sena municipality has never done so.

All three municipalities have followed some planning steps, such as formulation of visions, missions, and collective values, in developing their strategic plans. They also have formulated decent vision statements, which contain appropriate components of the good criteria of the vision statements. However, the missions of the Bangbuathong and Sena

municipalities lack some components, for instance, the aim to become a leading organization. The strategic plans of all three municipalities also encompass most organizational dimensions, such as personnel development and being in line with organizational working approaches, such as policy formulation. All municipalities have designated their personnel to be responsible for the implementation of the strategic plans and to follow crucial steps in the implementation phase, formulating most performance indicators and adhering to the timeframe in order to achieve the targets outlined in the plans.

In the implementation of a strategic plan, all three municipalities have formulated operational plans which contain fairly complete characteristics.

In the formulation of an operational plan, the Suphanburi municipality and the Sena municipality have followed necessary steps, integrated the relationship among related factors, and constructed concrete and practical performance indicators. The Bangbuathong municipality's operational plan, however, does not identify details about evaluation. In the development of operational plans, the Suphanburi municipality and the Bangbuathong municipality have organized regular meetings among the personnel responsible for project planning.

In the implementation of an operational plan, the Suphanburi municipality and Sena municipality have sometimes formulated plans to use technology in municipal work, and have revised and readjusted operation plans. The Sena municipality only has done so on some occasions.

The Suphanburi municipality and the Bangbuathong municipality have evaluated the work progress in some cases and on most occasions

have assigned municipal officials to be responsible for the evaluation. The Sena municipahty, on the other hand, has never done so.

Local Resident Focus

In reference to local resident focus, all three municipalities know the number of customers of some services. The Suphanburi municipality and the Bangbuathong municipality have collected local residents' needs through questionnaires, but the Sena municipahty has never done so. All three municipalities have never used advanced techniques, such as e-mail, to collect information on the residents' opinions. This may be because the use of e-mail is not prevalent in their areas. They also provide opportunities for local residents to lodge complaints directly to the senior executives. In order to find standards and benchmarks for their service deliveries, some municipalities, such as the Suphanburi municipahty, consult with other local organizations.

With reference to the distribution of information about local residents' demands on municipal officials and employees, the municipahties use several methods, such as circulation of documents, meetings, and notice postings. All three municipalities provide ample opportunities for people to provide them with information and to lodge complaints about municipal services. Sometimes, they organize community forums to learn of the people's problems and to receive proposals about desired projects to be put into the municipal development plans. On some occasions, they also organize the "Executives meet People" project.

Most people in all three municipahties are of the opinion that the municipahties provide an opportunity for local residents to participate in the administration of necessary community projects. The municipahties also

regularly monitor the results of service delivery.

With reference to public relations development, all three municipalities always provide opportunities for local residents to access and acknowledge information about municipal functions, income, and expenditures. Sometimes, they organize seminars to enhance knowledge among community committees, housewives' groups, and volunteers. Some municipalities, such as the Suphanburi municipality, have organized mobile municipal meetings. In the procurement process, they provide opportunities for local residents to participate in the hiring and purchasing process.

In the survey to formulate plans or to ascertain problems and people's requests, the municipalities normally use questionnaires, meetings, and community forums.

In order to promote public relations, the municipalities normally use leaflets and posters. Municipalities in upcountry areas, like the Suphanburi municipality and the Sena municipality, also use broadcasting lines and broadcasting towers to support their work.

Information System Management

As regards municipal information system management, ~~all~~ three municipalities have managed the information system on some issues. All three municipalities have also performed on other issues regarding the information system in a similar manner, including provision of opportunities for administrators to participate in information system development on some occasions, and asking for the demand of the users on some occasions. The information system has responded to the true needs of users on some occasions; however, the information system is difficult and complex to use in some stages.

The information system of **all** three municipahties is convenient, easy, and inexpensive to maintain. The Suphanburi municipahty has regularly organized training in the use of information systems for its administrators, whereas the other two municipalities have sometimes done so. All three municipahties have similarly provided security protection for the information system on some issues. The administrators also recommend that there be improvements on some issues regarding their information system, whereas the officials and employees of the Bangbuathong municipahty and the Sena municipality recommend that there be considerable improvements in the information systems. Both groups are slightly satisfied with the use of the systems.

All three organizations reason that only some issues of the information provide support for future work and are up-to-date. The Suphanburi municipality can search for required information quickly on some issues, while the Bangbuathong municipahty and Sena municipahty view the process as being slow. **All** three organizations, however, are of the same opinion that their current information systems are easy to understand. Finally, the systems help coordinate among personnel and support other organizations on some issues.

