

A Success Case of Implementing Sufficiency Economy Concept: Funeral Expenses Reduction Project

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ABSTRACT

Thai government is promoting “Sufficiency Economy” concept for the country’s economic development purpose. “Sufficiency,” according to this concept, means “To lead a reasonably comfortable life, without excess, or overindulgence in luxury, but enough.” This research selected Tha Toung Luang Sub District as a case study regarding to its successful “Funeral Expenses Reduction Project.” The objective of this study was to find out how to successfully implement Sufficiency Economy concept to communities. The main methods applied were in-depth interview, participatory observation, and document review. The research results revealed that the key factors that lead to the accomplishment of this project were the impactful opinion leaders, methodology of involving people to participate in the project, and the traditional reciprocal Thai culture.

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Introduction

Thailand is a developing country located in Southeast Asia. In 1997-1998, the country faced Asian financial crisis where a significant numbers of financial institutions and businesses had to terminate themselves. However, Thailand recovered fast. Due to the nation's well-developed infrastructure including free-enterprise economy, generally pro-investment policies, and strong export industries, Thailand generated solid growth from 2000 to 2007 - averaging more than 4% per year. The country was unfortunately hit again by the global financial crisis during 2008-2009. This time, the country's export was severely cut with most sectors experiencing double-digit drops

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(Central Intelligence Agency, 2011). The “Sufficiency Economy” concept then brought into public’s interest and was taught and implemented nationwide. The goal of adopting Sufficiency Economy concept is to sustainably develop economy based on a principle of self-reliance (Sathirathai & Piboolsravut, 2004). “Sufficiency,” according to this concept, means “to lead a reasonably comfortable life, without excess, or overindulgence in luxury, but enough” (His Majesty the King’s birthday speech on 4 December, 1998 direct quoted in Chaipattana Foundation website, 2013). It is crucial to study how such concept was successfully implemented and gained acceptance by members of a certain community. This research applied Everett Roger’s Diffusion concept to learn the success practice of this case. The content of this concept is further explained in the Relevant Concept part of this article.

The objective of this study was to find out how to successfully implement Sufficiency Economy concept to local communities. This research selected Tha Toung Luang Sub District Administration Organization as a case study regarding to its flourishing “Funeral Expenses Reduction Project.”

Tha Toung Luang Sub District consisted of 6 villages with population of approximately 4,000. This sub district, along with other sub districts around Thailand aimed to develop the areas of economics, cultures, and community. In 2009, Tha Toung Luang Sub District had won an award of “Best Management Practice” from the Ministry of Interior because of its “Funeral Expenses Reduction Project.” This particular project served the organization’s 3 main roles: 1) local tradition and culture support 2) community development and 3) community involvement. This case study illustrated a good model of how a local government agent effectively diffused Sufficiency Economy concept to a local community. Detail of the Funeral Expenses Reduction Project will be explained in detail in the Result section.

Objective

To study how Tha Toung Luang Sub District successfully implemented Sufficiency Economy concept to its community by using Funeral Expenses Reduction Project as a case study.

Relevant Concepts

Sufficiency Economy

“Sufficiency means to lead a reasonably comfortable life, without excess, or overindulgence in luxury, but enough” (His Majesty the King’s birthday speech on 4 December, 1998 direct quoted in Chaipattana Foundation website, 2013). “Sufficiency Economy” is a philosophy bestowed by

