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ANALYSIS OF THAI POLITICAL CULTURE FACTORS AS A MOTIVATOR INFLUENCING THE PERFORMANCE OF MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES IN PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY

ABSTRACT

The study concerns itself with the state of service delivery of local governments in Thailand, in particular the municipal government’s performance in the delivery of public health and sanitation services. One angle to find out such state of service delivery is to know the motivational factors of employees and thus be able to assess and evaluate the extent that the motivational factors under study influence employees to perform better in the delivery of such services. The important point is that if these motivational factors are determined as well as their influences on performance, then the road to better service delivery to the people will not be far behind.

In the study, the local government unit chosen is the metropolitan municipality (Tessaban). The two metropolitan municipalities: Nonthaburi in Central Thailand very near to Bangkok, a more urbanized area, and Ubon Ratchathani located in Northeast Thailand near the boundary of Laos, a less urbanized area, are chosen for study on the basis of purposive sampling.

Two main groups of respondents for the study are: (1) the employees of the municipality which in Thailand are classified into three: municipal employees, regular municipal workers, and the temporary municipal workers; and 2) clients who are the people in the municipal area who are availing of the public health and sanitation services of the municipality. The first group of respondents was chosen on the basis of stratified random sampling and the actual number of respondents totaled 402 broken down into 45 municipal employees, 52 regular municipal workers, and 300 temporary municipal workers. The clients group was chosen through cluster random sampling and the respondents numbered 757, distributed into 380 in Nonthaburi and 377 in Ubon Ratchathani.

Data collection instruments included the interview guide for the administrator and key employees and the survey questionnaire administered personally by the researcher to the employees and the clients. The survey questionnaire included questions that are open-ended, yes-no statements, and those which requires response using 5-rating Likert scale. Data were analyzed using both qualitative and
quantitative methods. The latter used regression analysis and multiple regression analysis to analyze and interpret the findings.

There were 4 variables of Thai political culture factors examined as to their influence on motivation of employees to perform better in their jobs. They are classified into: Hierarchy, Buddhist beliefs and practices, collectivism, and Thai characteristic.

The findings show the motivational factors that correlate with services delivery performance by kind of municipal employee/worker. Only two out of 4 factors motivated all three kinds of employees (hierarchy, and collectivism). The results are as follows;

1. Hierarchy: Most effective motivator for performance everywhere for all employees. Everyone is influenced by respect and high regard to elders and superiors
2. Buddhist beliefs and practices: Motivator in rural and less urbanized areas, but not in more urbanized areas. Tradition is more rooted in more rural areas of Thailand.
3. Collectivism: Strong motivator influencing unity in work places, group work, teamwork.
4. Thai Characteristics: Not so strong as motivator. Depends on personal attitudes, kind of work, and workload.

It is also found that the motivational factors had differential effects. The differences lies on the influence of other intervening variables. Thus, motivation either is strong or weak depending on the certain circumstances, location, and personal variables of the respondents. In general, the relative strength of a Thai Political Culture Factors as a motivator may be influenced by employment status (permanent and temporary employed) and the degree of development of the municipality.

This may make the results less universal and less applicable to other countries, but only country-specific or culture-specific. The study emphasizes that there are in Thailand elements in its culture that, while it shapes a group orientation or the play of centrifugal forces which may count to its blessing (in other countries, the culture may contain more centripetal elements that in the end spell out disintegrative forces destroying the culture and the nation). Thailand has a strong and solid nationalistic foundation that as already mentioned, may be its blessing and therefore its road to more prosperity and more economic and social development.

Based on the findings, the study recommends measures to the municipal government concerned:
1. The present hierarchical structure in Thailand is characterized by top-down communication in which the supervisor implements his decisions and influences employees lower in the organizational hierarchy. The municipality may apply bottom-up communication which allows employees at lower levels to communicate their ideas or feelings to higher level decision makers. This succeeds if an employee feedback program is instituted. The Division may design such employee feedback program to give employees a chance to participate in the organization. In addition, it could also give employees a voice in decision making and policy formulation through feedback. The most common form of feedback is employees’ perception surveys.

2. Collectivism as a motivator may be tapped if the Division encourages more teamwork, or empower team members to decide among themselves how to accomplish the work. Financial and non-financial reward for teamwork may also be considered.
**Introduction**

One strong rationale for the creation of local governments is that they serve as conduits to bring the national government closer to the people. They enact this role through the delivery of goods and services aimed at uplifting the lives of their constituencies (Skelcher, 1992).

The delivery of public services, however, has not consistently been satisfactory in all aspects. Too often, services have failed and are still failing poor people in terms of access, quantity, and quality (World Bank, 2003). In addition, according to the United Nations (1999), issues regarding service delivery have not received adequate attention.

In the case of Thailand, the particular country of study, local governments, in particular the metropolitan municipalities have not been aware of problems in public service delivery as identified above. However, the Thai government has embraced the concept of decentralization and has taken major strides in devolving various powers and functions to its local government units with the ultimate goal of resolving these problems more effectively.