All three municipalities have collected information from various sources in comparable format for use in work process improvement and performance evaluation. Both the Suphanburi municipality and the Sena municipality have set up units to provide information services for local residents. The Suphanburi and Sena municipalities have also provided a budget for information system management.

Development of Official and Employee Satisfaction

The Suphanburi municipahty sometimes organizes orientation courses for new officials and employees, and establishes a mentor system to supervise newcomers. The other two municipalities have never done so. The Suphanburi and Bangbuathong municipality sometimes provide opportunities for personnel to use initiatives and exercise responsibility to improve their work approach, whereas the Sena municipality always does that. The Suphanburi municipality has, on some occasions, organized personnel training activities and training and seminars on information, computers, and the internet, and the officials and employees have been able to make use of the knowledge from the training, but the Bangbuathong municipality and Sena municipality have never done so. The Suphanburi municipality and Sena municipality have set procedures for the exchange of information among municipal officials and employees in some issues, but the Bangbuathong municipality has not done that.

The Suphanburi municipahty and Sena municipality have formulated plans that provide timely development of the skills of their officials and employees. The Bangbuathong municipality also has a plan but has not systematically implemented it accordingly. The Suphanburi municipality and Bangbuathong municipality do not provide facilities for officials or employees to develop their skills, while the Sena municipality does but with substandard elements. All three municipalities have provided training for their officials and employees to acquire knowledge on laws, regulations, and municipal directives but in an unsystematic manner.

The official employees of the Suphanburi and Bangbuathong municipalities think that their compensation is not appropriate in

relation to their duties, while those in the Sena municipahty think it is. The Suphanburi municipahty and the Bangbuathong municipality have in some areas formulated approaches to obtain access to the major factors affecting personnel satisfaction. Regarding working style, the officials and employees of the Suphanburi municipahty are energetic and punctual, while those of the other two municipahties are less energetic and less punctual. Despite this, all of them can accomplish their tasks within the allocated time and most of them are honest.

Management Process

In planning, the Suphanburi and Bangbuathong municipahties have sometimes provided opportunities to formulate the plan's targets through collective effort between the senior executives and the subordinates, while the Sena municipahty has most of the time provided opportunities to do so. The officials and employees in all three municipalities know some work targets, though their knowledge is not complete. *All* three municipahties have set service targets in most of their functions. In the designation of approaches to provide a timely follow-up on implementation, the Suphanburi and Bangbuathong municipalities have done so in most services, while the Sena municipahty has in some services. The Sena municipality has designated overall service targets, but the Suphanburi and Bangbuathong municipahties have not done so. As for the designation of approach on the collection of feedback to monitor the progress of plan implementation, the Suphanburi municipahty has done so in most cases, the Sena municipality in some cases, and the Bangbuathong municipahty in no cases.

Regarding organizing, the officials and employees of the Suphanburi

municipality are of the view that they have been delegated appropriate authority, while those of the Bangbuathong municipality and the Sena municipality think that their authority has been inappropriately delegated. Also, the personnel of all three municipalities think that the chain of command and the span of control in their municipalities contribute to the inefficiency of their work. All three municipalities have carried out some preparation on human resource development to respond to future situations; however, they are still unsystematic. They also have similar systems on human resource selection processes and lack middle-level personnel in some positions because of recent organizational reform and financial shortages to invest in human resources. With reference to one-stop service provision, the Suphanburi municipality has extensively provided for that, the Sena municipality has provided for that on some occasions, and the Bangbuathong municipality has no provisions for that.

With reference to leading, the senior executives of the Suphanburi municipality and the Baungbuathong municipality are slightly receptive to new ideas, whereas those of the Sena municipality are highly receptive. The senior executives of the Suphanburi municipality also exhibit a higher degree of caring for subordinates, whereas those of the other two municipalities show some caring. As for group needs, the senior executives of the Suphanburi municipality and the Sena municipality place high importance on the issue, whereas those of the Bangbuathong municipality place some importance on it. As regards industriousness and personal encouragement, the senior executives of the Suphanburi municipality and Sena municipality are highly regarded, whereas those of the Bangbuathong municipality are moderately regarded.