His Majesty the King of Thailand to his subjects through royal pronouncements made on many occasions. The philosophy provides guidance on appropriate conduct covering numerous aspects of life. After the economic crisis in 1997, His Majesty the King reiterated and expanded on the concept of “Sufficiency Economy” in his remarks made in December 1977 and again in December 1998. The philosophy aims for a more resilient and sustainable economy and a higher ability to meet the challenges arising from globalization and other changes” (Wibulswasdi, C. et al, 2010). “Sufficiency Economy is a philosophy that stresses the middle path as an overriding principle for appropriate conduct by the populace at all levels. This applies to conduct starting from the level of the families, communities, as well as the level of nation in development and administration so as to modernize in line with the forces of globalization. Sufficiency means moderation, reasonableness, and the need of self-immunity for sufficient protection from impact arising from internal and external changes. To achieve this, an application of knowledge with due consideration and prudence is essential. In particular great care is needed in the utilization of theories and methodologies for planning and implementation in every step. At the same time, it is essential to strengthen the moral fibre of the nation, so that everyone, particularly public officials, academics, businessmen at all levels, adheres first and foremost to the principles of honesty and integrity. In addition, a way of life based on patience, perseverance, diligence, wisdom and prudence is indispensable to create balance and be able to cope appropriately with critical challenges arising from extensive and rapid socioeconomic, environmental, and cultural changes in the world” (Direct quote from North Education Website: Unofficial translation. A working definition compiled from remarks made by His Majesty the King on various occasions and approved by His Majesty and sent by His Majesty’s principal Private Secretary to the NESDB on November 29, 1999) (North Education, 1999).

Diffusion

Everett M. Rogers is a researcher who has done a lot of studies to synthesize significant findings and compelling theories related to diffusion of ideas. According to Rogers, E. (1995), diffusion is defined as “the process by which an innovation is adopted and gains acceptance by members of a certain community.” He pointed out that there is a number of factors interact to influence the diffusion of an innovation. The four major factors that influence diffusion process consist of: 1) the innovation itself 2) how information about the innovation is communicated 3) time and 4) the nature of the social system into which the innovation is being introduced (Rogers, E., 1995).

Diffusion is a process of five distinct stages that occurs over time. The stages in the process are 1) Knowledge 2) Persuasion 3) Decision 4) Implementation and 5) Confirmation. According to this

theory, prospective adopters of an innovation must learn about the innovation, be persuaded as to the intrinsic worth of the innovation, decide to adopt, implement the innovation, and confirm (repeat or reject) the decision to adopt the innovation.

The Theory of Perceived Attributes (Rogers, E., 1995) states that prospective adopters judge an innovation based on their perceptions in regard to five attributes of the innovation. The aforementioned attributes are: 1) Trialability 2) Observability 3) Relative Advantage 4) Complexity and 5) Compatibility. The theory stated that an innovation will experience an increased rate of diffusion if prospective adopters perceive that the innovation: 1) Can be tried on a limited basis before adoption; 2) Offers observable results; 3) Has an advantage relative to other innovations (or the status quo); 4) is not overly complex; and 5) Is compatible with existing practices and values.

The following picture illustrates Rogers' Diffusion Concept.

