The Readiness for Collecting the Land and Building Tax of Local Government Organizations in Muang District, Songkhla Province

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Abstract

The objectives of this research are to 1) analyze the general conditions of readiness for Land and Building Tax collection of Local Government Organizations in Muang District, Songkhla Province, and 2) study the guidelines of readiness for Land and Building tax collection of Local Government Organizations in Muang District, Songkhla Province. A semi-structure interview was used to collect data from 14 individuals both executives and officers of 6 Local Government Organizations in Muang District, Songkhla Province. The data was analyzed by using content analysis method. The results revealed that 1) the general environment of land and building taxation readiness consisted of a) an internal environment in which Local Government Organizations prepared staff with training, created a tax database and provided survey equipment while under budget limitations and time constraints because of the going on survey period. b) an external environment in which Central and Provincial Government Organizations supported the data to create a tax database while constraints from the law occurred because the law was unsuitable with actual operation. Other related law announcements were delayed including time limitation to build clear understanding with local people; 2) the readiness guidelines for collecting Land and Building tax by Local Government Organizations in Muang District, Songkhla Province showed that the officers should have had multiple training sessions about the new Land and Building tax to refresh and improve their knowledge and understanding, update the database of tax payers, and do the budget planning for surveying and producing public relations media.

Keywords Readiness for Collecting Tax, Land and Building Tax, Local Government Organizations

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ความพร้อมในการจัดเก็บภาษีที่ดินและสิ่งปลูกสร้าง
ขององค์กรปกครองส่วนท้องถิ่นในเขตอำเภอเมือง จังหวัดสงขลา

ศดานนท์ วัตตธรรม[2]

บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษาครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อ 1) วิเคราะห์สภาพทั่วไปของการเตรียมความพร้อม
ในการจัดเก็บภาษีที่ดินและสิ่งปลูกสร้าง และ 2) ศึกษาแนวทางการเตรียมความพร้อม
ในการจัดเก็บภาษีที่ดินและสิ่งปลูกสร้างขององค์กรปกครองส่วนท้องถิ่นในเขตอำเภอเมือง
จังหวัดสงขลา เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการเก็บข้อมูล ได้แก่ แบบสัมภาษณ์แบบกึ่งโครงสร้าง
เก็บรวบรวมข้อมูลจากผู้บริหารและเจ้าพนักงานขององค์กรปกครองส่วนท้องถิ่น จำนวน 6 แห่ง
รวมทั้งสิ้น 14 คน และนำมาวิเคราะห์เชิงเนื้อหา ผลการศึกษา พบว่า 1) สภาพทั่วไปของ
การเตรียมความพร้อมในการจัดเก็บภาษีที่ดินและสิ่งปลูกสร้าง ประกอบด้วย ก) สภาพแวดล้อม
ภายใน องค์กรปกครองส่วนท้องถิ่นได้เตรียมความพร้อมในการอบรมเจ้าหน้าที่ การจัดทำ
ฐานข้อมูล และวัสดุอุปกรณ์ในการสำรวจ แต่มีข้อจำกัดเรื่องงบประมาณ และช่วงเวลาในการ
สำรวจ ข) สภาพแวดล้อมภายนอก หน่วยงานราชการส่วนกลางและส่วนภูมิภาค ได้สนับสนุน
ข้อมูลเพื่อใช้จัดทำฐานภาษี แต่มีข้อจำกัดเรื่องกฎหมายที่ไม่สอดคล้องกับการปฏิบัติงานจริง
ความล่าช้าในการประกาศกฎหมายที่เกี่ยวข้อง และการทำความเข้าใจกับประชาชน และ
2) แนวทางการเตรียมความพร้อมในการจัดเก็บภาษีที่ดินและสิ่งปลูกสร้างขององค์กรปกครอง
ส่วนท้องถิ่นในเขตอำเภอเมือง จังหวัดสงขลา ได้แก่ เจ้าหน้าที่ควรศึกษาข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับภาษี
ที่ดินและสิ่งปลูกสร้างอย่างต่อเนื่อง จัดทำฐานข้อมูลผู้ชำระภาษีให้เป็นปัจจุบัน และจัดเตรียม
งบประมาณในการสำรวจและทำสื่อประชาสัมพันธ์เผยแพร่

