Desirable Attributes Transforming an Organization Established under a Special Act into a High-Performance Organization[*]

Gorn Huvanandana[**]

Kullatip Satararuji[***]

Phichai Ratnatilaka Na Bhuket[****]

Pornpun Prajaknate[*****]

Pornlert Arpanutud[******]

Prapon Sahapattana[*******]

Abstract

This research aims to examine the key attributes of organizations established under special acts within the context of Thai society that contribute to their status as High-Performance Organizations, effectively achieving their missions. Furthermore, it seeks to propose policies for enhancing the adaptability and responsiveness of these organizations to meet the needs of the nation and its citizens. Qualitative research methods, including document analysis, in-depth interviews, and group interviews, were employed to gather insights. The study involved a purposive sample of nine selected agencies. Data analysis involved concluding the information, identifying patterns, and understanding the

[**] Graduate School of Public Administration, National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA).
E-mail: organize.p20...@gmail.com
[***] Graduate School of Communication Arts and Management Innovation, National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA).
[****] Graduate School of Social Development and Management Strategy, National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA).
[*****] Graduate School of Communication Arts and Management Innovation, National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA).
[******] School of Liberal Arts, King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi.
[*******] Graduate School of Public Administration, National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA).

phenomena under investigation, ultimately allowing for the formulation of concrete and pertinent policy recommendations. The study's findings reveal several desirable characteristics for organizations established under special acts to achieve High-Performance status within the Thai societal context. These characteristics include:

Organizational Structure: The ability to swiftly adapt and respond to changes (Adaptability), coupled with flexibility (Agility), responsiveness to stakeholders, and the continuous development of work processes and technology.

Organizational Culture: Focusing on raising personnel awareness of service quality, prioritizing continuous learning, valuing competencies, and promoting shared values that prioritize the nation's interests.

Stakeholder Emphasis: Recognizing the importance of stakeholders and responding to external factors, which aids in understanding the genuine needs of service recipients and gaining support from the public sector and network partners.

Member Behavior: Encouraging members within the organization to respond to external factors and appreciate the significance of stakeholders. When such responses align with the organizational culture, they steer the behavior of all individuals within the organization towards shared goals, contributing positively to goal and mission attainment.

Furthermore, the study's results enable the synthesis of a successful organizational ecosystem for organizations established under special acts, which comprises both internal and external factors. At the individual level, effective collaboration and good governance among the organization's board of directors, directors, and the administrative office are essential. At the organizational level, a flexible and adaptable structure, coupled with a focus on cooperation and opportunities for other sectors to participate, is crucial. External success factors encompass freedom from political interference and support from the government and network partners.

Introduction

Government organizations in the Thai bureaucracy tend to exhibit a propensity for expansion in size and structure, resulting in a bloated and duplicative bureaucracy. Inflexible managerial techniques and a concentration of authority exacerbate this expansion. The existence of several antiquated regulations causes ineffectiveness. Thus, in an attempt to lessen these constraints and improve flexibility, the public service structure has been continuously reformed. As part of these reform efforts, new government agencies founded on the New Public Management (NPM) tenets will be established (Pollitt et al., 2001). This means that the old centralized government departments, bureaus, and ministries must be reorganized into somewhat autonomous organizations with clear goals. According to Tangsupvattana et al. (2011), these reorganized organizations are made to be effective, adaptable, agile, and able to operate with different social networks while discarding the limitations of the conventional bureaucratic hierarchy.

The following is a summary of the core principles of the New Public Management concept. Initially, it entails bringing management concepts from the private sector to the public sector. It has been noted that the organizational structures and management practices of the private sector work better for overseeing and carrying out public policies (Henry, 1995; Hood, 1991). Efficiency is prioritized, with an emphasis on resource economy and competition amongst government agencies. Priority is given to performance outcomes and professional management—which includes defining precise standards and operational indicators—is highly valued. Second, in order to give government organizations more operating flexibility, NPM supports decentralization and the easing of regulations (delegation and deregulation) (Hood, 1991). The focus is on decentralizing and delegating authority, easing various regulations to enhance the independence and flexibility of state organizations, and granting executives more discretion. Another key feature is that NPM relies on marketing mechanisms and contracts as management tools. It regards the market as a significant driving force and a pivotal mechanism for selecting the best contractual partners at the lowest cost in a competitive environment (Van De Walle & Hammerschmid, 2011). This may involve privatizing state enterprises (privatization), outsourcing work to external entities (contracting out), engaging in joint investments (joint ventures), and adopting franchising as tools for reforming the civil service system (Sadka, 2006).

On the contrary, New Public Management (NPM) is characterized by its emulation of private business management, focusing on input and output control and evaluation (Osborne, 2010). It perceives service recipients as customers. Nevertheless, this viewpoint has a weakness in that it oversimplifies people's role as mere customers. People aspire to be more engaged in government activities rather than being passive service recipients. Consequently, the concept of NPM has evolved towards a more collaborative approach, known as New Public Governance (NPG), which emphasizes networks and considers all sectors as part of a network in the policymaking process. NPG centers on resource allocation and collaborative problem-solving, reflecting the evolving complexity of global society in the 21st century, encompassing politics, economics, society, and environmental conditions, which impact public management in various ways (Osborne, 2010).

In Thailand, there are currently 24 organizations established under special acts, each with the potential to contribute to the country's development as intended at their establishment and as recognized by society. However, some of these agencies face scrutiny regarding their operational efficiency in achieving their intended objectives. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in the past two years has had severe repercussions on the economy, society, and people across the nation, affecting the operations of all 24 agencies to varying degrees. Some agencies have responded more effectively to the crisis, adapting and mitigating its impact. One of the key factors in their successful crisis management has been their ability to leverage cooperation and assistance from the public sector and the power of networks, aligning with certain aspects of the new public sector management concept (Osborne, 2010).

This research stands to gain significant advantages by consolidating and analyzing information concerning organizations established under special acts, to distill best practices. It seeks to compile these insights and draft policy recommendations that can guide the adaptation and management of organizations governed by special acts, aligning them with the evolving landscape. These recommendations will be presented to regulatory bodies and relevant stakeholders. Furthermore, the research aims to disseminate specialized knowledge that can be of value to a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including those engaged in public policy implementation, academia, and individuals interested in the management of organizations within this particular context. The primary objective of this study is to examine the desirable attributes of organizations governed by special acts within the

Thai context that allow them to become High-Performance Organizations capable of effectively fulfilling their missions and delivering impactful results.

