

Research Article

The Evaluation of Strategic Development Plans of Samut Sakhon Provincial Administration Organization

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Abstract

This study aims at 1) studying the basic information about the strategic development plans of Samut Sakhon provincial administration organization (PAO), 2) evaluating the results of the strategic development plans of Samut Sakhon PAO, 3) studying the problem and obstacle in the implementation of the strategic development plans of Samut Sakhon PAO, and 4) proposing guidelines for effective developing the strategic development plans of Samut Sakhon PAO. The data were collected by surveying 400 stakeholders of Samut Sakhon PAO and interviewing 10 key informants. The results showed that the local citizen samples were satisfied with Samut Sakhon PAO's 6 strategic developmental plans, namely (1) education development strategy, (2) quality-of-life enhancement strategy, (3) economic development strategy, (4) infrastructure development strategy, (5) environmental conservation and rehabilitation strategy, and (6) city development and administration strategy. Considering the dimensions ranking from the highest to lowest satisfaction scores, it was found that economic development strategy had the highest score ($\bar{X} = 3.97$), followed by infrastructure development strategy ($\bar{X} = 3.90$), education development strategy ($\bar{X} = 3.88$), quality-of-life enhancement strategy ($\bar{X} = 3.87$), environmental conservation and rehabilitation strategy ($\bar{X} = 3.82$), and city development and administration strategy ($\bar{X} = 3.82$), respectively. These lead to formulating recommendations on the effective and efficient implementation of policy for both the national and provincial level by making plans more practical and solving the economic problems in order to respond to people's needs and also evaluating the implementation of the strategic development plan in every step.

Keywords: project, project evaluation, strategic development plan, Samut Sakhon provincial administration organization

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1. Introduction

The crucial missions of the provincial administration organization (PAO) were to improve local people's quality of life in terms of infrastructure, education, religion, art, culture and traditions, local wisdom, social work, prevention and mitigation of public disasters, public water resources management, as well as public participation among local and various sectors (Krueathep, 2004). It must be carried out under the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand and the Provincial Administration Organization Act B.E. 2540 (1997) and its amendments. According to the Provincial Administration Organization Act B.E. 2542 (1999), Section 17 is subject to Subsection 16. The decentralized plan and procedure had assigned the authority to provincial administration organization to organize the public service system, provincial administration, and coordinate development projects in case they exceeded the capability of the municipality and the sub-district administration organization.

According to the regulations of the Ministry of Interior regarding the preparation of development plans of local administrative organizations, B.E. 2548 (2005) and amendments (No. 3) B.E. 2561 (2018), Article 29 stipulated that the local development plan monitoring and evaluation committee had the authority to determine the guideline methods for monitoring and evaluating development plans, monitor and evaluate the development plan, report the result and propose opinions to the local administrator, so that they could present to the local council and local development committee. The local development committee shall announce the monitoring and evaluation of the development plan results to the local people in public within fifteen days from the date of reporting results and giving opinions. The announcement must be shown for a period of not less than thirty days and at least once a year within December. A local administrative organization might assign organizations or a third party to implement or participate in the monitoring and evaluation of the development plan. This process was one of the crucial activities in the planning procedure, so that the organization might know the progress, understand the obstacles, and implement the plan to practice systematically. By applying the results to practice, local administrative organizations were able to manage public services more effectively and meet the needs of the local people (Sirisamphan, 2006).

Samut Sakhon had ranked highly in Thailand in terms of quality of life, economic wealth, and industrial development. Compared to other provinces, Samut Sakhon was relatively smaller, which could easily distribute the facility and care to all populations and facilitate the collaboration of provincial administrative organizations (lamtrakul & Chayphong, 2022). The administrative organizations needed to have strategic plans for administration that were used as strategies for planning.

To comply with the regulations of the Ministry of Interior and listen to public opinions, strategic development plans had to be monitored and evaluated. The development strategy was divided into 6 aspects, namely educational development strategy, enhancing quality of life strategy, economic development strategy, infrastructure development strategy, environmental conservation and rehabilitation strategy, and city development and administration strategy. The outcome of this study was to build strategies for implementing continuous learning and development in meeting the needs of local people.

This study focused on the evaluation of the strategic development plans of Samut Sakhon provincial administration organization (PAO) in six dimensions: (1) educational development, (2) promoting quality of life, (3) economic development, (4) infrastructure development, (5) environmental conservation and rehabilitation, and (6) city development and administration strategies. The results of this study will help us gain a better understanding on the success of the strategic development plans of Samut Sakhon PAO, especially in views of local constituents from three districts: Mueang, Krathum Baen, and Ban Phaeo district. The results of this study will subsequently yield further accomplishments and guidelines for developing future provincial strategic plans of Samut Sakhon PAO effectively and efficiently.

2. Objectives of the Study

1. To study the basic information about the strategic development plans of Samut Sakhon provincial administration organization (PAO).
2. To evaluate citizens' opinions toward the strategic development plans of Samut Sakhon PAO in six strategies: (1) educational development, (2) promoting quality of life, (3) economic

development, (4) infrastructure development, (5) environmental conservation and rehabilitation, and (6) city development and administration strategies.