คำสำคัญ   ความพร้อมในการจัดเก็บภาษี, ภาษีที่ดินและสิ่งปลูกสร้าง, องค์กรปกครอง
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1. Introduction

Local Government Organizations (LGOs) were established under the determination of the state administration based on the core principles of decentralization according to the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand 1997. LGOs were assigned to be responsible for two main tasks: providing public services and gaining their own revenue. Firstly, providing public services transferred from the central agency had to respond to the local needs. Secondly, their revenue comes from the national budget allocation and from their local tax collection (The Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand B.E. 2540, 1997; The Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand B.E. 2560, 2017; Determining Plans and Process of Decentralization to Local Government Organization Act B.E. 2542, 1999). In brief, decentralization required by law, contains two important frameworks that LGOs must do: a) providing public services and b) obtaining revenue from various resources that the tax laws suggest to allocate the budgets for public services, maintenance and management expenses.

The local tax principle is the taxation of LGOs from immobile goods i.e., land and buildings. The tax rate is different according to the area (Pattamasiriwat, 2016). It can be considered as an expansion of local revenue through property tax and trade tax (Waranyuwattana, 2008). This results in local fiscal independence. It allows localities to more independently formulate policies for local administration and development in accordance with the determination of decentralization to local areas in order to realize self-governance and solve their own problems (Wongwattanapong, 2018).

The land and building tax is a type of property tax leading to the main source of LGOs' revenue. It was very likely that the tax bases will be expanded to other types of taxes such as signboard tax and trade tax. This will generate more local revenue in the future. (Rosenbloom, Kravchuk, & Clerkin, 2015). In Thailand, the Land and Building tax is a new tax that LGOs--municipalities and sub-district administrative organizations--have to collect from 2020 onwards as a replacement of both the House and Land tax and the Local Maintenance tax that were cancelled due to the-out-of-date and unsuitable concepts they are based on (Raibsontier & Wattatham, 2019). The method of calculating and collecting Land and Building tax is totally different from the methods of the previous two taxes. Consequently, it becomes a very important issue that LGO's staff, particularly tax survey and evaluation officials and also revenue collection officials, have to be ready to perform their work duties amidst unfamiliar new tax calculation process. Meanwhile, they have to comprehend a broader category expansion of tax payers. This greatly affects the revenue forecast of LGOs.

The new tax base comes from the calculation of the total value of land and buildings starting from the appraisal prices of capital, properties, land, buildings and apartments according to the Land Law of the Treasury Department. The tax

bases in Land and Building tax uses a cost approach assessment. This tax base calculation is totally different from the previous tax collection which used revenue approach assessment that was on officials' considerations. The current Land and building tax uses the central appraisal prices from the Treasury Department as the standard prices to calculate the total property value. The central appraisal prices of both land and buildings will be adjusted according to a 4-year appraisal period (Kasikorn Research Center, 2017). The central appraisal prices are categorized into 4 types base on the nature of their usage: 1) agriculture 2) land and buildings which are agriculture and residence 3) commercial and 4) the wilderness or underdeveloped or abandoned (Department of Local Administration, 2019)

Muang District, Songkhla Province established all types of LGOs such as provincial administrative organization, city municipality, town municipalities, sub-district municipalities and sub-district administrative organizations. In the sectors of municipalities and sub-district administrative organizations, there are 6 offices: Songkhla Municipality (city municipality), Khaoroopchang Municipality (town municipality), Pawong Subdistrict Municipality, Kohtaew Sub-district Municipality, Kohyor Sub-district Administrative Organization, and Thungwang Sub-district Administrative Organization. Each office area has different environmental characteristics: urban, semi-urban, semi-rural and rural communities, that indicates various types and scales of tax bases of the land and building tax. These area conditions truly affected the organizations' revenue generation from taxation which led to different budgeting allotments to provide public services. The effects include the staff's readiness for Land and Building tax collection and different taxation outputs due to the potentiality of each area.

The revenue from the taxation by LGOs in Muang District, Songkhla Province, in Fiscal Year 2019 (Table 1) shows that the amount of tax collected related to the area size and the number of tax payers in each area. However, all LGOs, whether in big towns or remote areas, were affected by the Land and Building tax in the same direction which was a reduction in revenue. The reduction was approximately 15 percent from the existing revenue (Real Estate Information Center, 2020). So, when LGOs prepared for the new Land and Building taxation, they understood they would experience a reduction of revenue.