Literature Review

The concept of High-Performance Organizations (HPOs) has been explored by scholars through various paradigms since the seminal study "In Search of Excellence" by Peters and Waterman in 1982. Achieving HPO status necessitates strategic planning and execution aligned with organizational objectives, including its vision and core mission. This involves the collaborative efforts of the organization's personnel to build resilience and maintain a focus on the consistent implementation of policies and strategies. De Waal (2007) defines high-performance organizations as those that outperform their peers in achieving financial objectives. Their ability to adapt to change and respond swiftly is reflected in their consistent and integrated organizational structure. They prioritize the development of organizational capabilities and core competencies, recognizing human capital as the organization's primary asset. Brokaw and Mullins (2006) highlight HPOs as organizations capable of advancing their established mission and vision, demonstrating adaptability, synergistic collaboration, and a forward-looking approach, with a focus on outcomes rather than processes.

Holbeche and Park (2015) suggest that HPOs are organizations capable of mobilizing their capacity to transform into innovative entities and enhance operational efficiency by reducing overly rigid hierarchical structures. They emphasize the cultivation of an organizational culture through human resource management to drive sustainable change. The Office of the Public Sector Development Commission characterizes a high-performance organization as one that can compete and provide high-quality service to customers while remaining resilient in the face of globalization.

Wanichaparat (2016) reviews the academic definitions of HPOs and summarizes them as follows.

Table 1. Reviewing the Meanings of High-Performance Organizations Given by Academics.

Meaning	Academic Source
1. Organization with sustainable growth	Collins and Porras, Van den Berg and De Vries, Weick and Sutcliffe
2. Organizations with the ability to adapt to match the environment	Kotter and Heskette, Weick and Sutcliffe, Light (2005)
3. Organizations that can quickly re-spond to the environment.	McGee, Light
4. Organizations that focus on long-term operations	Miller and Breton-Miller, Light
5. Organizations that are managed in a manner Integrated to create con-sistency between strategy, structure, processes, and people throughout the organization.	Lawler et al., O' Reilly and Pfeffer
6. Organization that focuses on im-provement and continuously develops the organization's capabilities	Holbeche, Lawler et al., O' Reilly and Pfeffer
7. An organization that takes time to improve working conditions and de-velop opportunities for personnel in the organization.	Holbeche, Kling, Lawler et al., O' Reilly and Pfeffer

Source: De Waal (2005: 12, cited in Lorsuwannarat, 2016: 188)

Lorsuwannarat (2016) summarized that, according to scholars, a high-performance organization is one that consistently achieves its objectives with superior performance results. Such an organization is characterized by its flexibility and ability to swiftly adapt its operations to keep pace with changes. It maintains a consistent workflow, employs up-to-date technology, and invests in personnel development. Additionally, Lorsuwanarat suggests that high-performance organizations should incorporate social responsibility into their practices to ensure sustainable

success. This entails developing the organization's potential and social awareness, demonstrating responsibility to society, the community, and the environment, and ultimately producing enduring, high-quality work. Contemporary management principles and techniques are being employed within organizations to transition into high-performance organizations. Various management tools and strategic methods are utilized for this purpose. One frequently used approach is the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA), which has been adopted by the National Productivity Institute and adapted into the Thailand Quality Award (TQA). The emphasis lies in facilitating the transformation of organizations, both in the private sector and the government sector, to meet the standards of high-performance organizations. The Public Sector Management Quality Award (PMQA) criteria have been improved in the public sector by organizations such as the Office of the Civil Service Commission and the Office of the Public Sector Development Commission. The goal of these initiatives is to inspire regional agencies to assess their quality standards and move closer to becoming high-performance entities. But in order to become a high-performance organization, one must constantly prioritize organizational development and employ a range of management tools and strategic approaches to meet the demands of our rapidly evolving modern world.

Thailand experienced an economic crisis in 1997, to which the government sector's inefficiency was a major contributing element. Thailand was forced to ask the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for financial support in order to deal with the problem. Thailand has to create new, effective public sector organizations and modify its bureaucracy as a prerequisite to receiving loans from the IMF. This required putting good governance ideas into practice and restructuring public sector administration. As a result, beginning in 1998, a number of civil service reforms were implemented. These took many different forms, such as state-owned businesses and organizations that were designed to increase the effectiveness of the public sector. This signaled the beginning of a systematic endeavor to create effective public institutions. The main goals were:

- Increase the effectiveness of government services, making them more adaptable and agile despite not being motivated by financial gain.

- To make it possible to hire talented staff members at different rates according to their skills, departing from the bureaucratic system's one-size-fits-all strategy.

- To allow other sectors to participate in the management of public services, acknowledging that government work is a compulsory administrative public service that sometimes necessitates collaboration with network partners and the private sector.

- To address the rapid changes in economic and social dynamics, which the government sector struggled to adapt to due to numerous inflexible regulations. This called for more agile and adaptable organizations.

During this period, six pilot public organizations emerged, established by the Public Organization Act of 1999, enacted as Royal Decrees. These organizations included the Community Organization Development Institute, Mahidol Wittayanusorn School, Banphaeo Hospital, Geo-Informatics and Space Technology Development Agency, Princess Sirindhorn Anthropology Center, and the International Institute for Trade and Development. The first type operated on a mission-driven basis and did not require a permanent location, hence their establishment through Royal Decree. Before that, there were autonomous agencies, such as the National Science and Technology Development Agency, the Office of the Science Promotion Commission, and organizations focused on research and innovation and the promotion of teaching science and technology, all established according to special acts.

In 2007, the Office of the Public Sector Development Commission (OPDC) observed that the organizations under its supervision and government agencies shared similar characteristics, particularly as juristic persons with nonprofit objectives. This led to the development of new criteria for classifying government organizations into two types: 1) Public organizations established under special acts (including supervised agencies), and 2) Organizations established by the Public Organizations Act of 1999, issued by Royal Decree. Subsequently, on March 1, 2022, the Cabinet approved the classification of organizations into three types:

1) Organizations established by the Public Organizations Act of 1999 and its amendments.
2) Organizations established under special acts, including state-run autonomous universities with the status of organizations established under specific laws.
3) Organizations organized by the Royal Decree issued under the National Higher Education, Science, Research, and Innovation Policy Council Act of 2019.