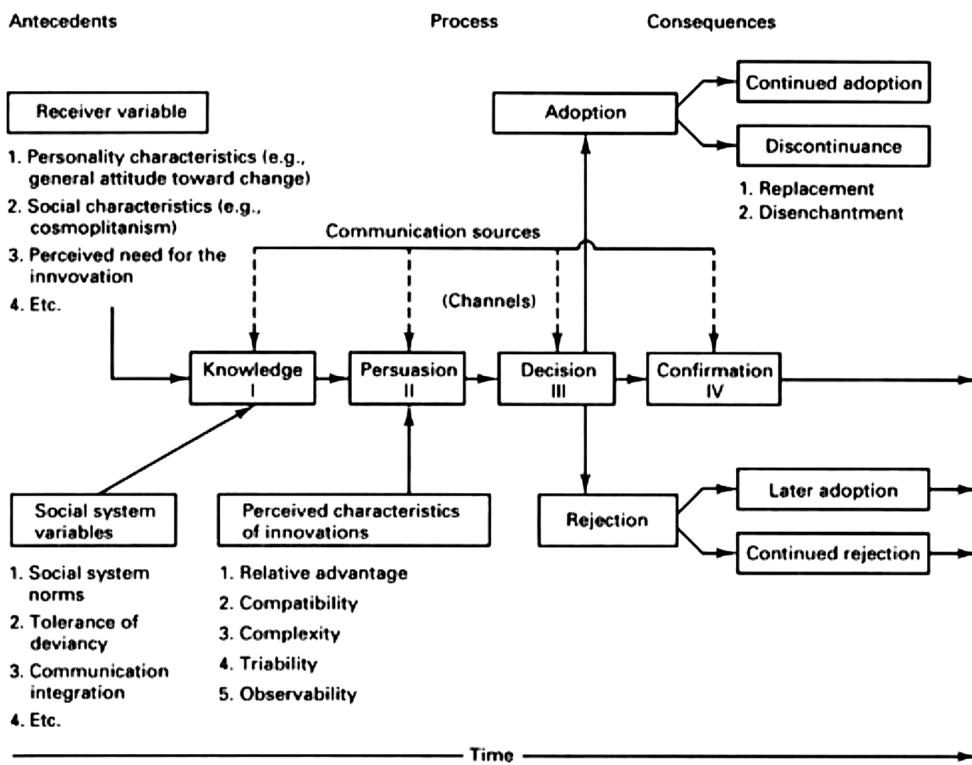


Figure 1: Rogers' Diffusion Concept

Source: Rogers, E.M. (1995). *Diffusion of innovations* (4th edition). The Free Press, New York.

Literature Reviews

The application of Sufficiency Economy philosophy is not limited only to the national level, but it is applicable to people from all walks of life at all levels. However, the levels of success are varied due to different factors. According to Vilasinee, B. (2010), the key success factors of the application of the philosophy includes: knowing what ones are doing; being honest and persevere; taking middle path; being sensible and insightful in taking decisions; building protection against shocks despite different applications; and sharing the same goal of balanced and sustainable development. At an individual and house hold level, people should have reasonable behavior in investment and consumption such as better individual and family financial planning, and limiting unnecessary luxurious consumption. Prayukwong, W. (2007) suggested that encouraging individuals to directly learn from daily life and the experiences of economic activity will help individuals to see linkages of their work to that of others and to improve their work processes in such a way that benefits the entire community. In other words, developing a better understanding of economic activity in a holistic way is a key to success in applying Sufficiency Economic successfully. Nuangchaler, P. and Chansirisira, P. (2012) conducted a research on applying Sufficiency Economy concept in university's community service and also found that one of the key success factors was the involvement of village members. Moreover, they suggested that the networking among stakeholders; in which in their case including academic institute, local governmental organization, and local communities, were crucial. Mongsawad, P. (2009) provided relevance suggestions that involvement of the locals were necessary. He also indicated that by involving in hands-on activities, the locals would gain essential skills such as critical thinking, decision making, leadership, and teamwork. He suggested that different types of projects could be applied the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy and success in alleviating poverty. Examples of methodologies to help alleviated poverty were to reduce expenses through home production, to eliminate costly local entertainments, and to promote local markets.

According to Pruetipibultham, O. (2010), to have "the model of success" for villagers and interested public to adopt proper knowledge that could guide them to achieve self-reliance in a sustainable manner was important. She gave an example of the Royal Development Study Centres (RDSCs) and pointed out that each center was a place that gathers examples of successful projects and integrates technical knowledge with practical theories to form a source of knowledge. People can come and learn the success cases from those centers. As a result, the visitors would enhance their creativity and capacity to carry out their development works in ways which would create benefits for their community and the nation.

There were other types of projects that applied Sufficiency Economy philosophy that aimed to enhance the economy of the local communities. OTOP (One Tambon One Product) program was one of the well-known development projects in Thailand which followed this philosophy. This project was initiated by the Department of Community Development which acted under the Ministry of Interior Affairs. According to Curry, R. L. and Sura, K. (2007), OTOP programs had grown gradually and had contributed to the Thai economy significantly. However, the study reported that this program was not an absolute powerful tool that could eradicate the rural poverty in Thailand completely. This study suggested four limitations that the project could be succeed only if these four basic conditions existed. First, agricultural resources are substantial and readily accessible. Second, communities are well organized and willing to cooperate. Third, local people have work skills. Lastly, communities are capable of reaching for outside financial and technical aids.

Besides academic studies oriented around Sufficiency Economy concept implemented in Thailand, there were studies in other countries as well. For instance, Omar, A.R.C., et al. (2013) conducted a study regarding sufficient and sustainable livelihood in Malaysia using a natural farming program as a case study also found out the relevance result that empowerment of community members was a key success factor of the program. As the community members were highly involved with the project, they gained direct experience that their quality of life was improved significantly. Therefore, after the outside project consultants completed the pilot project, the community members were willing to run this project in the long term on their own and more people in the area expressed their interest in joining the future project. It was noted in this study that the external parties had played an important role in being agents whom bring in new useful knowledge to the communities. Knowledge sharing among the villagers alone would not generate new ideas to the villages.