Failure to provide quality services may defeat the purpose of the devolution process in Thailand, although it is believed to be an essential measure for decentralization. The effects of decentralization on human resources development, specifically motivating employees in ways that have an impact on municipal government employees’ performance, is one matter not generally considered in decentralization reforms (Mutebi, 2003; Blair, 2000). In Thailand, services need improvement given the country’s rapid economic growth and development especially on the solid waste management problems. Kokpol (1998) mentioned that garbage collection and disposal is one of the most important services provided by municipal governments in Thailand.

Indeed, the performance of local governments directly impacts on public service delivery. There are several factors that affect the performance of municipal government employees. One of the most important among the factors that affect performance is motivation. Many studies have linked motivation with productivity and almost all motivational theories have been formulated to increase performance without compromising quality and quantity.

This study tries to propose the new term of motivational factors by bringing in the Thai political culture as a motivator affect the performance of municipal employees. The important point is that if these motivational political culture factors are determined as well as their influences on performance, then the road to better service delivery to the people will not be far behind.
Research questions

The state of service delivery in the case of Thailand as mentioned above directs this study to address the following research problems: What are the effects of motivational political culture factors on employee performance? What is the impact of employee performance on public service delivery specifically on the Public Health and Environmental Services based on clients’ assessment of its outcome? What are the similarities and differences of the two metropolitan municipalities studied here in terms of the motivational factors affecting their performance on the Public Health and Environmental Service?

The objectives of the study thus include: 1) To identify and describe the Thai political culture motivational factors affecting the performance in public service delivery of municipal government employees at the level of metropolitan municipality, 2) To analyze and identify the effects of the Thai political culture motivational factors on performance in public service delivery of local government employees at the level of metropolitan municipality, 3) To assess the impact of performance by municipal government employees on public service delivery based on client satisfaction with these services, 4) To recommend measures how some Thai political culture motivational factors may be improved or developed to enhance or strengthen the performance of municipal government employees.

Thai Political culture

Thai culture is a complex phenomenon, a sum total of the beliefs and behavior of the people living in Thailand. Despite the inroads of Western ideas into the country, Thais are still very much influenced by its own unique society and culture. The more interesting aspect of Thai culture and society relevant to this study is political culture. Since this study revolves around a basic political unit called the municipality, a review of the concept “political culture” is inevitable.

A study of the factors that can motivate a Thai employee to perform better at work must not disregard the powerful effect of political culture in a Thai’s psyche. His behavior can be better understood with much attention given to the influence of his political preconceptions and orientations, individually or as a group. This paints the bigger picture and paves the way towards a deeper understanding of the Thai psyche and behavior in the workplace.

In this study, Thailand’s political culture is mirrored in the following aspects:

1) Hierarchical system,

2) Predominance of Buddhist beliefs and practices,

3) Collectivism, and
4) Thai characteristics or social traits.

**Political Culture Aspects of Thailand**

Thai culture is highly political in structure given that hierarchy permeates both the civic as well as the political life of the people. The aspects of political culture examined here are manifested in the working style of municipal employees when they are serving the public. The details of major elements of Thai political culture are described here.

- **Hierarchy**

  Almost everything in the perception of Thai people is situated in a hierarchical system. People can be "high" or "low" according to their age, family background, occupation or professional rank. Older people are usually honored and respected. People of the same age and social status also show respect for one another. (Vongvipanond, 1994)

  The system of hierarchy extends into the Thai government system including the local government units. The position of other people in the hierarchy, especially the elders and people in higher ranks is enough motivating factor for subordinates to do a good performance in their jobs. Employees show their respect by obeying their superior or the person who is in a higher position. They are willing to accomplish their task following the orders as well as try their best to complete their tasks to show respect for their supervisor. Therefore, the more employees give respect to their superior or higher ranking employees, the more they are motivated to perform their jobs well.

- **Buddhist Beliefs and Practices**

  Religion through Buddhism remains a dominant force in Thai culture, and Buddhism plays a very significant role in the daily life of Thai people. Buddhist teachings are a dominant guide to the way of life. With about 95% of the people in Thailand Buddhists, Buddhism is inevitably involved in almost every occasion from birth to death of any Thai -- such as birthdays, marriages, moving to a new house, funerals, opening business offices, or buying new vehicles, etc. In addition, a Buddhist, Thais believe in rebirth, so people try to have good manners and make merit for their future life. (Vongvipanond, 1994)

  The role of Buddhism extends into local government practices, especially in the municipality. Most employees believe in Buddhist teachings, and an employee who strongly believes in the role of Buddhism and Buddhist teachings would lead to better performance at work. The belief in karma means that employees would be
ensured that if they do good things, they would be happy and satisfied about their life both now and in the next reincarnation. Employees with strong beliefs about the role of Buddhism would try their best when serving people, because they also believe that will lead to a better life in the future. Therefore, the role of Buddhism can be a motivating factor for employees to perform better in their jobs.