Regarding the establishment of public organizations, specific guidelines are in place. Organizations can be established by the Public Organizations Act of 1999 through the enactment of a Royal Decree. However, there are exceptions. If an organization needs to exercise state power unilaterally (Unilateral Act) in a manner that affects the rights and freedoms of individuals, or if it involves

creating a fund exempt from budgetary procedures or the treasury law, a special act may be enacted for its establishment. Additionally, state higher education institutions that require certification can also be established through special acts.

Public organizations can originate from two main categories:

- They may stem from the original mission of a government agency that decided to separate from the parent agency to achieve greater flexibility, efficiency, and the ability to manage and respond promptly.

- They may be newly established organizations. The criteria for their consideration include assessing whether the service in question is beyond the capacity of the government to perform, whether it requires highly skilled individuals with wages that the government sector cannot afford, and whether it has a significant impact on the country and its operations.

The establishment of organizations under special acts presents a new form of state organization rooted in the concept of New Public Management (NPM). This development is a response to the tendency of public organizations in the Thai bureaucracy to expand, resulting in a bloated and redundant bureaucracy characterized by centralized power, inflexible management, ineffectiveness, and outdated regulations. To overcome these limitations and enhance responsiveness to change, organizations created under special acts emphasize decentralization and the relaxation of regulations (delegation and deregulation), enabling government organizations to operate with flexibility, free from the vertical constraints of traditional bureaucracy (Tangsapwattana et al., 2011).

Literature review shows that most organizations established under special acts exhibit notable flexibility and employ board-directed governance systems, granting them considerable freedom and adaptability in their operations. They typically maintain a clear chain of command and have the flexibility to change their organizational structure to fit changing circumstances. This flexibility includes pursuing particular tasks and organizational goals. Many of these older organizations face constraints as their roles and goals change over time. The laws ingrained in the original Acts, such as the Health Security Law under the National Health Security Act of 2002, which has been in force for more than 20 years, are partially accountable for these restrictions.

Organizations created under special acts that receive their funding on their own and are not dependent on the federal budget have a fair amount of financial flexibility. They won't have to worry about budget cuts because they can independently manage their money. This financial independence allows for long-term, reliable management as well as flexible budget allocation to support initiatives that call for consistent work. Financial flexibility also makes it easier for networks to form, which enables different sectors to work together to accomplish organizational goals through a range of projects supported by different partners.

Recognizing the value of flexibility, numerous organizations created under the special acts have formed committees. Although this offers some flexibility, it can also lead to restrictions, including interfering in the committee's membership selection process. These companies have a transparent organizational structure and are able to modify it in response to changing requirements. These organizations frequently face difficulties as a result of centralized regulations placed on government agencies, even though they are built to offer flexible management and react quickly to changes. These universal rules may restrict the organization's capacity to carry out tasks in a flexible manner. For instance, regulations governing procurement, including those pertaining to foreign procurement, present challenges because they call for deposits and require use of government certification, which causes inconveniences and delays. These regulations can make it difficult to finish the work within the allotted time, which can be very problematic.

Research Methodology

The research conceptual framework has two main parts and is based on a thorough analysis of relevant literature. Related ideas and information are covered in the first section, particularly the def-inition of high performance organization and the unique traits of organizations created by special acts. The research findings, including the identified desirable characteristics of organizations established under special acts in the context of Thai society, are included in the second part of the framework. These qualities are crucial in helping these companies become high-performance organizations so they can successfully carry out their goals and generate outcomes.
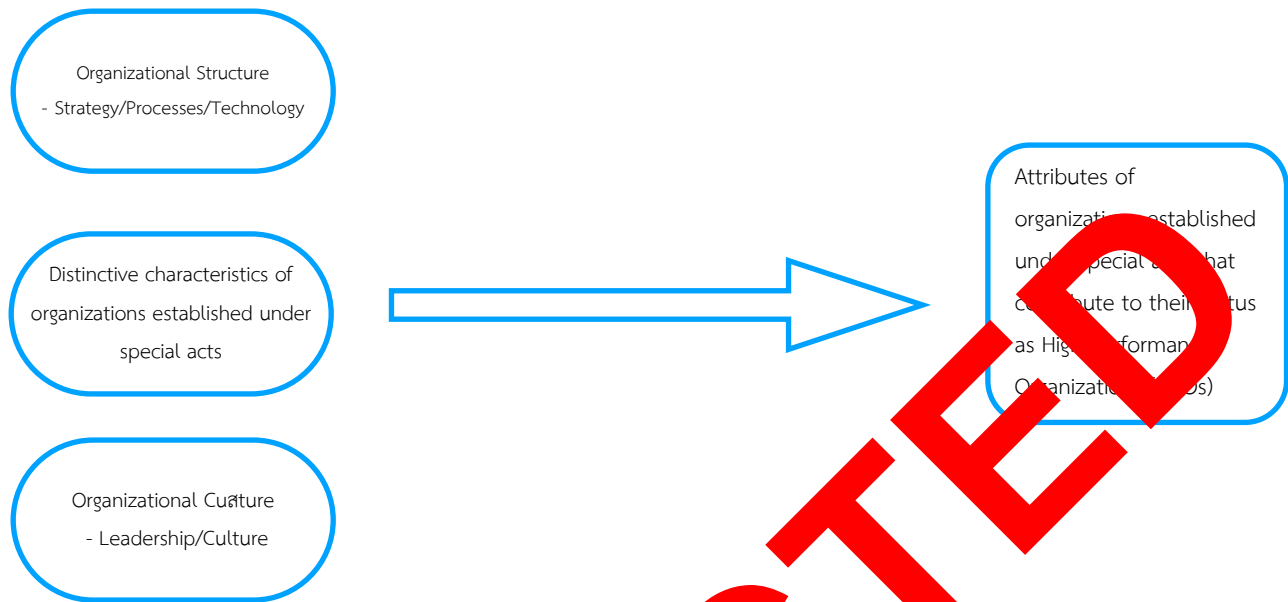
Figure 1. Conceptual Framework.