Even though a number of studies suggested various key success factors of implementing Sufficiency Economy concept, there are some obstacles. For example, Rossi, A. (2012) had conducted an ethnography research at Phu Payak Royal Project in Nan Province during 2008 to 2009. The goal of the Royal Project were to stop opium plantation, preserve natural resources, and help enhance economic and living status of the hill tribes residing in the northern provinces of Thailand by teaching them to plant cash crops such as cold climate fruit trees that generate higher income to the hill tribes (Royal Project Foundation, 2013). Rossi found that the major obstacle that the Royal Project faced in raising awareness about the importance of trees preservation was the approaching methodology. The evidence was that the local community at Phu Payak was Lua Tribe (Mon-Khmer speaking groups). Most of them do not practice Buddhism, but the Royal Projects staff involves them in eco- eco-Buddhist

ceremonies like the tree ordination ceremony. Ordination is a Buddhist ceremony to transform a man to be a monk which was believed to be a sacred status where ordinary Buddhists should pay respect to. Tree ordination is a symbolic action of sanctifying the trees in order to protect them from logging and to symbolically remind people that nature should be treated as equal with humans, deserving of respect and vital for human as well as all life (Sagar, L. I., et al, 2002). In this circumstance, the Lua did not have their fundamental belief in Buddhism, therefore, such symbolic ceremony did not mean much to them. The lesson learned from this evidence was that using the methodology that the community does not mentally involved could be a major obstacle to diffuse a new idea to them. Therefore, the change agent should research on the target group's belief and values before taking action in order to design an effective way to motivate them.

Research Methodologies

The main methods applied were in-depth interview, participatory observation, and document review. The researcher based the interview questions as well as observation checklist on Everett Rogers' Diffusion Concept. The researcher interviewed key informants including the Head of Tha Toung Luang Sub District Administration Organization, related officers, and villagers who participated in the Funeral Expenses Reduction Project. In addition, the researcher did participatory observation by attending the funerals under the Funeral Expenses Reduction Project in both the Buddhist chanting ceremony and also the cremation ceremony in order to witness the actual activity. As the researcher interviewed the key informants about the principle of the project and also its implementation, then attended the real funeral under the project, the research results were verified and validated accordingly.

Research Results

The research results were explained based on Rogers' Diffusion Concept's stages in the diffusion process as follows.

1. Knowledge

Tha Toung Luang Sub District's idea of Funeral Expenses Reduction Project started from the policy of the Thai government to promote Sufficiency Economy concept to local residents around the country. Therefore, Tha Toung Luang Sub District Administration Organization acted as a liaison between the government and the locals. The board of the organization, which consisted of the executives of the organization, representatives of local residents, respected monks from the temples

in the area, arranged several meetings to discuss what and how to transfer the concept into impactful practice. The goal of the meeting was an initiation of a project that helps local communities to improve their economic status. According to the Sufficiency Concept that if the income of the people is low, they should try to control their expenses and cut down the unnecessary expenses and carefully spend on essential things for an economy but enough living. As a result of the brainstorming, they concluded that their major problem was poverty. They agreed that the local residents' income were lower than the nation's average because the majority of them were farmers and some did handicrafts which did not generate consistent income. Their significant finding was that even though the local residents barely able to live on their income; they were pressured to spend money on social event, especially funeral. The cost of one funeral could be as high as 200,000 Thai Baht while one person's average was around 48,200 Thai Baht. The locals believe that when somebody passed away, the relatives and others should arrange a very nice funeral as the last good thing they can do to that person. For the ceremony, the relatives have to prepare "Prasart" (literally mean "castle") which looks like a small fancy house to send to the dead one by burning this Prasart in a ceremony believing that the dead one will receive it and have a nice place to stay in the heaven. The Prasart prices ranged from 3,000 to 20,000 Thai Baht. The other heavy expenses were expenses on food and drinks especially alcoholic drinks to provide to the other local residents who come to help them out at the funeral. Local Thais society is a reciprocal society in which people help each other out and the ones who get help will show their appreciation but providing food to the helpers. In general, funeral will be held for about 5-7 days and the total cost may range from 120,000 to 200,000 Thai Baht. The working committees figured that many local residents had to borrow money to arrange the funeral and ended up with high debt that took them a lot of effort and long time to pay back. In addition, they agreed that funeral was a source of alcohol-related problems such as people fighting because at the funeral, the host will provide plenty of alcoholic drinks to the helpers days and nights.