Table 1   Revenue from tax collection of LGOs in Muang District, Songkhla Province, fiscal year 2019

(unit : baht)

Type of local tax / LGOs	house and land tax	local maintenance tax	signboard tax	total
Songkhla Municipality	35,793,234	233,420	3,242,688	**39,269,343**
Khaoroopchang Municipality	44,552,531	80,488	2,422,607	**47,055,627**
Pawong Subdistrict Municipality	14,267,668	142,010	1,930,507	**16,340,185**
Kohtaew Subdistrict Municipality	479,652	62,833	83,298	**625,783**
Kohyor Subdistrict Administrative Organization	838,211	23,362	149,523	**1,011,097**
Thungwang Subdistrict Administrative Organization	901,300	86,572	115,336	**1,103,209**

source: arranged by researcher

Those factors discussed above cause this research aiming to study "The readiness for Land and Building Tax collection of Local Government Organizations in Muang District, Songkhla Province". The results will contribute to the readiness guidelines for LGOs' Land and Building Tax collection to develop the revenue of LGOs to be clear budget that could be allocated for public services in their own areas.

2.   Research Objectives

(1) to analyze the general conditions of readiness for Land and Building Tax collection of Local Government Organizations in Muang District, Songkhla Province.

(2) to study the guidelines of readiness for Land and Building tax collection of Local Government Organizations in Muang District, Songkhla Province.

3.   Methodology

3.1   Key Informants

The researcher determined the key informants in this study from Creswell's Criteria (2014) specifying the primary interviewee size to be between 5 and 25. Then, the researcher selected 14 purposive sampling contributors who were interviewed until reaching the saturated data. The main informants were from 6 LGOs in the research areas of case studies. They were classified into 2 groups:

1) treasury management group, namely the head officers of local government organizations and/or the directors of the department of treasury or the heads of the department of treasury or executives in other relevant positions, who have experience in finance management and could propose guidelines for the adjustment of 1-2 people in each department and 2) revenue collection officers, namely revenue development officers and/or revenue collection officers or tax map officers in other relevant positions, who are experienced in surveying, evaluating and collecting taxes for 1-2 people of each department. All of which are relevant from management to operations.

3.2   Instrument

The instrument used in this research was a semi-structured interview that was used to collect information from the key informants. Based on the theoretical concepts, law, and related research to create tools, the semi-structured interview was an open-ended questions to collect information, comments and suggestions, concerning a) the internal environment of the agencies in readiness for collecting the land and building tax as follows in regards to: the knowledge and understanding of the officers, work support by local administrators, budgeting, technology system or tax database, and survey equipment; b) the external environment of the agencies as follows: the clarity of the government policy on taxation, relevant regulations and laws, support or assistance, knowledge and understanding of the people, and public cooperation, c) the guidelines for readiness for Land and Building tax collection in concerns to: knowledge and understanding of policy, law and the government officials' work duties and performance, the integrity of the database, operating budget, survey and tax payment service, support or assistance, and public relations and creating understanding with tax payers.

3.3   Instrument Quality Inspection

The firstly constructed semi-structured interview was presented to 3 experts to consider the language, content and suitability of the questions so that there are clear and easy be comprehended by the main informants. They have extensive expertise in local finance management, organization management, and local governance. Then, the scores obtained from the experts were used to find the index of item objective congruence (IOC) by selecting the questions with a consistency index of 0.50 or more (Phongwichai, 2001). The questions had a conformity index value greater than 0.50 and were revised as the experts suggested before using for data collection.

3.4 Analysis of Results

The collected data from the in-depth interviews were analyzed by using the content analysis method which involves grouping similar information and drawing conclusions according to the issues studied.

4. Research Results

4.1 General conditions of readiness for Land and Building taxation

4.1.1 The internal environment of the agencies in regards to their readiness for collecting the Land and Building tax was classified into 5 significant issues as follows:

(1) The knowledge and understanding of the officers showed that LGOs focused on employees attending training on how to calculate the tax correctly. Several experts were asked to prevent misinterpretations of the law, procedures and methods as the officers might make inaccurate tax calculations. LGOs followed the main operation plan aiming to accomplish the work within the specified framework while officers' comprehension of the Land and Building tax was insufficient because of the limited training periods. Moreover, other related laws that were continuously released. The centralized departments concerning this taxation were not aware of the reality of each area. Consequently, the later released laws were ambiguous, unclear and inefficient for the officers. However, various on-and-off-line-advertisements of the new method of Land and Building taxation were widely presented to locals as their preparatory step.