- **Collectivism**

  By nature of their socialization, Thai people are more mindful of the interests of the group for unity’s sake over one’s individual interests. This is called collectivism. Collectivism can be seen in the extended family structure, where children are socialized to accept the concept of “we”. Kinship terms are also used extensively such as Phi/Nong, which are terms of fondness that show the closeness of an older and younger friend, respectively. In a clique, the group provides protection and support to the individual, which in turn is reciprocated by the individual who bestows loyalty and respect to that particular group.

  Collectivism could also be seen in terms of supporting social harmony as a core value. Ideas and practices related to collectivism have entered into the municipality. The municipalities as well as other government units always work to build a consciousness about unity among the employees. Collectivism can be a motivating factor for employees, because as a Thai people, employees are willing to help each other to do the work with fun and a strong group sense. When they are united in doing their tasks, they will complete these tasks effectively and efficiently. Therefore, employees who have a strong sense of collectivism would tend to improve their performance in delivering public service to the people.

  By extension, Thais are also very nationalistic and hold the concept of nationalism as sacred. (http://anna.nejmantomicz.com/htmls/com_thai_culture.htm)

- **Thai Characteristics**

  Generally, Thai people are kind, generous, and easygoing. Thais are generally a happy people. The Thai family is a warm, loving unit which values togetherness. Thais are optimistic and fun-loving by nature, which means that participation and fun when working together is their outstanding characteristic. This optimistic, good-humored nature makes life generally enjoyable for the Thais. Thus, even if misfortune comes along, they would be uncomplaining and work to repair any damage done immediately. This has been called the Thai way of life, and is characterized by tolerance and self-control, which are traits attributable to the peace that the country enjoys. Their affection for Thailand, the King and Queen, and the national sports team are sincere and real emotions of that which Thais value highly. (http://www.a2zpattaya.com/index.htm?main=m0306.htm)
There are four catch-phrases that could sum up the way people in Thai society relate to one another. These are the *mai pen rai*, or “it doesn’t matter”; *jai yen* or “cool heart”; *sanuk* or “fun”; and *kreengcai*.

*Mai-pen-rai* can be roughly translated as "It does not really matter." or "It is not a problem." The expression reflects Thai people’s attitude towards themselves, the people they come into contact with and the world around them. Almost everybody and everything is acceptable to the Thais. Objections and conflicts are to be avoided at all costs. Thai people are known for their tolerance and compromising nature. This cultural trait can perhaps be traced back to the linguistic experience of the Thai people.

*Jai yen* or “cool heart” deals with the emotions and how one expresses oneself. Losing control of one’s temper, being angry and irritated in public is unacceptable and is considered as displaying a lack of self-control. “Cool heart” means that one must indirectly express any emotion that involves anger or criticism, if it is necessary. This is a belief that during a disagreement, blustering, shouting and asserting one’s rights would not do any good and would just hinder the person’s cause. To underscore the attitude, Thais will just say *mai pen rai* or “it’s not important” and “it doesn’t matter” anyway. *Jai yen* also means smiling a lot and staying calm as much as possible. Since Thais smile most of the time, this is perhaps the reason for Thailand being called the Land of a Thousand Smiles.

*Sanuk* means to have a good time, to enjoy oneself and to derive pleasure and joy from something. It is almost a rule of living for Thai people that whatever they do would have to be “sanuk”. It goes beyond having of a good laugh or a good time at a dance or a performance. It also appears when Thais are more inclined to play than to work or when they mix work with play. A closer examination of the meaning of the word "sanuk" would show that whether it is work or play, the important requirement is that one should be able to derive satisfaction and pleasure in what one does.

*Kreengcai* is another characteristic that is common to the Thais and refers to the kindness, self-restraint, tolerance and the avoidance of interpersonal irritation. A smooth social atmosphere starts from the person practicing *kreengcai* who goes out of his way to be considerate to the other person, putting much thought and effort to his words and actions (Mulder, 1992)

These characteristics appeal to Thai people and affect the job performance of employees who serve the public. The employees who have these Thai characteristics would also show good performance in the workplace and in delivering services to the people. They would serve the public with kindness and tolerance. In
addition, they would enjoy, have fun in doing their work, as well as serving the people with a smile.

The inclusion of political culture, considered as motivational factors in this study, sets this research apart from other researches on employee performance. The Thai employee’s behavior in the workplace is largely political, depending in part on their high regard for hierarchy. This study explores the extent of influence and impact of the political culture factors on employee performance.

**Conceptual framework**

The conceptual framework contains two levels of analysis: the employee motivation-performance level and the organizational analysis level. The first level analyzes the Thai political culture motivational factors of the individual worker that influences him to perform his job better. The variables for this first level are derived from the literature review on specific factors that motivate people to work. The second level analyzes client satisfaction for the services provided by the Public Health and Environmental Division.