According to this particular problem, one of the board members suggested that they should find a way to reduce such financial burden for the local residents which in conformance with the Sufficiency Economy concept. He told the other board members that he had heard about "Funeral Expenses Reduction Project" from a monk in another village. Therefore, the board contacted that monk and talked to him about the idea of how to reduce funeral expenses. They learned that at another village, all the villagers came together and had a consensus to cut down the funeral expenses by replacing the traditional Prasart with other cheaper and useful things such as tables and chairs. Instead of simply burning them to symbolize sending them to the dead one, the relatives donated

those things to local organizations in the area such as school or temple. In addition, they agreed to provide just water instead of alcoholic drinks. As a result of such practice, the villagers were able to reduce the funeral cost more than half of what they used to pay for. The board took this idea back to the meeting and they agreed to start their own Funeral Expenses Reduction Project.

In sum, at this stage, the organization learned their problems and the causes of them and also a potential solution which align with their organization's goal, Sufficiency Economy.

2. Persuasion

From the research, it was found out that the key factor for persuasion stage was the impactful opinion leaders. The opinion leaders of this community consist of the head of Tha Toung Luang Sub District Administration Organization, the heads of the 6 participated villages, and interestingly the respected monks from the temples in the area. Each party played a different role. The head of Tha Toung Luang Sub District Administration Organization acted as a liaison between the government and the villagers. He had an authority to make decision on funding and an authority to assign other members in the team to work. The heads of the participated villages acted as the one who conveys the government messages received from the Toung Luang Sub District Administration Organization to the villagers. They also had authority to ask the villagers to participate in the community meeting. Villagers tended to trust the head of the villages since those village heads were elected to be in the position by the villagers under democracy constitution. Another very important opinion leader was the monks whom were highly respected by the villagers. Most of the villagers were Buddhism and all of them were in common traditional cultures where monks were highly respected and perceived as they were in a sacred status. Therefore, villagers tended to obey the monks' preach as well as willing to do merit as the monks ask for. Tha Toung Luang Sub District Administration Organization developed the organization board consists of these three parties aiming that they would be the opinion leaders to drive the Funeral Expenses Reduction Project.

To start the project off, the board set a meeting to brainstorm for ideas to reduce the funeral expense. They agreed to set criterion for the following factors: 1) number of days to hold the funeral 2) amount of money to give to monks in return for their praying service (Note: Each night of the funeral, the host will invite monks to pray at the funeral and the tradition was to give money to the monk as if to do merit. However, at present, it became a tradition to give money to the monk as to pay for their praying service. It was expected that the better off host should give more money to the monk.) 3) materials to use in the funeral (such as "Prasat") 4) food and drink to be provided at the funeral to the helpers 5) gambling restriction at the funeral 6) alcohol consumption restriction at the

funeral. The board concurred that the detail of each factor should be a consensus of the villagers, so they separated into 6 teams (as there were 6 villages under Tha Toung Luang Sub District Administration Organization's span of responsibility) to conduct workshops at each villages in order to finalize the agreement on the extent of the rules of the aforementioned 6 factors. Their main roles were to explain the concept of the Funeral Expenses Reduction Project to the villagers and to persuade them to join the project. The groups would present to the villagers about the benefits of joining this project and ask for their inputs to develop the rules for the project.

3. Decision

The 6 opinion leader teams conducted 6 workshops with the villagers. The main goal of the workshops was to raise awareness about the overly high funeral cost. In addition, they shared a successful case study of another village that highly success in their Funeral Expenses Reduction Project. As a result, the villagers were mentally convinced. After that, they brainstormed on flipcharts posted on walls to get the consensus on the degree of the 6 factors stated in the persuasion stage. The results from all 6 villages' workshops were mostly similar with just a few differences in small details. The consensus of the rules for this project is shown in the table below.