> *"...In view of the officials' responsibility, they specially paid attention to this tax. The staff really searched for the information and willingly answered people's questions. They put the new taxation information on the official website, vinyl banners, and announcements in the villages, including the information given by the village Heads through village assembly. The LGOs administrators also organized training by asking lecturers from the Department in BKK…"* (Revenue collection officer of LGO A, personal communication, February 26, 2020)

(2) Work support by local administrators showed that intensive trainings and practice in simulations of new taxation was done using real data provided by the Treasury Department. This training project assured that the employees do their job correctly when the taxation period arrived. On the other hand, training sessions were limited due to the high cost of training. The diminished frequency of training resulted in administrators not fully understand the Land and Building tax. They did not realize the complexity of this new taxation because the officers were not experienced enough through the training. Nevertheless, the management

administrators really urged the public relation officers to create the official website publicizing various key information of the new way of collecting land and building tax to inform the locals before the actual tax collection.

> *"...Administrators were not very supportive. Before this, I hadn't been to a single training session. The Administrators did not support the budget on the taxation trainings that the lack of knowledge could affect to people..."* (Revenue collection officer of LGO B, personal communication, February 28, 2020)

(3) Budgeting revealed that money was allocated to area survey work, public relations section and training to enhance knowledge and information of Land and Building taxation to target groups: sub-district headmen, village headmen and representatives of the public sector. On the other hand, the budget was not sufficient as the operation budget had not been planned clearly enough because not enough agencies could be contracted to complete the land and building tax survey. The solution to the problem was that the staff of the Treasury Division and the Technical Division had to perform the relevant tasks. Consequently, the work outputs were delayed because those officers had their own tasks to finish in the same period of time.

> *"...LGOs had set a budget of preparation for readiness to survey the areas. The LGO spent its own revenue on this budget for 2020..."* (The director of the department of treasury of LGO C, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

(4) The technology system or tax database showed that LGOs' information system using both the database of the Land Department related to all property registration and some data collected from the field. The Land Department used Microsoft Excel programs including the L-Tax 3000 to collect database. Website search engines and GIS Google Map were included for obtaining information required by the Land and Building law. Miscalculations were done because many of the programmers who wrote the various programs for collecting taxes had unclear understanding of Land and Building tax. When Google Map was used to help the officers have more actual information of real areas instead of using only the assessment database from the Treasury Department, problems occurred according to instability or lag of website due to many concurrent users.

> *"...The tax payers' database is the Department's database which both are the related systems. They are all property registration information. The local officials can use the Line@ system to access the Department's database..."* (Revenue collection officer of LGO B, personal communication, February 28, 2020)

(5) Survey equipment used for land and building taxation were basic tools such as various types of tape measures, cameras, laser markers. Some agencies used software applications for land surveying while the areas that could be inspected by the officers themselves were agricultural and not very wide. However, the amount of survey equipment was insufficient and the equipment features were not modern enough. Memory units were unsuitable for storing tax databases. When the staff received the devices with new technology, they could not fully utilize those advancements to produce a completed database. The lack of up-to-date technology to assist officials in collecting taxes caused database collection delays.

"...Officials usually use general tape measure to assess the width, length and floor counting, and then they calculate the collected information according to the formula of calculation with MS Excel program, deducting depreciation, deductions, etc..." (Revenue collection officer of LGO D, personal communication, February 21, 2020)

4.1.2 The external environment of the agencies in regards to their readiness for collecting the Land and Building tax was classified into 5 significant issues as follows:

(1) The clarity of the government policy on taxation showed that the state policy of the land and building taxation was clear. The governmental sectors including the Department of Local Administration, the Treasury Department, the Land Department, and the Fiscal Policy Office tried to expedite the ministerial regulations and related laws to speed up the assessment all regions throughout Thailand. The government assigned the holistic policy while the regulations and laws caused problems when being applied to the details of actual areas. In addition, the government should have created public relations before the land and building taxation was announced, including the classification of the tax types that must be paid.