The impact of these motivational factors on job performance is definite, yet the task of explaining the causes is complex. This study aims to analyze the Thai political culture motivational factors that affect the job performance of municipal government employees. Thai political culture motivational factors consist of four variables: hierarchy, beliefs and practices of Buddhism, collectivism, and Thai characteristics.

The Thai Political Culture factors are unique to the Thai bureaucracy and Thais in general. In addition, these factors bind all employees and basically affect how one person relates to others in the community and even beyond the confines of the office. All these factors when combine directly affect the performance of employees of the metropolitan municipality in public service delivery. Performance is considered as the dependent variable in this study.

After analyzing the performance of each Division, the study then aimed to gauge the performance of employees in delivering services to the people. If employees perform a better service, the people are satisfied. Therefore, the second level of analysis involved looking into the state of public service delivery in the municipality in general and the services particularly offered by the Public Health and Environment Division. An improved performance of employees (assuming that an employee has been motivated enough to perform better) and of municipality as a whole can be assessed through the following outcome criteria: (1) faster service delivery in terms of quantity and quality, (2) responsiveness to people’s needs, (3)
accessibility to the services, (4) courteous and fair treatment of clients, and (5) correct and updated information on local government matters. The assessment of the service delivery based on the clients’ satisfaction of the services they received.

**Methodology**

In the study, the local government unit chosen is the metropolitan municipality (*Tessaban*) which in Thailand is one of three kinds of municipalities, the other two being the city (*Muang*) and town (*Tambon*) municipalities. The two metropolitan municipalities: *Nonthaburi* in Central Thailand very near to Bangkok, a more urbanized area, and *Ubon Ratchathani* located in Northeast Thailand near the boundary of Laos, a less urbanized area, are chosen for study on the basis of purposive sampling.

Two main groups of respondents for the study are: (1) the employees of the municipality which in Thailand are classified into three: municipal employees (who are the civil servants and have therefore a permanent employment), regular municipal workers (permanent in employment status but not civil servants), and the temporary municipal workers (with temporary employment status working in a contractual basis); and 2) clients who are the people in the municipal area who are availing of the public health and sanitation services of the municipality. The first group of respondents was chosen on the basis of stratified random sampling and the actual number of respondents totaled 402 broken down into 45 municipal employees, 52 regular municipal workers, and 300 temporary municipal workers. The clients group was chosen through cluster random sampling and the respondents numbered 757, distributed into 380 in Nonthaburi and 377 in Ubon Ratchathani.

In addition to the above respondents, the administrator and key employees working in the municipality were also tapped for additional sources of data to validate gathered information and to complete the case study for both municipalities.

Data collection instruments included the interview guide for the administrator and key employees and the survey questionnaire administered personally by the researcher to the employees and the clients. The survey questionnaire included questions that are open-ended, yes-no statements, and those which requires response using 5-rating Likert scale.

Data were analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The latter used regression analysis and multiple regression analysis to analyze and interpret the findings. The hypotheses in this study are illustrated in the following table.
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<th>Factors</th>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
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| Hierarchy                | There is a positive relationship between the high respect for hierarchy and better performance of a job in the municipality. | 1) readily submits to orders of superiors without arguing his case;  
2) highly regards the hierarchical structure in the municipality;  
3) gives prime importance to the leadership in the municipality regardless of any perception of incompetence or personal dislike towards the superior. |
| The Beliefs and Practices in Buddhism | There is a positive relationship between beliefs and practices of Buddhism and the way a Thai employee performs at work in the municipality. | 1) the non-confrontational approach taken by employees over matters affecting their rights at work and concerning their superiors or those in authority,  
2) open acceptance of hard work that stresses the principle of suffering,  
3) open acceptance of a position as temporary worker based on the principle of impermanence  
4) high regard (or preference) for merit by doing good deeds to co-workers in particular and the organization in general on the basis of the Buddhist emphasis on karma. |
| Collectivism             | There is a positive relationship between strong collectivism and better performance of a Thai employee at work. | 1) high consideration for another worker’s “face” (his dignity and honor) or feeling  
2) tendency to avoid being considered as an individual who is remarkably different from the group to which he belongs  
3) strong regard and love of his country or loyalty to the municipality  
4) high preference for teamwork and membership in a clique to which one shows utmost loyalty. |
| Thai Characteristics     | There is a positive relationship between the employee’s innate characteristics of generosity, coolness at heart, fun-loving disposition and forgiveness and better performance in his job, regardless of the religion that he practices | 1) he is already satisfied with the work that he performs and does not complain about it  
2) he regards the importance of self-control and that one should not lose his temper in public and thus he restrains from fighting or arguing his position with others as much as possible  
3) he readily forgives in the event that someone does him wrong  
4) he enjoys doing his work and is less stressed because he regards work as fun  
5) he is willing to help the clients even if he had to exert extra efforts. |
Finding and discussion

The finding in this study presents the regression and multiple regression analysis of the motivational political culture factors that influence employees to perform better when delivering public services to people in communities. The variables of motivational political culture factors consist of four main categories; hierarchy, belief in Buddhism and its practices, collectivism, and Thai characteristics. The researcher divides the population in the analysis into three groups: Municipal employees, Regular municipal workers, and Temporary municipal workers. In addition, the comparison is based in similarities and differences between the two divisions in Nonthaburi and Ubon Ratchathani.