The study used a qualitative methodology to collect detailed data and provide precise and tangible empirical examples. This required gathering insights from a variety of stakeholders through document analysis, in-depth interviews, and group interviews. In order to improve data accuracy and enable additional analysis and synthesis, triangulation technique was implemented that involved the use of multiple methods and sources. The population for this study consists of 24 organizations. The selection of sample organizations for the study was done through a purposive sampling method. To minimize bias in the sampling process, organizations will be randomly selected, taking into account the diversity and coverage of the population in various dimensions such as mission, size, age of the organization, as well as the perspectives of organizational representatives and their readiness to provide information. The sample group for this study comprises 9 organizations, selected to ensure a representative and comprehensive reflection of the entire population. The sample groups included nine agencies, including the Health Systems Research Institute, the Office of National Higher Education Science, Research and Innovation Policy Council, the National Science and Technology Development Agency, the Thailand Science Research and Innovation, the National Health Security Office, the Office of Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion, the Thai Health Promotion Foundation, the Safe and Creative Media Development Fund, and the Trade Competition Commission of Thailand. Owing to the purposive sample method used in this investigation, certain features of the results might be unique to

the organizations under consideration. Thus, it is crucial to proceed with caution when extrapolating study findings to other organizations established under special acts operated in the public sector.

Key informants for in-depth interviews and focus groups were selected based on specific criteria. Primary informants for in-depth interviews were senior executives or representatives from the nine sample agencies. The main informant for the focus group should have the capacity to provide information regarding policy implementation and management guidelines for organizations established under special acts, covering various dimensions, including middle-level administrators, or representatives of the sample group, as well as representatives from the private sector and civil society. Key informants for in-depth interviews and focus groups needed to be proficient in Thai and willing to participate in the research.

Data collection tools encompassed sets of questions tailored for in-depth interviews with policymakers, experts, and organizational executives within the nine representative agencies. Additionally, questions for group discussions were prepared for representatives of organizations established under special acts, and separate questions were designed for focus groups with participants from the private sector and relevant civil society groups. Data analysis involved concluding data collected through diverse methods, including in-depth interviews, group discussions, document reviews, and research related to relevant government policies. The data was examined for patterns and relationships between variables to develop a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under study, encompassing changes observed in the course of the research. These insights informed the analysis and synthesis process, culminating in concrete and appropriate proposals.

Findings

The presentation of the study results aligns with the research objective, which is to investigate the essential characteristics of organizations established under special acts in the context of Thai society that contribute significantly to their status as high-performance organizations (HPOs). These HPOs are defined as organizations that achieve success by their objectives, displaying agility and responsiveness to changes. They achieve this through the coordination of work processes, technology utilization, and personnel development to attain desired results, emphasizing sustainable success over the long term. The presentation of information derived from interviews and small group discussions will be structured

according to the categories proposed by De Waal (2007) in his conceptual framework, which outlines four key groups influencing high-performance organizations i.e., Organizational Structure, encompassing process management and technology, Organizational Culture, Stakeholder Importance and Responsiveness to External Factors, and Member Behavior within the Organization.

Adaptability

High-performance organizations rely on a flexible and adaptable organizational structure to achieve their founding mission effectively and maintain relevance in a constantly changing external environment. One challenge that can hinder the achievement of desired organizational outcomes is the division of work based on the organization's structural framework, often leading to work silos. To address this issue, an example from the National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA) is illustrated. NSTDA consists of five specialized centers, namely the National Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, the National Metal and Materials Technology Center, the National Electronics and Computer Technology Center, the National Nanotechnology Center, and the National Energy Technology Center. NSTDA uses a mix of non-financial and financial incentives to encourage cooperation among its researchers and staff to problem-solve problems that require knowledge from multiple disciplines and skills from multiple centers. Research on particular topics that can address governmental concerns or circumstances requiring interdisciplinary knowledge is supported financially by financial incentives. For example, in addressing food-related issues, specialists from multiple centers, including the National Metal and Materials Technology Center, the National Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, and the National Electronics and Computer Technology Center, work together on research projects under a common budget. This budget goes toward paying researchers and hiring helpers for the work. The five centers work together across their areas of specialization, and funding for research serves as a catalyst for this cooperation. NSTDA has a system in place to encourage cross-functionality, allowing researchers from various centers to collaborate on particular issues. This strategy is also applied to human resources management, where non-cash rewards are given, such as better career prospects for taking part in major projects or cross-center cooperation. The workload that employees and researchers have to complete is also outlined in these incentives. This cooperative strategy is essentially similar to a horizontal corporation, which is a feature of contemporary businesses. It recognizes the unique knowledge in every industry and looks for methods to apply those abilities and skills to solve difficult problems. This horizontal, cooperative strategy encourages collaboration across the organization's levels and makes interdisciplinary problem-solving possible.

Agility

When it comes to improving organizational agility, a short chain of command organizational structure has various benefits. It is managed by the organization's executives, with the board of directors overseeing policy. This simplified structure promotes organizational agility by enabling quicker decision-making and the capacity to react quickly to a variety of circumstances. Notably, the management of the organization frequently plans and initiates organizational restructuring.

The regular turnover of leadership further improves the organizational structure's adaptability. A new director's role gives them the power to change the organization's structure, no matter how big or small. Usually, the director has a three-year term that can be extended for an additional two years. One of the most important tools in the director's management toolbox is the capacity to modify and rearrange the organization.

It's possible that many organizations were unaware of how agile they were until the COVID-19 crisis. But the crisis made clear how crucial organizational agility is, especially when it comes to reacting quickly to new circumstances. Organizations with a short chain of command, financial and personnel flexibility, and a management structure that reported directly to the board were better positioned to handle the crisis. During the COVID-19 crisis, this flexible organizational structure was crucial in helping organizations respond swiftly and offer necessary services. It made it possible for them to react quickly to missions requiring the provision of services quickly, meeting the population's pressing needs and desires. In response to the crisis, for example, the National Health Security Office (NHSO) moved quickly to obtain a government budget and provide Antigen Test Kits (ATK) at no cost to the general public. Thanks to funding and well-defined decision-making processes, NHSO was able to work with private hospitals and change market dynamics, which led to a notable decrease in test kit prices and increased testing accessibility.