3. To study the problems and obstacles in the implementation of the strategic development plans of Samut Sakhon PAO.

4. To propose guidelines for developing future strategic development plans of Samut Sakhon PAO effectively and efficiently.

3. Scope of the Study

In this study, the scope of the study was determined as follows:

1) The scope of the content, which consisted of 6 strategies of Samut Sakhon PAO's provincial development plan, namely educational development, promoting quality of life, economic development, infrastructure development, environmental conservation and rehabilitation, and city development and administration.

2) The scope of the study area was the area of the local administrative organization located in Samut Sakhon, which covered three districts consisting of Mueang Samut Sakhon district, Krathum Baen district, and Ban Phaeo district.

3) The scope of the research sample was 400 samples of stakeholders in Samut Sakhon province, namely community leaders, administrators, members of the community council, business/private sectors, government sectors/state enterprises, and local constituents.

4. Literature Review

Mackenzie (1961) and Sharpe (1970) proposed the efficient-service school of thought for local government theory. They argued that the objectives of local government are to provide services that are fit with local characteristics to the grassroot people such as construct local roads, maintain law and order, provide electricity and water supply, build community health center, etc. It can be said that the role of local government is to deliver services to the people at the grassroots. This school of thought explained that since local government is the closest

organization to the people, it should be warranted with its responsibilities. Delivering the service to the local people is expected to pre-occupy the resources, power and time of the local government. The existence of local government is to efficiently produce service delivery to the local people. This theory stipulates that local governments should pay exclusive attention to and collect the interests and goals of the people for becoming more efficient services. The local government needs to find appropriate solutions to solve the problems in order to provide better service for their welfare and build trust with their constituents (Kampen et al., 2006).

The Provincial Administration Organization (PAO) is a large local administrative organization which was responsible for providing public services throughout the entire province, as well as providing non-redundant support for the municipality and sub-district administration organization. Regarding political science theories and concepts, the provincial administration organization was responsible for administering the province for people happiness and well-being, and national security in terms of politics, economy, and society, especially promoting an awareness of the self-government (Krueathep, 2014).

People participated in the governance, were aware of the problems, and solve their own local problems by reflecting their own needs through a democratic administrative process under the supervision of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand 2017 and the Provincial Administration Organization Act B.E. 2540 (1997), Sections 16–17.[†] In addition to determining the vision, mission, and strategy for local development, the evaluation of the strategic plan also created the knowledge, understanding, and transferring experience to personnel in the organization to work together responsibly. To launch the project that met the people's requirements and satisfaction with the development strategies, it was still necessary to listen to the public's opinion that contributed to managing and proposing the appropriate activities for organization (Rust & Zahorik, 1993).

[†]

https://www.parliament.go.th/ewtadmin/ewt/parliament_parcy/ewt_dl_link.php?nid=16045&file name=index

4. Methods

A mixed-research method was applied in this study consisting of quantitative research by using questionnaire-based survey methods and qualitative research by using an in-depth interview method of all stakeholders. This research studied the success of the strategic development plan of Samut Sakhon PAO, and then interpreted it based on citizens' satisfaction. The questionnaire and the interview questions were developed and validated using the index of item-objective congruence (ICC) method (Turner & Carlson, 2003).

The data collection procedure was divided into two parts. For quantitative research, this study employed Taro Yamane's formula to calculate a sample size from 601,000 Samut Sakhon population.[‡] Then, 400 questionnaires were conveniently distributed to people living in three study areas. The quantitative study analysis was divided into three main categories, namely percentage, mean, and standard deviation. For qualitative research, an in-depth interview was used to gather data from 10 purposively selected key informants. Content analysis was used to analyze the data from the in-depth interviews.

5. Results

The findings of this study can be summarized as follows:

1) The overall satisfaction of the six provincial strategic development plans of Samut Sakhon PAO

The results revealed that the citizens' overall satisfaction with the 6 provincial strategic development plans of Samut Sakhon PAO, was high ($\bar{X} = 4.08$). Considering each strategy, it was found that the economic development strategy received the highest score of satisfaction ($\bar{X} = 3.97$), followed by the infrastructure development strategy ($\bar{X} = 3.90$), the educational development strategy ($\bar{X} = 3.88$), the quality-of-life enhancement strategy ($\bar{X} = 3.87$),

[‡] <https://www.macrotrends.net/global-metrics/cities/205974/samut-sakhon/population>

the environmental conservation and rehabilitation strategy ($\bar{X} = 3.82$), and the city development and administration strategy ($\bar{X} = 3.82$), respectively.

2) Focusing on the educational development strategy

The results showed that local citizen samples were satisfied with the implementation of the educational development strategy, specifically, local citizen samples reported the highest level of satisfaction in encouraging and supporting children and youth to have an opportunity to receive a continuing education ($\bar{X} = 4.134$).

3) Focusing on the quality-of-life enhancement strategy

The results found that local citizen samples were satisfied with the implementation of the quality-of-life enhancement strategy, especially, local citizen samples reported the highest level of satisfaction in supporting and cooperating with Samut Sakhon hospital and Krathum Ban hospital for public health and well-being promotion ($\bar{X} = 4.143$).