1. First Level of Analysis: the employee motivation-performance level on Motivational Political Culture Factors that Affect Employee Performance in Public Service Delivery

- Hierarchy

   Based on giving instructions factor, most municipal employees, regular municipal workers and temporary municipal workers were given instructions about what to do and how to do their job (89.5%, 88.5%, and 90.2%, respectively).

   For the factor of obeying the supervisor’s orders, most municipal employees, regular municipal workers, and temporary municipal workers said that by obeying orders and accomplishing tasks, they were showing respect to their superiors (70.2%, 94.2%, and 93.8%, respectively). However, most municipal employees said that they do not believe that all orders of their superiors must be obeyed, regardless of their personal objections (56.1%). Most regular municipal workers and temporary municipal workers believed that all orders from their supervisors must be obeyed (78.8% and 78.8%, respectively).

   In terms of the level of respect given to the superior, most municipal employees, regular municipal workers, and temporary municipal workers said that those in higher positions in the municipality were very respectable people (59.6%, 40.4% and 53.4%, respectively). Moreover, most believed that hierarchy is very important for an organization (96.5%, 96.2%, and 91.2%, respectively).

   The regression analysis showed that the level of significance for municipal employees, regular municipal workers and temporary municipal workers was 0.000, 0.000, and 0.000, respectively, which was less than the statistically significant level (0.05) and t-value is positive. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and it can be interpreted that there is a positive relationship between the high respect for hierarchy
and better job performance in the municipality. It means that employees who have high respect for the hierarchy will perform better on their job than employees who have less respect for the hierarchy.

Based on survey result, it is consistent with the case studies conducted among municipal employees, regular municipal workers and temporary municipal workers in both Nonthaburi and Ubon Ratchathani Metropolitan Municipality. Those employees are motivated by the hierarchy system because the Thai culture itself gives importance to the hierarchy system, starting from the family to the work place. This hierarchy plays a major role in Thai society and the governmental system in Thailand. It is everywhere starting from the family to the workplace, especially in the government system. Thai parents instill the concept of superiority to the children by imposing on them the requirements that respect must be bestowed upon authority figures starting from consideration of one’s age. In the workplace, subordinates always give high respect to their superiors by following order and try their best to perform their job. This is regardless of whether their superior is fit to rule or not, or relates well to them or not. Whenever the higher level officer assigns tasks to their subordinates or the employees at lower level positions, those on the lower rank are motivated to accomplish that task out of respect for the higher level officer.

In addition, the performance level of employees also show that the more employees show high respect to the hierarchy system, the more they perform better in their job (Nonthaburi Performance Evaluation, 2004; Ubon Ratchathani Performance Evaluation, 2004).

In conclusion, Hierarchy is one factor affecting the level of performance of all employees. This is because the culture is itself hierarchical where respects for those higher in rank such as elders and superiors are the rule everywhere. Hierarchy can then be a motivator for a better performance.

- **The beliefs in Buddhism and its practices**

The regression analysis showed that the significance level for municipal employees, regular municipal workers and temporary municipal workers was 0.004, 0.012, and 0.000, respectively, which was lower than the statistically significant level of 0.05 and t-value is positive. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and it can be interpreted that according to the regression analysis as shown in appendix A, can be interpreted that there is a positive relationship between beliefs about the role of Buddhism and the way a Thai employee performs at work in the municipality. It means that the more
employees believe in Buddhism and practices that follow the way of Buddhism, the better performance they have.

The result of the survey is contradicted with the result of interviews among municipal employees, regular municipal workers and temporary municipal workers in Nonthaburi Metropolitan Municipality where most employees are not motivated to do better by the role of Buddhism. However, the survey result is consistent with the interview result conducted from Ubon Ratchathani municipal employees, regular municipal workers and temporary municipal workers.

Nonthaburi is different from Ubon Ratchathani because it is urbanized and an economically developed area due to its proximity to Bangkok. People go shopping or traveling instead of going to the temple to learn Buddhist practices for application in their daily lives as well as in their job. The lifestyle of the people has also influenced the employees in the Division. They seldom apply Buddhist beliefs and practices in their workplaces. The Division in Nonthaburi also does build a consciousness in the employees about applying Buddhist practices at work. Therefore many of them do not know the meaningful of the role of Buddhism and Buddhist practices and the doctrine can not motivate them to perform better in their job.