Stakeholder Responsiveness

The Office of Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion (OSMEP) case study illustrated how the entity was designed to respond to stakeholders by utilizing the organizational structure. It required members of industries closely associated with the organization's operations to be included in the Policy Oversight and Operations Monitoring Committee. The National Farmers Council, Thai Chamber of

Commerce, Tourism Industry Council of Thailand, Federation of Thai Industries, Thai Bankers Association, and business owners of small and medium-sized businesses in the area are a few examples of these stakeholders. In addition, the organizational structure comprises two committees i.e. the Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion Committee and the Executive Committee of the Office of Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion. The composition of these committees includes representatives from national private sector organizations and experts who represent small and medium-sized enterprises in the region. This composition, as mandated by the Act, streamlines operations making them more efficient and responsive. Having private sector representatives, especially for SMEs, facilitates quick decision-making and workload management based on established measures.

An important feature of this responsive structure is its agility and ability to adapt quickly. It allows for timely responses to changing circumstances and missions.

On the other hand, involving external sectors in the organization's operations may also pose challenges related to potential political interference. In the case of the Ministry of Culture's affiliation, the Minister of Culture plays a significant role as the Chairman of the Committee and the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry serves as the chairman of the executive sub-committee. While this arrangement has advantages, such as providing an external perspective, it can also raise concerns about political interference depending on the individuals appointed to these positions. The organization may need to address these concerns and consider alternative structures that provide more flexibility while maintaining supervision to meet its objectives effectively.

Technology and Work Processes Redesign

The study revealed that organizations have made adjustments in terms of technology, work processes, and personnel in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many organizations have recognized the significance of work processes that facilitate remote work. This adaptation is not merely a short-term response but is considered important for long-term sustainability. Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, some organizations had already set up their systems for remote work.

Organizations have learned valuable lessons about adaptability and the benefits of remote work as a result of the pandemic. It is known that working remotely can be productive, and this trend is probably going to continue after the pandemic. For example, some organizations realized they needed

to put procedures in place that would allow non-laboratory-related tasks to be done from home, such as NSTDA, which typically involves scientific laboratory-based work. Organizations now need to reconsider their preparedness to continue operating uninterrupted during unforeseen events as a result of this experience.

Organizations have had to adjust to utilizing tools like the Zoom program in their operations as a result of learning from the COVID-19 situation. While using online work systems and tools like Microsoft Teams has become widespread, some businesses are striving for a more complete work-from-anywhere solution that enables workers to work from any location as long as secure systems are in place. Organizations have started initiatives like Work From Anywhere (WFA) in response to the pandemic to give their workers more flexible work schedules. These programs enable workers to work remotely when it's suitable, subject to certain guidelines and standards established by their departments. Businesses have discovered that it's possible to operate more effectively and efficiently by adjusting to new work models, such as remote work. In addition to creating work procedures, technology infrastructure, and policies to facilitate this flexible mode of working in times of crisis, they also understand that doing so is essential to their long-term success plans.

In reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic, organizations significantly altered their spending procedures, which resulted in the decentralization of spending authority. The challenges brought on by the virus's spread could be quickly and precisely addressed thanks to this decentralization of spending power. For example, the Prime Minister delegated authority to Subdistrict Administrative Organization (SAO) leaders to allocate funds for disease prevention and promotion during the pandemic. The chairman of the SAO was granted the authority to approve projects not exceeding 100,000 baht for COVID-19 management initiatives. This shift in financial control is seen as a flexible approach to managing resources effectively during the COVID-19 crisis. The COVID-19 outbreak also prompted organizations to adjust their work processes to enhance flexibility in service delivery to stakeholders. Organizations have adopted technology to facilitate direct interactions with service recipients and overcome the challenges posed by travel restrictions and physical contact limitations. An example is the Office of Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion (OSMEP), which shifted from a project-based model involving contractors to a role as a coordinator. OSMEP now matches entrepreneurs directly with service providers utilizing technologies, streamlining the support process and making it more efficient. One key area of development identified is the sharing of data among agencies involved in science, research, and

innovation missions. Enhanced data sharing can contribute to a more holistic management approach, providing a clearer and more unified understanding of problems, directions, and solutions. Collaborative data sharing between government sectors and units within the system can significantly increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the entire system. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated organizational changes, promoting adaptability, technology adoption, and innovative approaches to service delivery.

Engaging with stakeholders and being responsive to external factors involves actively seeking and understanding the genuine needs of service recipients. Allowing a wide range of sectors, especially stakeholders, to participate in an organization's operations enables a comprehensive understanding of the diverse issues faced by the communities or sectors the organization aims to serve. A notable example of this approach is embodied by the Thai Health Promotion Foundation, which plays a crucial role in uniting various sectors to collaborate on health promotion initiatives. By fostering multidisciplinary cooperation, this foundation can effectively address contemporary health promotion challenges. What sets the Thai Health Promotion Foundation apart is its remarkable flexibility and capacity to encourage broader stakeholder participation across different sectors, surpassing the capabilities of the government sector in this regard.

Incorporating various sectors into an organization's operations can also serve to fulfill workforce needs during critical periods, especially events like the COVID-19 outbreak. Additional support and resources can be harnessed from the public sector and network partners, which encompass a variety of agencies. A prime illustration of this is evident in the National Health Security Office (NHSO), which has a longstanding practice of actively seeking input and collaboration with the public sector. Maintaining strong relationships and collaboration over the years, the NHSO's commitment to listening to feedback from all stakeholders, as mandated by the law, reinforces a sense of shared ownership between the NHSO and the public sector. This collaborative ethos comes to fruition during situations requiring close cooperation, as seen in the involvement of 1330 volunteers and motorcycle taxi 'riders' in delivering food and medicine to individuals in home isolation.

Furthermore, effective coordination with external agencies and network partners is essential for health research and response efforts. Organizations like the Health Systems Research Institute (HSRI) and the National Research Council of Thailand (NRCT) work together to divide responsibilities and conduct research, demonstrating a concerted approach to addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. These entities

employ a comprehensive network that encompasses both public and private sectors, universities, research institutes, and community organizations, resulting in remarkable adaptability. Nevertheless, NRCT has recognized the importance of engaging the private sector more extensively in the research process. Encouraging greater private sector involvement, from shaping research questions to applying research findings, can lead to more direct responses to societal research needs and better utilization of research outcomes. The challenge remains in increasing private sector participation to maximize the beneficial impact of research results on society.