4) Focusing on the economic development strategy

The results found that local citizen samples were satisfied with the implementation of economic development strategy, especially, local citizen samples reported the highest level of satisfaction in organizing the tradition of Samut Sakhon's procession of Chao Phor Lak Muang ($\bar{X} = 4.204$).

5) Focusing on the infrastructure development strategy

The results found that local citizen samples were satisfied with the implementation of infrastructure development strategy, especially, local citizen samples reported the highest level of satisfaction in constructing the retaining walls to prevent soil erosion along the banks and subsidence of roads ($\bar{X} = 4.101$).

6) Focusing on the environmental conservation and rehabilitation strategy

The results found that local citizen samples were satisfied with the implementation of environmental conservation and rehabilitation strategies, especially, local citizen samples reported the highest level of satisfaction in providing machinery to remove the hyacinths and weeds in rivers and canals ($\bar{X} = 4.083$).

7) Focusing on the city development and administration strategy

The results found that local citizen samples were satisfied with the implementation of the city development and administration strategy, especially, local citizen samples reported the highest level of satisfaction in publishing information and publicizing provincial administrative organization through various channels ($\bar{X} = 4.104$).

8) The results of the in-dept interviews

Finally, the summarized results of the in-dept interviews with 10 key stakeholders depicted that the development of Samut Sakhon PAO's future strategic development plans should be well-planned, meet the needs of local constituents, solve the current economic and social problems, and put a plan into practice effectively and efficiently. After launching the strategic development plans, the strategic plan committees must be set up to monitor and evaluate every implementing process of Samut Sakhon PAO's strategic development plans in order to ensure the accuracy, effectiveness, and efficiency of the implementation of Samut Sakhon PAO's strategic development plans, and to promote public trust.

6. Discussion

This study found that most of the local citizen samples were satisfied with Samut Sakhon PAO's strategic development plans. In addition, the success of the implementation of the six strategies of Samut Sakhon's PAO can be discussed as follows:

1. The strategic development plans can be successful if they are tangible and genuinely meet the needs of the local citizens, such as supporting education (contract teachers), providing computer classrooms, promoting tourism, solving occupational problems, preventing and mitigating public disasters, providing sandbags and pumps, and protecting and preserving natural resources and the environment, etc., these outreach activities made the public aware of the activities, which led to accomplishing a goal.

2. The strategic development plans can be successful if they are reliable. This can be seen as the number of developmental activities/projects in each fiscal year was clearly stated in accordance with the 2023–2027 strategic provincial development plan (Samut Sakhon Province, 2024).

3. The strategic development plans can be successful if they meet the public benefit requirement. Every fiscal year, Samut Sakhon PAO conducted a needs assessment survey to identify people as priority issues to address to encourage public participation.

4. The strategic development plans can be successful if they can build public trust and confidence. These can be initiated by leveraging social media and other traditional media to promote the PAO's works.

5. The strategic development plans can be successful if they pay attention to the differences in the context, location, needs. For instance, Krathum Baen district had a territory adjacent to Bangkok, which was considered an urban society, so activities or projects should focus on supporting urban expansion, namely expanding traffic lanes and reinforced concrete pavements, and promoting tourism to boost the local economy.

All in all, it can be said that when local government organizations can effectively deliver public services, local constituents will be satisfied with their local government organizations. These findings are consistent with the notions of the values of local government (Mackenzie; 1961; Sharpe; 1970).

7. Recommendations

This study provided some recommendations for Samut Sakhon's PAO to initiate its future strategic development plans more effectively and efficiently.

The 1st Strategy (Educational development): Samut Sakhon's PAO should continue promoting better education by providing the budget for hiring smart teachers, increasing their salaries, and granting more scholarships for low-income students.

The 2nd Strategy (Promoting the quality of life): Samut Sakhon's PAO should pay special attention to the career promotion of related officers. Transferring the sub-district health promotion hospital to Samut Sakhon's PAO is another issue that needs to be focused on.

The 3rd Strategy (Economic development): In order to promote sustainable economic development, Samut Sakhon's PAO should focus on sustainable tourism, train local people and entrepreneurs related to sustainable development, and promote local products to national and international markets.

The 4th Strategy (Infrastructure development): Samut Sakhon's PAO should work closely with other municipalities or sub-district administrative organizations in terms of providing mechanical weed remover, constructing and maintaining the city streets, neck road bridge, and road shoulder, and increasing the number of sandbags during flooding.

The 5th Strategy (Environmental conservation and rehabilitation strategy): Samut Sakhon's PAO should encourage and educate the public and local manufacturing entrepreneurs to have more knowledge about waste management, hazardous waste, and waste segregation. Organizing training programs or related activities to reduce waste and promote sustainable waste management practices is needed.

The 6th Strategy (City development and administration strategy): The officers of Samut Sakhon's PAO should be more ethical, approachable, and open-minded. The visionary and liberal leaders are required to keep up with the new technologies and advanced knowledge to apply them to local development. Moreover, encouraging local people to be aware of their own rights and duties in accordance with democratic values. Finally, enhancing public participation is crucial for boosting politics and local development.

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