In conclusion, the beliefs in Buddhism and its practices is not a motivational factor to do better a job among municipal employees, permanent employee or temporary municipal workers in Nonthaburi because of their urbanize and Bangkok influenced culture. On the other hand, municipal employees, permanent employee or temporary municipal workers in Ubon Ratchathani considered Buddhism as a factor for them to perform their jobs better because the municipality less urbanized and far from the influence of modernize Bangkok.

This is consistent with the performance of employees as shown in Table 8-7, where performance is high even without the consideration of Buddhist beliefs and practices. In other words, other factors could be motivating them for a better performance.

- **Collectivism**

Regarding to the regression analysis, as shown in appendix A, interpreted that there is a positive relationship between a strong sense of collectivism and better performance by a Thai employee at work. It means that the more employees have a strong sense of collectivism, the better performance they have.

The survey result is consistent with the result from interview of municipal employees, regular municipal workers and temporary municipal workers in both municipalities where employees are motivated by collectivism because Thai culture
itself is centered in unity among groups which provide protection and support to the individual, who would reciprocate by giving loyalty and respect to that particular group. The group always helps each member to accomplish tasks. This culture is extended to the culture of the employees in the municipality because they feel part of the grouping. In addition, they are united doing group work such as activities related to organizing and running campaign fairs is convinced them to be united in order to accomplish their task.

Therefore, the unity among employees motivates them to have a strong intention to do their work, especially when it involves many activities. They will also help each other to accomplish their tasks, thus delivering services to the people in a way that is better than doing it alone. This could be the reason why collectivism is a motivator for them to have a better performance.

Therefore, there is a similarity between Nonthaburi and Ubon Ratchathani employees who are all motivated to perform better in their jobs owing to the collectivist nature of Thai political culture. Collectivism is thus a motivator of employees for good performance.

This result is confirmed by the performance level of employees in both municipalities. Thus, employees who are united and in harmony doing their jobs have a better performance than employees who work alone (Nonthaburi Performance Evaluation, 2004; Ubon Ratchathani Performance Evaluation, 2004).

- **Thai characteristics**

Most municipal employees, regular municipal workers, and temporary municipal workers think that Thai characteristics, such as the values of *mai pen rai*, *jai yen*, *sanuk* and *kreengcai* are important for Thai employees (59.6%, 59.6%, and 67.4%, respectively).

The most important Thai characteristic for most municipal employees was “kreengcai” (40.4%). In comparison, most regular municipal workers and temporary municipal workers gave the greatest importance to “*jai yen*” (44.2% and 39.4% respectively)

For the least important Thai characteristic, most municipal employees, regular municipal workers and temporary municipal workers ranked “*sanuk*” as the least important (45.6%, 42.3 and 38.8%, respectively).

Based on regression analysis of municipal employees, as shown in appendix A, can be interpreted that there is no relationship between Thai characteristics and better performance by Thai employees at work. It means that whether municipal
employees display or value these basic Thai qualities, it will not affect their ability to have a better job performance.

This result, however, is not consistent with the result gathered from the interviews among municipal employees in Nonthaburi Metropolitan Municipalities. However it is consistent with the interviews among municipal employees in Ubon Ratchathani Metropolitan Municipalities.

Municipal employees in Nonthaburi are more motivated by Thai characteristics than municipal employees in Ubon Ratchathani. The reason could be because of the attitude of the employees to the job that they are doing. In Nonthaburi, the employees have to deal with an overload of work. Therefore, employees put a high value on *Mai Pen Rai* ("It does not matter") and *Jai Yen* ("cool heart") in their mind. They keep on working never mind the exhaustion and so what is needed is to just stay calm or cool. Also, employees in Nonthaburi hold a high respect for the Thai value of *Kreengchai* (self-restraint or tolerance). The ordinary Thai respect each other and so all are motivated to do their work following orders without any resistance.

In contrast, the attitude of municipal employees in Ubon Ratchathani towards their job is different from that of the employees in Nonthaburi. In the former, employees are not swamped by work overload. Development is not rapid yet and not so many people live there Nonthaburi. Their view of *Jai Yen* is that if they always calm down or have a cool heart, they would not be able to finish their jobs on time. To them also, work is not *Sanook* which implies that if they have fun while performing their jobs, they would not get quality products or results.

On the other hand, the regression analysis of regular municipal workers and temporary municipal workers as shown in Appendix A, found that there is a positive relationship between the Thai characteristics (of generosity, coolness of heart, fun-loving disposition and forgiveness) and better job performance, regardless of the religion he practices. It means that the more employees’ character displays and values these basic Thai qualities, the better their job performance will be.

The survey result is also consistent with the interview results conducted among regular municipal workers in Nonthaburi and regular municipal workers and temporary municipal workers in Ubon Ratchathani Metropolitan Municipality. Based on the interview, those employees are motivated by Thai characteristics.