To help SMEs, the Office of Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion (OSMEP) implemented a number of initiatives. One of these efforts involved working with the Comptroller General's Department to improve SMEs' access to the market. The Department established standardized procedures for procurement that made it easier for SMEs to participate in government agency markets. In order to encourage government agencies to choose SMEs, OSMEP offered incentives such as a 10 percent handicap and encouraged the allocation of at least 30 percent of government procurement budgets to SMEs. Additionally, OSMEP was essential in creating standards for SMEs that prioritized efficiency gains and cost savings. Through the "SME gets the money back" program, SMEs that satisfied these requirements were given financial support that helped them a significant amount of their costs.

In order to help SMEs overcome their financial obstacles, OSMEP provided support in obtaining funding. This was accomplished by putting in place loan guarantee policies and offering special bank loans. OSMEP observed enhanced public sector cooperation during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through cooperation with the Provincial Chamber of Commerce, OSMEP was able to increase the number of volunteers in its network of over 1,000 by enlisting successful SMEs as service providers. This network allowed for the effective delivery of services to SMEs.

To ensure comprehensive access to services, OSMEP established service centers in each province, providing SMEs with convenient access to support. These actions reflect OSMEP's dedication to assisting SMEs and adapting its operations to respond to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

At an individual level within an organization, high-performing organizations require their members to be responsive to external factors and to value their stakeholders. When individual

responses align with the organizational culture, it fosters a collective behavior that contributes positively to achieving the organization's goals. During the COVID-19 pandemic, citizens witnessed remarkable flexibility in reallocating various resources to address the nation's needs. People from diverse backgrounds and expertise came together to contribute. Some individuals with knowledge in chemical production started making disinfectants, others manufactured gloves, while the IT department developed touchless elevators and innovative COVID-19-protective patient wheelchairs. There were even innovations in the field of nanotechnology, with individuals creating their nano-textiles for masks. This demonstrated a collective mobilization to provide essential solutions during a challenging time.

In guiding the behavior of organizational members, shared values play a significant role. For instance, promoting a culture of continuous learning and adaptability encourages employees to keep pace with changes in themselves, the organization, and society. Learning organizations prioritize the development of their employees and offer opportunities for them to engage in challenging work. Executives can incorporate these employee desires into policies and operations to achieve desired outcomes. Furthermore, organizations that emphasize learning understand the value of their people in ensuring sustainability. It is crucial to address the needs of employees, which may go beyond monetary compensation and include other elements that contribute to their well-being. In sum, individuals within high-performing organizations exhibit responsiveness to external factors and a commitment to their stakeholders. This set of values and behavior is instrumental in achieving the organization's objectives.

Discussions and Implications

The study's findings emphasize key factors contributing to becoming a high-performance organization, which involves effectively achieving results aligned with the organization's mission. These factors include having an adaptable and responsive organizational structure, as well as fostering flexibility within the organization's work. An important aspect of this adaptability is having a streamlined hierarchy, where management relies on top executives with oversight from the board, enabling the organization to operate swiftly and respond promptly to changing circumstances. According to the study, organizational restructuring is a management strategy that is frequently started by a new director. Reacting to stakeholders is also an essential component of high-performing organizations. The study notes that the organization's Establishment Act outlines the composition of the committee responsible

for overseeing policy and monitoring the organization's operations. This committee includes representatives from sectors that are closely involved in the organization's activities. Additionally, the study underscores the significance of adapting to evolving technology and aligning work processes with personnel adjustments. This was notably observed during the COVID-19 pandemic, where some organizations recognized the importance of having work processes conducive to remote work, a trend expected to persist beyond the pandemic. The crisis prompted organizations to re-evaluate their preparedness to ensure uninterrupted service delivery during unexpected events. Moreover, certain organizations had already established work systems resembling telecommuting before the pandemic's outbreak. Therefore, high-performance organizations exhibit adaptability, responsiveness to stakeholders, and readiness to adopt technology and modify work processes as integral components of their success. These attributes enable them to fulfill their missions effectively.

The successful ecosystem of organizations established by special act can be summarized as a combination of internal and external factors, as indicated in the study.

Internal Factors

These factors are further divided into two levels: the individual level and the organizational level.

At the individual level, efficiency and good governance are contingent on the collaboration of three critical components: 1) the organization's board of directors, 2) the director, and 3) the administrative office. Both the organizational committee or board and the director should demonstrate robust good governance practices, possess a well-defined vision, and exhibit effective leadership. To develop an agile and independent organization, they must continue to be free from the restrictions of bureaucracy, be willing to take risks, and embrace change. The administrative office plays a crucial role in supporting the director's and board's decision-making procedures. To help the committee or director make decisions, this department should be staffed with professionals who can offer information and legal counsel. Maintaining stable workgroups with specialized knowledge and reducing frequent personnel changes are essential to achieving this.

At the organizational level, good governance, adaptability, and agility should guide the management of the organizational structure. The culture and values of the organization should reflect

its unique qualities, placing a strong emphasis on flexibility, quick fixes, and ongoing learning and growth. Moreover, the organization should prioritize results and base its decision-making on data, making effective use of appropriate technology. The organizational objectives delineated in the Act should serve as a guiding force for the organization's operations. Above all, it is crucial for the agency's mission and work to gain broad recognition and visibility. Furthermore, fostering collaboration with civil society networks is essential for advancing the organization's mission. Efficiency and effectiveness are greatly contingent on cooperation with network partners who can adapt to the evolving needs of service recipients. The organization must actively seek opportunities for collaboration with external agencies and civil society to proficiently address these changing needs.

External Factors

Crucial external factors contributing to the success of an organization's operations encompass being "free from political influence and receiving support from the state and network partners." These factors can be elucidated as follows.

- The organization should be shielded from political interference at all echelons and granted autonomy concerning its operations, personnel, and budgetary matters.

- Government oversight should not impose excessively stringent regulations that impede autonomy and flexibility.