"...work methods of lawmakers and officials to collect information in real areas are totally different. The first group only looks at the problems in terms of bird's eye view, but in the reality of the areas, the officers face more than that. As a result, it turns out that this new law has many constraints, cannot go along well with the area reality…" (Revenue collection officer of LGO A, personal communication, February 26, 2020)

(2) Relevant regulations and laws revealed that the production of the secondary legislation and various ministerial regulations applying to the current situations and to the land and building tax collection were appropriate.

In the meantime, the issuance of land and building tax provisions were unclear, inconsistent, and changing constantly while the accompanying laws were not yet announced. After agencies had completed work procedures, a new law was released. They had to go back and correct the previously completed work in order to be complaint to the latest laws. It was definitely a waste of time.

> *"...The related laws have been continually publicized and it seems the promulgation of related laws has no end. This obstructs the working and the services to people. When work is done, a new law comes out. The officials have to correct the work and rework. This causes so much work in progress…"* (Revenue collection officer of LGO F, personal communication, February 27, 2020)

(3) Support or assistance from the Central and Regional Departments showed that Songkhla Province was provided chances and support for Land and Building taxation training. The sessions were scheduled for the officials whose work related with the tax collection work. The government monitored this work continuously. The Provincial Land Office provided the latest information changes, particularly the transfer of land ownership. The Treasury Department provided the information concerning land appraisal prices. On the other hand, Central Government did not provide the agencies completed relevant details of this taxation work especially up-to-date information. Moreover, the period of time to update the database was very limited. These constraints caused officials to use the previous year's database to calculate the tax, instead of using the current database.

> *"...LGOs are responsible to the authorities of Local Province. So, this office has set up training on land and building tax for officials in Songkhla. Training are also organized by various official or non-official agencies. The central government is monitoring this work …"* (The director of the department of treasury of LGO B, personal communication, February 28, 2020)

(4) Knowledge and understanding of the people revealed that the officers willingly explained this new tax collection to people who came to LGOs. The agencies established several projects to publicize the new taxation to create good understanding with local people. Public relation activities completed were brochures, printed announcements and meetings between communities with local and community leaders. As the tax act was still unclear and made officials feel uncertain, the process of explaining or giving information of new tax collection could not build clear understanding of new taxation to locals especially to the elderly and the people living in semi-rural/rural areas.

"...People started to understand the new tax law because they attended training sessions, also watched news and began to accept the changes. But some still didn't understand the new taxation…" (Revenue collection officer of LGO C, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

(5) Public cooperation revealed that publicity was done through vinyl banners, radio and Facebook/Line campaigns directly to people that would make them well cooperate. Good cooperation led to better taking care of the one's benefits or the community's benefits. Due to the newly released law, the officers required a new survey. It caused people to not to fully cooperate as they did not understand and disagreed with the Land and Building tax collection.

"...Most people are willing to cooperate based on their comprehension of the right and duty of tax payers and the penalty of not paying tax. LGOs have provided the new tax knowledge and made people understand the benefits for tax payers; therefore, people give quite good responses…" (Revenue collection officer of LGO D, personal communication, February 21, 2020)

4.2 Guidelines of readiness for Land and Building tax collection

4.2.1   Knowledge and understanding of policy, law and the government officials' work duties and performance showed that LGOs should set up consecutive training sessions providing knowledge and understanding of the policies and the Land and Building law as some related laws were constantly changed. The officials could update their work information to the present regulations and related laws through the trainings that gave them chances to share the knowledge and exchange their experiences with work problems and solutions. The current knowledge would enable the officials to have efficacy operation plans. Besides, consecutive trainings were morally supportive for the officials to make them confident that they worked together in the same direction. Using Line application as a main group or various small groups occurred after the training sessions IT was another way of sharing the latest law information, asking for and giving solutions.

"...Giving permission to officers to continually attend trainings will help them gain more and current tax information leading to do an operation planning…" (The director of the department of treasury of LGO E, personal communication, February 26, 2020)

4.2.2   The integrity of the database revealed that LGOs should use Microsoft Excel to calculate land and building taxes and be ready to strengthen the software using that could keep up with the constant database changes to be able to deal with questions from local people about land and building tax.