Table 1: Funeral Expenses Reduction Project's rules in comparison with the traditional way

| Rules | Traditional way | Agreement on rules for Funeral Expenses Reduction Project |
|---|--|---|
| 1) Number of days to hold the funeral | 5 - 7 days. | Maximum of 3 days. |
| 2) Amount of money providing to monks in return for their praying service | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More than 100 Thai Baht per monk and the wealthier host is expected to give more money. - The giving amount will be known by everyone attending the funeral. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 100 to 200 Thai Baht per monk per one praying night. - Guests must not ask about the amount of money given to the monks and nobody should talk about this money. |
| 3) Materials to use in the funeral | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use as expensive Prasart as the host could afford (sometime they could not even afford it and had to borrow money from others). 2. Use expensive coffin to show their respect to the dead one. 3. People will light up firework in the funeral at night. 4. On the last day while transporting the body of the dead from either home or temple to the cremation place, they usually put the coffin on a trailer and put Prasat cover the coffin and the host will stand on the side of | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use cheap Prasart or use some other useful things to substitute Prasart and not burn them. Instead, donate them to other local organizations (such as useables and chairs put together as Prasart and give them to a local school after the funeral was over). |

Table 1: Funeral Expenses Reduction Project's rules in comparison with the traditional way
(Continued)

| Rules | Traditional way | Agreement on rules for Funeral Expenses Reduction Project |
|--|--|---|
| | the trailer and throw coins to the people on the street sides as if they are going merit by giving away money. | 2. Use inexpensive coffin. 3. Quit using firework. 4. Quit throwing-coin (giving away money) tradition. |
| 4) Food and drink to be provided at the funeral to the helpers | 1. The host will provide food and drink to the guests at the funeral days and nights. 2. The host will provide alcoholic drinks to other villagers who come to help out at the funeral. 3. The host will prepare 3-5 types of food for the guests. 4. In general, the host will prepare a lot of food and the guests were expecting to bring the rest back after the funeral. | 1. Quit providing food and drink every night of the funeral and replace with just providing water. 2. Replace alcoholic drink, soft drinks, and replace with water or homemade juice. 3. During day time, provide 1-2 types of food only. 4. The guests must not bring food back home after the funeral is over. |
| 5) Gambling restriction at the funeral | People usually play gamble at the funeral at night symbolizing they were there to keep company with the soul of the dead so that the soul would not be lonely and sad. | Quit gambling in the funeral. |
| 6) Alcohol consumption restriction at the funeral | People usually drink alcohol at the funeral to cheer up the host as well as to make the funeral not too depressing. | Quit drinking alcohol at the funeral. |

4. Implementation

After getting agreement on common rules, the project was announced and called for members. On the first round, there were 814 households registered to be members. In the first year, there were a total of 21 funerals under this project. The villagers and related people said that they were very satisfied with the project because they could save a significant amount of money and the funeral did not hurt their economic as much as it used to. All of them said that everyone involving in the project was well disciplined and strictly followed the agreed rules. It was an internal control where villagers in the community control each other. For example, when somebody complained about not having alcoholic drink, the others would say that they already agreed and if that person wants to drink, he/she could drink outside of the funeral and pay on their own. Then, such complaints would stop. The result reveals that in the past, the host had to pay about 120,000 to 200,000 Thai Baht. After they participated in the Funeral Expenses Reduction Project, the expense was decreased to about

60,000 – 80,000 Thai Baht. In addition, the villagers were happy that the alcohol-related problems were decreased significantly.

5. Confirmation

To confirm the result of this project, the project organizer did evaluation of the project by distributing questionnaires to the project participants and asked for their opinions towards the project and its result. All of the participants provided positive feedback toward the project. They also said that they would convince other villagers who were not yet involved to join the project. As Tha Toung Luang Sub District Administration Organization had announced for the second round of membership application three months later, there were 106 more households submitted their applications. In addition, I, as the researcher, interviewed villagers during my data collection period, I found that 100 percent of the households had joined the project. This is a confirmation of the success of this project. In addition, the villagers told the researchers that this project will be a sustainable project since it was very well accepted by the villagers and the practice has became a new social norm of their community.