Regular municipal workers in both municipalities are motivated by Thai characteristics. The reason could be because of the kind of job they are doing. Most of them are garbage truck drivers. Therefore, most value much the positive side of Thai characteristics. *Mai pen rai* and *jai yen* as well as *Kreengchai* are very applicable to driving.
Temporary municipal workers in Nonthaburi are less motivated by Thai characteristics than do temporary municipal workers in Ubon Ratchathani. The reason could be again the type of job of the worker. The urbanization of Nonthaburi and its large population implies plenty of work to do. Garbage collecting, street cleaning has to be always done and so these employees are busy and are overloaded with work. Their type of job is also quite boring and sometimes they do not feel safe while cleaning streets for example. As a result, they do not enjoy performing their jobs. Therefore they are less motivated even when they are immersed in a culture that emphasizes sanook and jai yen. Moreover, since they had to face pollution and handle dirty things, they wanted to finish their work as soon as they could.

But the temporary municipal workers in Ubon Ratchathani are more motivated by Thai characteristics in doing good in their work. The reason could be because of the less urbanization of the province compared to that in Nonthaburi. There is less population density. The workers do not encounter work overload. There is less pollution as there are not many people in the area. These workers therefore see Thai characteristics in their positive side. Street cleaners and garbage collectors are always patient and show a cool heart when doing their jobs especially, when they have to face directly about services of the Division. Because of such attitude, they are motivated to perform better in their jobs.

In conclusion, Thai characteristics are motivational factors which have different effect on different type of employees. They affect municipal employees and regular municipal workers in Nonthaburi, and regular municipal workers and temporary municipal workers in Ubon Ratchathani to do better, but these they are not motivational factors that affect municipal employees in Ubon Ratchathani and temporary municipal workers in Nonthaburi of the nature of their job work overload, and unsafe work place.

**Most effective motivator among Thai political culture factors**

Among the political factors that motivate municipal employees to perform better in their job (hierarchy, collectivism and Thai characteristics), as shown in Appendix A, hierarchy has the greatest effect for most employees to perform better (0.000), followed by collectivism (0.0195).

Among regular municipal workers and temporary municipal workers, hierarchy has the most motivational factor for them to perform better (0.000 and 0.000, respectively), this is followed by Thai characteristics (0.003 and 0.0235, respectively).
In conclusion, hierarchy is considered the motivator that has greatest effect on the performance of all employees as proven by two case studies. Hierarchy system is already embedded in Thai culture that it greatly influenced the lifestyle of the people as well as the organizational culture. Most employees respect their superiors as manifested by employees following the orders and trying their best to accomplish the task efficiently. This motivates them to have a better performance in delivery service to the people.

2. Second level of Analysis: Organizational Analysis Level on Effects of service delivery and the satisfaction of people

According to the assessment of service delivery performance based on people’s perception, as shown in Appendix B, found that the Public Health and Environmental Division in Nonthaburi is able to respond to the needs of people. Aside from the motivational political factors motivate them to have a better performance to be able to respond to people’s need, there are mechanisms to ensure such responsiveness. There is a role for people’s participation in policy making, made possible through the cooperation of the administrator of the municipality, the municipal council, as well as various sectors such as public health volunteers, housewives’ groups, women’s groups as well as community representatives such as the community committee or village head. Everyone provides opinions and solutions to problems through SWOT analysis. Suggestions are gathered and then presented for consideration when the policy is formulated by the administrator of the municipality and municipal council. This approach ensures that the policy would respond more or less to the needs of the people. Its big budget enables the Division to acquire a capability to provide adequate service to the people in terms of advanced medical equipment in the health center or mobile pubic health services to focus on disease control, such as vaccinations and fogging in case of dengue outbreak to the people in community. Employees in the municipality are also motivated by factors such as a sense of responsibility, the recognition they receive by means of rewards, leadership, and so on. Therefore, the services are responsive to people’s needs.

In contrast, clients in Ubon Ratchathani perceive a moderate level of responsiveness to their needs (3.2455). This suggests that the services provided by the Public Health and Environmental Division in Ubon Ratchathani are not enough to respond to people’s needs. Although, employees in Ubon Ratchathani are motivated by political culture factor, the Division lacks a system of people participation. Policy
making is basically a prerogative of the Mayor. It is thus obvious that service delivery might not respond to people’s needs. In addition, the Division operates with budget constraints which limit its capability to provide adequate services to people in community in the form of new and high tech medical equipment. The mobile medical services are inadequate because of limitations in physical resources, such as transportation. Even if employees in the Division are motivated by motivational factors to be able to perform better in their jobs, the budget constraint proves a major obstacle which makes its services to be perceived as not responsive enough to the needs of people.

Aside from the responsiveness of the people’s need, people in Nonthaburi found its Division moderate in terms of fast service delivery (3.3274); access to services in general (3.3037); perception of courtesy and fair treatment of the employees (3.3789); and correctness and timeliness of information on the services that the people receive from the bureau (3.2211). Although employees are motivated by Thai political culture factor, there are others factors that influence the delivery of the service. These factors are the shortage of personnel, the workload, the stress employees suffer because of the large size to cover for servicing – these are just some of the many employees must contend with to be able to provide responsive service.