- Regulatory hurdles should be able to accommodate the unique characteristics of each organization since they differ in their missions, environments, and sizes.

- The state should allocate flexible budgets tailored to the specific mission of each organization. Such allocation should consider differences in organizational size, mission, and revenue prospects.

Mechanisms should be in place enabling organizations established under the Act to adapt their agency objectives to align with evolving circumstances. This adaptability is crucial as organizations created according to legislative acts must contend with limitations that necessitate adjustments in response to changing conditions or even the possibility of dissolution when objectives are no longer relevant. These mechanisms and guidelines should be explicit and well-defined.

Data synthesis encompasses the discussion of distinct characteristics across various dimensions among organizations established under special acts, attributing to their adept management capabilities. Predominantly, these organizations exhibit a high degree of agility as their management structure is

directly answerable to the board, affording them independence and flexibility. This agility is coupled with a streamlined hierarchy that allows for swift adaptation of the organizational structure in response to evolving contexts. Furthermore, these organizations demonstrate adaptability in executing specific activities to align with their objectives.

In terms of flexibility characteristics, several noteworthy aspects arise. Some organizations generate income from taxes and maintain their committees, which permits them to offer competitive compensation to entice talented individuals. This flexibility in setting attractive compensation rates for knowledgeable and skilled personnel contributes to workforce performance. Many of these organizations employ contract-based employment to streamline personnel management and welfare provisioning, ensuring they remain resource-efficient. However, it's worth noting that certain organizations have been observed offering disproportionately high compensation relative to performance, potentially resulting from inadequate public relations. Additionally, the Cabinet classifies the salary rates and benefits of directors into three tiers based on the organizational challenges and national impacts stemming from their operations. Such organizations often have international networks that necessitate consideration.

A critical consideration is the potential for political interference due to legal stipulations that place government agencies and ministers in charge of overseeing organizations established under special acts. Many organizations are known for the use of political influence to meddle in various aspects, including budget allocation, appointment of executive committees, engagement of consultants, and recruitment of officials. Regarding supervision, monitoring, and evaluation, the 2003 Royal Decree on the Criteria and Methods for Good Governance mandates government agencies to routinely assess their performance, extending to organizations established under special acts. For organizations established under the Organization Act of 1999, the Cabinet prescribes the evaluation framework, while those established under special acts adhere to the criteria outlined in their establishing law. Notably, organizations with clearly defined objectives have well-defined Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that enable accurate performance evaluations. However, in instances where organizational objectives are vague, particularly in coordinating functions with ambiguous KPIs, performance assessments can become less transparent.

Important outside variables are necessary for private companies to succeed, especially strong supporting from the government and stakeholders as well as a nonpartisan posture. It is critical that these organizations maintain their independence, which includes operating, hiring, and financial choices being made without excessive political influence. A flexible regulatory framework that acknowledges and takes into account the various missions, environmental settings, and sizes of these entities is essential to fostering their autonomy. Budgetary allocations by the government also need to be flexible in order to guarantee that available funds are appropriately matched to the unique goals of every private group. Furthermore, given how rapidly the world is changing, a system should be in place that enables legally-established private groups to modify their goals in response to new situations. Clear conditions and mechanisms for adjustments should be in place, providing a structured approach in situations where objectives need to be modified or organizations need to be terminated due to shifting needs or conditions.

There is a recurring concern within the government that organizations might establish their regulations. To address this, various regulatory bodies like the Office of the Public Sector Development Commission (OPDC) and Cabinet resolutions aim to partly exert control. Excessive regulation, however, risks making these organizations resemble government bureaucracy, leading to a loss of the advantages inherent in organizations established under special acts. This includes the potential erosion of their capabilities in monitoring, performance evaluation, and procurement processes. Notably, the introduction of the Government Procurement and Supplies Management Act B.E. 2017 further restricts organizational autonomy and introduces the possibility of scrutiny by the Office of the Auditor General.

In a broader context, organizations established under special acts dutifully fulfill their roles, aligning their operations with the objectives outlined in the respective Acts governing their establishment. Most of these organizations have developed visions, missions, and organizational structures along with instilling core values and organizational culture that align with their unique characteristics, effectively guiding them toward their goals and vision. Furthermore, some organizations have grown from modest entities into well-recognized institutions. However, there are instances where organizations face common challenges, including operational misalignment with their objectives due to budget constraints. This is particularly critical for organizations that solely rely on state funding, especially given the recurrent reduction in the state budget allocation. Additionally, some organizations may find themselves tasked with missions that deviate from their initial objectives due to changing

circumstances or mission overlap. Hence, fostering cooperation across various sectors is considered a pivotal step in accomplishing the organization's objectives and missions. Although the COVID-19 outbreak initially limited interactions between the organization and various stakeholder groups, the organization adapted by altering its communication strategy. Utilizing technology and information systems, they ensured the continuity of various operations requiring input from various stakeholder groups, ultimately advancing their work toward the achievement of set objectives.

Figure 2. Conducive Ecosystem for Organizations Established under the Special Acts.

Conducive Ecosystem for Organizations Established under the Special Acts

Still, crisis management during the COVID-19 outbreak brought about challenges, including document processing delays and coordination issues with external agencies. Additionally, budget cuts and financial fluctuations presented difficulties for the organization's stakeholders. Consequently, the organization found it necessary to reassess its financial planning, especially during the ongoing crisis. The trend of establishing such organizations persists, both for those founded under royal decrees and those governed by special acts. This trend emerges due to the evolving missions required as the economy

and society change. These missions may demand individuals with specialized knowledge and skills that government agencies cannot typically hire within their regular structures. Moreover, there is an increasing need for government services to be more efficient, flexible, and cost-effective. Such a transition to organizations established under special acts and royal decrees can ultimately reduce the state's long-term budgetary burden, especially concerning pensions for retiring civil servants. Furthermore, government services are expanding beyond traditional government agencies, extending to the private sector through various forms of outsourcing.