Discussions

In this section, I will discuss the result of this research based on Everett M. Rogers's Innovation Diffusion Model. Roger (1995) stated that there are four factors that influence diffusion process. The four factors are discussed as follows.

1. The innovation itself

The Funeral Expenses Reduction Project was not a brand new project since the other village had developed and implemented it before. However, it was new to the people of Tha Toung Luang Sub District and it was an effective solution to the problems it was facing. In addition, it fits well with the organization's mission, "Sufficiency Economy." As the project proofed an effective result in reducing the community's expenses, this innovation had a good start by getting support from related policy makers and stakeholders. This result was relevant to the study of Pruetipibultham, O. (2010) which suggested that people tended to be able to enhance their creativity and capacity to carry out their development works when they had the opportunity to see the "model of success." Tha Toung Luang villagers had a chance to learn from other villages' success case so they were confident that this project would be success and should benefit them. As they ran their project for the first round and the result proofed positive outcomes that the participated members had gained tangible financial benefit from this project, it attracted other villagers to join in the second round.

2. How information about the innovation is communicated

As stated in the research result section, the information about the innovation was communicated through the opinion leaders consisted of the head of the Tha Toung Luang Sub District Administration Organization, the heads of the 6 participated villages, and the respected monks from the temples in the area. Regarding to Amalia (2012)'s research, Tha Toung Luang was a success case since the villagers were Buddhists and monks were involved as an opinion leader. Those people were well known and accepted by the villagers and they worked well as opinion leaders. The information channels consist of word-of-mouth, workshops, posters, and community radio. The significant success factors, according to the villagers, were that the head of the village asked every household to send at least one person to attend the workshop and transfer their knowledge and experiences to the rest of the family members. By doing this, every villager were aware of the project as well as understand the benefit and goal of it. Another significant success factor was that in the workshop, the workshop facilitators had tried to get everybody involved in the workshop during the brainstorming time by asking for their opinions and suggestions. The workshop facilitators would praise the villagers that they were directly involved and would receive direct impact from the project, so their opinions would be very valuable. As a result, the participants felt accepted and willing to participate. Furthermore, as the Tha Toung Luang Sub District Administration Organization showed its effort in supporting this project by announcing it and assigned all of the 6 villages to conduct workshops at the same time, the impact was strong. The effect of the workshops was amplified by word-of-mouth from the workshop participants to others in the villages, and reinforced with posters and repeated news and commercials about this project community radio.

According to Nuangchalerm, P. and Chansirisira, P. (2012) and Mongsawad, P. (2009) conducted a research on applying Sufficiency Economy concept and found that key success factors were the involvement of village members and networking among stakeholders. The result of this research supported their findings. As the villagers had participated in the project and directly experienced positive results, they were willing to communicate the ideas to others and able to explained about the project as well as the benefits of Sufficiency Economy Philosophy with profound understanding.

3. Time

Timing was a crucial factor of this project. Tha Toung Luang Sub District Sub District Administration Organization had planned a timeline to implement this project as well as to evaluate it. The steps were to brainstorm for the idea of how to bring Sufficiency Economy concept into practice, to come up with a project, to convey the project concept to the villagers, to get the

villagers involved, to implement the project, to evaluate the project, to promote this project to the rest of the villagers, and to evaluate again and keep it sustain. This project was done within one-year timeframe.

4. The nature of the social system into which the innovation is being introduced

The nature of the social system of Tha Toung Luang Sub District was supporting the Funeral Expenses Reduction Project being introduced since the relationship of the people within the community was strong and people have culture of helping each others. In addition, even though they were living in a collective culture, they were open minded people and were willing to change for the better. It obvious in this case that people agreed to change several things from the tradition ways to a new ways such as quit using Prasart and replace it with useful things. This result was relevant to the study of Curry, R. L. and Sura, K. (2007) and Omar, A.R.C., et al. (2013) which suggested that the willingness to cooperate of the villagers was a crucial factor to accomplish the goal of Sufficiency Economy project. In addition, as Mongsawad, P. (2009) suggested, leadership and teamwork were important factors to reach the goal. In this case, Tha Toung Luang Sub District had an effective leader who could influence the community members and the community members were courteously cooperated.