In the case of Ubon Ratchathani, aside from the responsiveness factor, the perception of the people who evaluated the services that they received from the division is in Moderate level was given all parameters which are; (1) faster service delivery of the services in terms of quantity and quality (3.0955); (2) access to services in general (3.2487); (3) perception of courtesy and fair treatment of the employees to the people (3.3257), and; (4) correctness and timeliness of information on the services that the people receive from the division (3.0535). The reason why perceptions of the people are in neutral level is because even the employees have their motivational factors to motivate them to have a better performance, the budget constraint of the division is mainly obstacle. Lacking of budget make the division has less capability to provide new and update medical equipments, enough garbage bins and so on to the people. This result in services is not responded to their needs. In addition, because of budget constraint, the division also has less capability to provide new physical resource such as garbage truck to the employees. They have to use the old and damage one which results in slow in delivering service to the people. In addition, because of the shortage of human resource, the services are not cover in all communities. The division does not have enough employees to deliver service to the people especially the one who are located in the farther areas. Furthermore, the division lack of the employees who has enough knowledge and skill match with their
job. Therefore, the information concern with service delivery is not corrected and updated enough.

Thus, it can be concluded that the capability of a municipality to provide services to people as well as the performance of employees in serving the people showed two clear general patterns. In Nonthaburi, the people assessed the service delivery as mostly satisfactory (63.9%); in Ubon Ratchathani, perceptions were generally on the neutral level (46.9%), a level lower than the satisfactory level.

**Recommendation**

Based on the findings, the study recommends measures to the municipal government concerned:

3. The present hierarchical structure in Thailand is characterized by top-down communication in which the supervisor implements his decisions and influences employees lower in the organizational hierarchy. The municipality may apply bottom-up communication which allows employees at lower levels to communicate their ideas or feelings to higher level decision makers. This succeeds if an employee feedback program is instituted. The Division may design such employee feedback program to give employees a chance to participate in the organization. In addition, it could also give employees a voice in decision making and policy formulation through feedback. The most common form of feedback is employees’ perception surveys.

4. Collectivism as a motivator may be tapped if the Division encourages more teamwork, or empower team members to decide among themselves how to accomplish the work. Financial and non-financial reward for teamwork may also be considered.

**Conclusion**

Thai political culture motivational factors (hierarchy, Buddhist beliefs and practices, collectivism, and Thai characteristics) point out that hierarchy, being a comprehensive value, manifesting everywhere from family to the workplace in Thai society, can be a motivator for everyone to improve his or her performance in services delivery. The same case with Buddhist beliefs and practices although it shows different effects on performance motivation depending on the presence of an intervening variable. One intervening factor is urbanization. Urban lifestyles minimize influences of tradition while less urbanized areas still find these traditions honored. There is more socialization in urban areas. People always go shopping or traveling instead of going to the temple. In urbanized Nonthaburi, employees do not
place much importance to the application of Buddhist beliefs and practices in their daily lives and in their workplace. Therefore, such religious beliefs and practices cannot motivate them towards a better performance.

Collectivism is a factor that motivates employees for a better performance. Thai culture values unity in a group. The group always provides protection and support to the individual who in turn would reciprocate by giving loyalty and respect to that group. Therefore, the unity among employees motivates them to have a strong intention to perform better in their group tasks.

Thai characteristics are a factor with different motivating effects depending on the type of employees. Municipal employees are not influenced by Thai characteristics. But this factor can be a motivator if there is an intervening factor like presence of work overload. In situations where there is a lot of work to do, these employees will always keep in mind that “it does not matter” and try to have a “cool heart.” For the regular municipal workers, Thai characteristics can be a motivator because of the nature of their jobs. In the case of temporary municipal workers, Thai characteristics also act as motivators. In Ubon Ratchathani, its less urbanized development and low density make for absence of work overload. Here, Thai characteristics are seen in a positive way which motivates them to perform better in their job. In contrast, in urbanized Nonthaburi, the high population density implies there would be more work to do and more trips to the areas to be serviced, more exposure to pollution, and more dangers to face such as accidents. Thai characteristics here are seen in negative way and thus cannot motivate these employees.

Therefore, according to the finding, it can be conclude that hierarchy is the most effective motivator for performance everywhere for all employees. This is because of the meaningful of Thai culture regarding to the hierarchy system. Everyone is influenced by respect and high regard to elders and superiors. The role of Buddhist beliefs and practices is a motivator in rural and less urbanized areas, but not in more urbanized areas. Tradition is more rooted in more rural areas of Thailand. Collectivism is strong motivator influencing unity in work places, group work, teamwork. However, Thai Characteristics is not so strong as motivator. Depends on personal attitudes, kind of work, and workload.
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