"...Officers sent a notification to the taxpayers to check and assess whether the information was correct or not according to the tax payment conditions. Tax payers who own the property have to know the exact information and have to confirm it. After checking and correcting the feedback information, officers will calculate the tax. Then the officers will present the renewed tax payment invoice which is the tax price to be paid…" (Revenue collection officer of LGO D, personal communication, February 21, 2020)

4.2.3   Operating budget showed that various operations on Land and Building taxes spent a considerable amount of their operating budget on system improvements, skilled technology personnel, training for officials from different work departments dealing with the land and building tax collection, and projects for promoting these law concepts and operation to various target groups. In fact, almost all LGO departments really needed efficient support from Technology Department that should be set up in each LGO because they lacked capable technology staff. Fully budget support to help them work through this rough period should have been done by department executives. Additionally, budget allocation for training and projects should have been initiated before this law was enacted.

"...Officers do cash advance under the frame of survey budget. Usually, they go to the assigned areas to compare the reality with their information from the database. Besides, new information comes every day. They also work with the tax map officers to receive true and clear information of the areas such as the intrusion into the river..." (Revenue collection officer of LGO D, personal communication, February 21, 2020)

4.2.4   Survey and tax payment service showed that the survey staff did the daily survey to send the data to the tax payment sectors. The data for the tax payment sectors had to be regularly updated because they were received new data daily which conflicted with pervious saved data. The tax payment sectors provided 2 service channels for tax payers: pay directly at the LGO tax payment service office or transfer payment directly to the LGO's official bank accounts.

"...The survey takes about a week. Wherever you go to, any village, any zone, you just look on the map so that it won't be messed up. For the tax payment service, taxpayers can pay directly by themselves or do money transactions to the banks that LGO assigned …" (Revenue collection officer of LGO A, personal communication, February 26, 2020)

4.2.5   Support or assistance from the central and regional authorities showed that their present assistance is training. The central offices provided help whenever LGOs had any problems by providing them the data of the new taxation. When some LGOs could not make good decisions on taxation work, they consulted the authorities who were expertise on specific cases on the Line group. The central offices periodically inquired the progress of the agencies' operations.

"...Local Songkhla Province has a land and building tax Line group. LGO officials can share their problems and share solutions. The Treasury Department also has Line@ giving an opportunity to browse various updated information, including improvement of the L-Tax program. In the aspect of public relation, LGOs also have their own websites for announcements such as Facebook and Line, not only to provide tax announcements but also to update the tax information...." (The director of the department of treasury of LGO B, personal communication, February 28, 2020)

4.2.6   Public relations and creating understanding with tax payers revealed that LGOs publicized the new taxation of Land and Building Law through mobile announcement vehicles, signs, brochures and notifying messages via Facebook, Line, and the official websites. Moreover, official letters were sent to the village chiefs or village heads to publicize to people in the communities about the new taxation. In addition, a project providing knowledge and understanding of the new tax law to local leaders or entrepreneurs was established.

"...LGOs must explain clearly to people who don't know about this new law. In addition, a training session should be at least organized for target people such as entrepreneurs, business groups, not for general locals..." (Revenue collection officer of LGO F, personal communication, February 27, 2020)

5. Discussion

5.1   *General conditions of readiness for Land and Building taxation*

The general conditions of readiness for land and building taxation of LGOs in Muang District, Songkhla Province revealed that the internal environment of LGOs had the preparatory steps for both revenue collection staff, or revenue development and tax mapping officers to be involved in the operation. The administrators encouraged them to attend trainings held by the government and private sectors at various organizations. The expenses of training were supported by the budget allocated for this purpose. However, it was very unlikely, after attending one training session, that the operation staff could understand whole concepts and work procedures clearly related to the unfamiliarly new and complex

Land and Building Tax Law. In the meantime, the training budget was so limited. It was not sufficient for personnel to attend several trainings on different concepts. Therefore, using social media was essential to gain more knowledge and current information. This corresponded to Thesavanich, Lokathakorn, Srisaowalak, Thongsopin, Sajjanon, and Permpoonwiwat (2008) who found that many out-of-date administration regulations were the weaknesses of the sub-district and municipal organizations. Regulation were ignored in the field for sake of optimization. The shortage of budget was another weakness that led to limited project implementations, insufficient and out of work equipment, dilapidated workplaces, and inadequate human resource development.