Policy Recommendations

Studying the management lessons discovered during the recent crisis situations these organizations faced is crucial to ensuring that organizations established under the special Acts have effective management practices to achieve the goals of their establishment, sustainable development, and efficient adaptation to changes as a High-Performance Organization. In the context of Thai society, this study attempts to identify best practices that can be implemented while taking into account the unique qualities required for organizations under particular acts. These elements are essential to the development of an organization into a High-Performance Organization and to attaining outcomes that are in line with the mission of the organization. Below, the policy recommendations aim to enhance the adaptability and responsiveness of organizations under special acts, ensuring they can effectively serve the needs of the country and its citizens, even in challenging and dynamic circumstances like those experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recognition of Organizational Characteristics and Structure Importance

Many organizations previously underestimated the significance of their organizational characteristics and structures ineffective management. However, when faced with the COVID-19 crisis, these organizations were able to respond promptly and efficiently due to their flexible and independent management structures. The crisis underscored the value of these characteristics. Therefore, promoting a deeper understanding of an organization's unique features among its executives and personnel is essential. This newfound awareness instills confidence in leveraging the organization's distinct characteristics to enhance goal management. Furthermore, many projects that were once conceptual ideas became tangible and practical initiatives for these organizations during the COVID-19 crisis.

Flexibility in Adapting Organizational Objectives

While organizations established under special acts typically exhibit flexibility, they are constrained by the requirement to adhere to the objectives stated in their respective Acts. Over time, or due to changing contexts, some objectives may become obsolete or irrelevant, while new objectives may emerge that are misaligned with the original ones. Amending the Act is a challenging process, often prompting organizations to interpret the Act creatively to achieve their evolving goals. Therefore, it is advisable to establish mechanisms or guidelines that grant organizations established under special acts more flexibility in adapting their objectives as needed.

Emphasis on Public Relations

Public relations is often neglected in many organizations, which tend to operate similarly to other government agencies. However, effective public relations is of paramount importance, especially for newly established organizations or those with narrowly defined missions. Public outreach is crucial in ensuring that the general public understands the organization's operations, their benefits to the people, and their overall significance. This knowledge also extends to budget committee members who may not fully comprehend the organization's importance and contributions. Improved public relations efforts are required to raise awareness about the organization's mission, demonstrate its necessity, and highlight the benefits it brings to society.

Assessment of Value for Money

An essential organizational principle mandates that operations must be conducted to achieve objectives established upon the organization's inception. When operating, if objectives have been attained or inefficiencies are prevalent, this could lead to the dissolution of the organization. The study revealed that organizations abroad, similar to many in Thailand, referred to as "Mission Oriented," are frequently dissolved, whether due to mission accomplishment or inefficiency. An important strategy for such organizations is the implementation of an "Exit Strategy." Consequently, organizations in Thailand should be mindful of this aspect, as the dissolution of an agency has significant implications for its personnel. Organizations must formulate contingency plans to address such scenarios.

Navigating Political Interference

Political interference is a common occurrence in both government agencies and organizations. This arises because numerous matters encompass policies that need to be executed. While certain

interests might come into play, it is an unavoidable aspect. What each organization must comprehend and adhere to is the Core Mission, Core Asset, and Core Competence of the organization. By adhering to these fundamentals, organizations can resist undue interference without causing substantial disruptions to their mission and operations.

Collaboration for Wider Impact

Every organization is comprised of personnel possessing profound knowledge, skills, and expertise, allowing them to make a significant impact on the population and the nation in alignment with established objectives. However, such impact may sometimes be limited to specific groups or confined to certain areas. Therefore, organizations, including those in the private and network sectors, should emphasize information sharing and integrated collaboration. By addressing the people's and the nation's issues as their foundation and working collectively, problems can be tackled on a broader and more sustainable scale. For instance, the issue of the BCG economic model, which almost every public organization is involved in, can generate a more extensive and forward-thinking impact and better address the needs of the population and the nation.

Organizational Structure and Culture Consideration

Organizational structure and culture are pivotal elements for the development of a high-performance organization (HPO). The shared values, culture, and mindset within an organization significantly influence how its members perform their roles and follow personnel operation guidelines. The organization's flexible structural design, particularly, plays a crucial role in ensuring swift and efficient operations. Consequently, it is essential to foster shared values, culture, and mindset among the personnel that align with the organization. Cultivating shared values and a culture consistent with the organization's identity and objectives contributes to expediting goal achievement. Both the executives and employee groups within the organization should collaborate in creating shared values and culture that resonate with the organization's identity and objectives. This collective effort empowers the organization to effectively work toward its goals, especially when executives have backgrounds in government agencies or previous government service.

Embracing New Public Management Concepts

The contemporary environment and evolving societal needs necessitate organizational adaptation, particularly in times of crises like the recent COVID-19 pandemic, which exhibited high

volatility. Organizations should adopt new public management concepts, such as New Public Governance and Responsive Governance. These management approaches emphasize participation, decentralization, and the establishment of network partnerships. Such strategies enable organizations to respond quickly, efficiently, and effectively to the evolving needs of the public. Notably, many agencies during the COVID-19 crisis relied on network partners, including institutions like the National Health Security Office (NHSO), to swiftly address challenges and problem-solving.

Characteristics that distinguish organizations established under special acts from typical government agencies highlight desirable attributes for High-Performance Organizations within the Thai context. These organizations possess a capacity to swiftly adapt and respond to changes, demonstrating exceptional adaptability and flexibility in their work processes. They benefit from streamlined organizational structures with short chains of command. Management rests on executive leaders within the organization, subject to policy supervision from the board. This streamlined structure enables rapid responses to situational demands, emphasizing agility. Additionally, organizational restructuring is an inherent management tool, allowing structural changes when a new director assumes office. In the face of crises, these organizations recognize the importance of aligning technology, work processes, and personnel adjustments. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the significance of facilitating remote work processes, which are anticipated to remain crucial even beyond the pandemic. Consequently, many organizations have reviewed and enhanced their readiness to ensure continuous and uninterrupted service delivery during unexpected events. Some have developed work systems that resemble remote work practices in anticipation of future disruptions. The findings of this study offer valuable insights for policy recommendations aimed at enhancing the management of organizations established under special acts, making them become high-performance organizations that are responsive to the needs of the country and its citizens.

Acknowledgments

Research Ethics

The study received approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee at the National Institute of Development Administration, under the research project code ECNIDA 2022/0133 and certificate number 2022/0134, dated November 10, 2022

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