Besides the four factors influence diffusion process, I would also like to discuss about how prospective adopters judge the Funeral Expenses Reduction Project based on their perceptions in regard to five attributes of the innovation. The discussions are as follows.

1. Trialability

Everett M. Rogers (1995) stated that innovation diffusion would be effective if people can try the new innovation before adoption. In this case, the villagers did not try before they adopt and implement the Funeral Expenses Reduction Project. However, they had learned from another village that had implemented this project and was successful before. So, although they did not try it beforehand, they learned from the others. According to Vilasinee, B. (2010), knowing what ones are doing and being sensible and insightful in taking decisions are components of the key success factors of the application of Sufficiency Economy philosophy. Vilasinee's suggestion is align with the concept of Rogers (1995) and the practice of the Tha Toung Luang villagers in the sense that the villagers took effort to acquire sufficient information about how to implement the project and also knew the result of the project before they conducted a trial project at their village.

2. Observability

The result of this project was tangible; the people who participated in the Funeral Expenses

Reduction Project and had implemented the project could cut their expense down 50 percent or more. Due to such clear and impactful result, the diffusion process was strengthening. This finding supports the study of Prayukwong, W. (2007) that encouraging individuals to directly learn from daily life and the experiences of economic activity will help individuals to see linkages of their work to that of others and to improve their work processes in such a way that benefits the entire community.

3. Relative Advantage

This innovation's advantage was helping the local residents save money as well as solve the alcohol-related problem, which was a big problem in the community. The villagers agreed that this was a significantly better development project than any other projects they had done in the past such as career training projects which enhance their career related skills but the result was not as outstanding as this one.

4. Complexity

The procedures and rules of the Funeral Expenses Reduction Project were simple and easy to understand and implement. In addition, the villagers were involved in setting those procedures and rules, this helps the villagers to accept the concept fast. Regarding to Rossi, A. (2012), one of the obstacles of implementing new concept in the local community was the differences in traditional beliefs and cultures. In this case, the traditional belief of the villagers and the concept of the project aligned. Most of the villagers were Buddhists and the project was oriented around Buddhism philosophy of taking the middle path by not overspends on unnecessary things. Therefore, the issue of complexity did not emerge in this case.

5. Compatibility

The result showed that the project, when compare with the existing practices and values, it was better in all dimensions of the organization's main roles namely it support local tradition and culture, it helped community development, and it generated community involvement and strengthen the relationship of people within the community.

Conclusion

In conclusion, by using Tha Toung Luang Sub District Administration Organization's Funeral Expenses Reduction Project as a case study to learn how a local government agent successfully diffused Sufficiency Economy concept to the local residents. It was found that the organization's practice was aligned with Everett M. Rogers's Innovation Diffusion Model which consists of five processes: 1) Knowledge 2) Persuasion 3) Decision 4) Implementation and 5) Confirmation. It is

notable that Roger's Innovation Diffusion Model was a general model in which the proper way of "how" to follow all of those stages of different organizations or places would be differ depending on the norm, culture, beliefs, and people's mind sets. In this case, Tha Toung Luang Sub District Administration Organization, which served as a change agent was located in Chiang Mai, Thailand where the residents' norm, culture, beliefs, and people's mind sets were different than those of other areas. From the case, it was an advantage of Tha Toung Luang village that most of the villagers were Buddhists, therefore, they designed their project by integrating Buddhist belief and ceremonies with the Sufficient Economy concept. In turns, the cooperation and the feedback were positive. In addition, this project had tendency to be sustainable because after the first trial round of the project, the non-project members had observed the tangible success of the project. Then, they agreed to join in the later rounds of the project. Sustainability is one of the core components of Sufficiency Economy concept. It could be concluded that the key factors that lead to the accomplishment in diffusion of this project were the impactful opinion leaders, methodology of involving people to participate in the project, and the traditional reciprocal Thai culture.

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