Besides, the database of land and building tax needed to be improved that so that LGOs could expedite the survey process. The size and area of land and building were the core information for taxation according to the new Land and Building Law whereas the previous building and land tax was collected based on the revenue generated by the utilization of buildings and structures. Additionally, the local maintenance tax was the sum of land based on the estimated price which is an improper work concept at present, and inconsistent with the current conditions. Thus, all databases before this new law except the data of tax payers were useless. This corresponded to Rosenbloom et al. (2015) stating that a building tax was a type of property tax i.e., the primary source of LGO revenue. It was likely that LGOs would expand the tax base to other types of taxes like Trade tax in order to generate more local revenue in the future. Besides, Permpoonwiwat (2009) who studied Land Tax Policy confirmed that the House and Land Tax Act in 1932 and the Local Maintenance Tax Act in 1965 were enforced for an extensive period of time. Therefore, several provisions were unsuitable for the present situations. Consequently, many key problems with Thai property taxation or land ownership unavoidably occurred particularly with the tax base and tax rates.

Moreover, the large LGOs such as city municipalities and town had much more readiness than the smaller LGOs such as sub-district municipalities and sub-district administrative organizations. The larger organizations certainly had more manpower to do the survey work and also had the database system using Microsoft Excel and L-Tax 3000 program to keep the existing information. Boonreang (2015) supported that there were different readiness levels for taxation of land and buildings between the groups of sub-district municipalities and sub-district administrative organizations; between the groups of sub-district municipalities and town municipalities; and between the groups of sub-district municipalities and city municipalities. Nevertheless, all the large and smaller LGOs were in the same conditions of not having full readiness according to the problems of preparation time and ambiguity of the law. The period of preparation for operating new tax collection was limited as it was very close to the starting time of tax payment. The

ambiguity of law and regulations that were continuously announced caused the officers to understand or interpret in different ways.

The external environment of LGOs was directly concerned with the government's policy. The government announced the new taxation law that was truly in accordance with the current situations. This law uses the principle of progress as the basis of preparation for tax base which focuses on the revenue base of tax payers. Tax payers who have more assets pay more tax than individuals who have less property. The determination of land and building types and the appraisal prices still had limitations because they were not determined from the reality of the areas. Area differed largely from each other. Conversely, the announcements of standard forms of land and building types and middle prices were enforced to compare with the actual conditions in the areas. This issue corresponded to Pattamasiriwat (2016) who mentioned Fiscal Decentralization Theory. The local tax principle meant that LGOs had the power to collect taxes, fees and ordinances. The local tax base covered immobile goods like Land and Building tax. Tariffs may vary according to areas and to the benefit principles concept that meant the tax payers/fee payers receiving benefits from local public services. Tariff must consider both the Ability to Pay Principle and the Polluter Pay Principle. Browning and Browning (1983) said that revenue tax was a tax on people's revenue. This tax type was the main earning and the taxation was widely accepted, but the tax payment capability of locals was a significant step of tax collection.

People in the LGOs' areas were confused with the changes of new tax collection due to the lack of knowledge. The new taxation absolutely remodeled the old concepts of tax payment. Previously, tax collection did not cover homeowners, but this new law included them to be tax payers. Their assets i.e., lands and buildings must be assessed by the rules and regulations of new taxation. The survey officials had to explore the areas to gain current information which relied on tax payers cooperating with the officials. Less cooperation occurred subsequent to the lack of knowledge and comprehension because both new and old taxpayers were afraid of paying more tax resulted from the survey.

So, one of the roles of LGOs and officers was to publicize all kinds of informative medias focusing on main work procedures of new taxation to communicate and make clear and good understanding among local tax payers. Krueathep (2018) supported that a feature of good local tax was an ease of understanding. A good local tax system should not lead to work inconvenience or arguments caused by different interpretations as well as discretion of tax types and/or tax rates. If there were multiple tariffs, wide varieties of calculation bases, many exceptions or reductions, and discretion in interpretation, these would definitely create unnecessary hassles for tax payers.