With reference to reliability, the senior executives of the Suphanburi municipahty and the Bangbuathong municipahty are sometimes reliable, but those of the Sena municipality are always reliable. In addition, the senior executives of the Suphanburi and Sena municipahties are always committed to their work, whereas those of the Bangbuathong municipahty are committed on some occasions. With respect to intelligence, the senior executives of the Suphanburi municipality are intelligent in dealing with most issues, while those of the other two municipalities are intelhgent regarding some issues. The senior executives of the Suphanburi municipality are very capable in communicating their vision, whereas those of the other two municipalities are only slightly capable. The senior executives of the Suphanburi municipality and the Sena municipality are also regarded as change agents on most issues, whereas those of the Bangbuathong municipahty are regarded so on some issues. The senior executives of the Suphanburi municipality and the Sena municipality are highly capable in task prioritization, conflict resolution, and negotiation, whereas those of the Bangbuathong municipality are moderately capable.

All three municipalities have designated performance achievement measures through various methods, including local resident satisfaction and governmental unit criteria. The Suphanburi municipality and the Bangbuathong municipahty have compared their performance measures with other agencies, while the Sena municipality has not done so. In monitoring and supervising job progress, as well as in amending laws and regulations to facilitate work implementation, the Suphanburi municipahty and the Sena municipality have extensively done so, whereas Bangbuathong has done so on some occasions.

Municipal Results

The municipal results obtained from municipal service delivery according to the Municipal Act 2496 B.E. reveal that all three municipalities have focused on various services at relatively similar weights. However, such activities as cleanliness of streets and public areas, garbage collection and disposal, prevention of communicable disease, and child and youth welfare, clearly contribute to the Suphanburi municipality's higher scores over the other two municipalities. From these areas, the Suphanburi municipality's performance achievement score is 81.2 percent, that of the Bangbuathong municipality 57.2 percent, and that of the Sena municipality 46.2 percent.

The municipal results obtained from municipal service delivery according to the Annual Municipal Development Plan reveal that the Suphanburi municipality obtained higher scores than the other two municipalities, especially in the economic development and social development areas. From this area, the Suphanburi municipality scored highest at 81.6 percent, the Sena municipality at 68.4 percent, and the Bangbuathong municipality at 59.2 percent.

Regarding the municipal results in the area of officials' and employees' satisfaction, the officials and employees of the Suphanburi and Sena municipalities are more highly satisfied with municipal measures on the resolution of their complaints and problems, whereas those of the Bangbuathong municipality are moderately satisfied. With respect to attitude toward work safety, the Suphanburi municipality's officials and employees feel that they are very safe, whereas those working in the other two municipalities feel less safe. Those workers working for the Suphanburi

municipality are highly satisfied with the working environment, while those working for the Bangbuathong municipality are moderately satisfied. Regarding job security, officials and employees in all three municipalities feel that they are highly secure.

As for the overall local residents' satisfaction with municipal performance, the Suphanburi residents are highly satisfied with the municipal performance, the Bangbuathong residents are highly satisfied with the municipal performance, and the Sena residents are moderately satisfied with the municipal performance.

Regarding the importance of variables affecting municipal performance achievement, all municipalities have placed leadership of senior executives on the top of the prioritization list, whereas local resident focus comes second and management process is listed third.

Recommendations

From the results of the study, the researcher has the following academically-related and policy-related recommendations.

Academically-Related Recommendations

1) The study considers seven variables, each as a major item. In a real situation, however, there are minor details within each variable which are yet to be considered due to limitations of time, complexity of the data collected from various sample groups, and the selection of appropriate statistical techniques in analyzing a structural equation model. Further study that focuses on the details and relationships of these minor components of each variable is recommended to confirm and expand the

scope and depth of the body of knowledge regarding this model.

2) Further research in comparative study among different types and levels of municipalities aimed at identifying variables having the capability to explain and influence municipal performance achievement is warranted. The result of the study should reinforce the reliability and validity of the body of knowledge.

Policy-Related Recommendations

1) Governmental agencies, such as the Ministry of Interior, should organize seminars to educate municipal senior executives (mayors and vice-mayors) throughout the country in order that they acquire knowledge concerning the measurement of municipal performance achievement, as well as realize and understand the relationships and influences of variables upon one another.

2) Governmental agencies, such as the Ministry of Interior, should coordinate human resource development programs which enhance the ability of municipal permanent officials at all levels on the measurement of municipal performance achievement so that they can efficiently and effectively identify the success of municipal service delivery to local residents.

3) Municipal senior executives, officials, and employees should encourage extensive participation of local residents in monitoring municipal functional implementation and providing accurate feedback to the municipality. This will enhance the ability of a municipality to provide the right and appropriate services according to the local residents' needs.

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