5.2 Guidelines of readiness for Land and Building tax collection

The readiness guidelines of collecting land and building tax of LGOs in Muang District, Songkhla Province showed that relevant officials still needed to constantly enhance their core knowledge and detail comprehension of Land and Building taxation by attending several training sessions, accessing the current information provided by central departments or by neighboring LGOs and provinces including information on social media. These were the essential channels for officials to contact experts directly, and also to be exposed to various case studies in other LGOs. These communication means were opportunities to share and exchange their experiences with work problems and efficacy solutions. Raibsontier and Wattatham (2019) found that Khao Rup Chang Municipality had done the preparation for land and building taxation by 1) organizing training for staff, 2) organizing projects provided important information about Land and Building taxation to locals to create correct understanding between the officials and tax payers, 3) producing printed medias containing key information on Land and Building taxation and distributing them to the public, 4) using the announcement mobile cars to publicize the land and building taxation, especially in Khaoroopchang municipality area, and 5) Khaoroopchang municipality should gain more revenue from other sources.

The officers needed to constantly perform their duties as best as they could find the right answers for current work although the law in terms of principles and regulations was still ambiguous for field and office operations. In the limited time of preparation, the officers started the survey work to obtain the present data to suit the system of new tax calculation and to build the up-to-date databases. In the meantime, new taxation comprehension and good understanding was created through media and meetings with local leaders and people in perspective areas. All the work was insufficiently supported because of budget constraints. Some activities were unable to be forecast such as multiple training sessions and, modern survey equipment. Consequently, the budget was inappropriately planned for them. The solutions coping with the readiness for the land and building taxation, of course, were that budget planning had to focus on the support of several times of trainings for each, more survey tools with new technology, on/off line media expenses, and meetings with locals. Thesavanich et al (2008) found that the creation of clear taxation comprehension and early good understanding among local tax payers was necessary. The paid taxes should be clarified how the locals had community development sometime in return. Better public services and various types of community convenience established to the areas would no longer be the burden to the public. Bangtamai, Lapchit, and Damrongunavuth (2017) also confirmed that the municipality should improve the procedural processes to agree with the current work conditions. The systems of tax map data and the property registration should be implemented as tools for operations of work readiness.

6. Conclusion

From the study on the readiness for collecting the Land and Building tax of LGOs in Muang District, Songkhla Province, it was found that there were no differences among LGOs' preparation process for readiness that local authorities at all levels had set up to cope with the changes in tax collection. They acutely aware of this new taxation as no LGOs had experienced the tax calculating methods based on real and current database. Consequently, budgeting was carefully designed into various aspects such as expenses for organizing or attending training, equipment with up-to-date technology for survey work, public relations work, etc. On the other hand, the readiness achievement levels of the preparation process among LGOs in Muang District, Songkhla Province, were obviously different. It is widely accepted that budget really plays a key role on the levels of goals that are achievable. Large-sized LGOs compared to small and remote ones certainly have more advantages in consideration of more revenue leading to larger budget allocation into various work aspects: more man power, more qualified personnel experienced with modern technological work systems and equipment, and a better previous database that was ready to suit the new way of tax calculation. Nevertheless, the fact is the new Land and Building taxation reduced the amount of revenue for LGOs because of the various tax exemptions for average income tax payers. Local administrators must prepare to minimize the reduction of revenue's impact on public services.

7. Suggestions

7.1 Suggestions for applying research results

(1) The results of the study showed that the availability of land and building tax collection by LGOs in Muang District, Songkhla Province still needed to prepare both the departments themselves and other related sectors for the new taxation. Therefore, the research results obtained should be used in allocation of budget planning to support the work operations of each department, for example, local meetings for tax payers, taxation manuals for people in the areas, and survey work.

(2) The results of the study disclosed that other related agencies had to play a significant role in the performance of duties by local government organizations by providing support and assistance. The information obtained from the study results are the fact from actual work performance, for example, present survey data in agreement with the criteria of the land and building law, training constraints for operation staff, and time limitation including communication channels of building law comprehension among local tax payers. This

fundamental data could be very useful for work operation planning of each related agency.

7.2 Suggestions for the next research

(1) The availability of land and building taxation by LGOs in other districts in Songkhla Province should be studied to compare the data among their agencies and/or to show the actual overall data in the province. The studies would clarify the effects of this taxation.

(2) The local tax payers' knowledge and comprehension towards the land and building taxation should be investigated to reflect the direct impacts on people and entrepreneurs. This study would cover the other part of who was involved in the new taxation i.e., the aspect of local people who were directly affected by tax in order to receive comprehensive and real data from all sectors.

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