

## *Trend in Vocational Education Provision of Municipalities in Thailand*

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### Abstract

The objectives of this research were to 1) study the trends and factors of vocational education provision of municipalities and 2) propose guidelines for enhancing municipalities' learning process to provide vocational education and training for developing career in the community. The research method was divided into two parts. The first part was the survey research by using a questionnaire for collecting data from executives of 378 municipalities in order to study the current condition, trends and conditional factors of vocational education provision of the municipalities. Another part was the educational experts' focus group discussion in order to find guidelines for enhancing municipalities' learning process to develop career in the community.

The results of the survey research showed that, for the trends in vocational education provision in the next three years, 1.5 percent of sub-district municipalities, 20.7 percent of town municipalities and 33.3 percent of city municipalities had a trend towards the education provision in the form of college by themselves. The sub-district and town municipalities had increasing average value of the participation level in vocational education provision to develop careers and the results were in the high level for the arrangement of community learning forums for local people to know their social capital, and training for transmission of local wisdom to people in the community. The city municipalities had increasing average value of trend of participation level in vocational education provision to develop careers in the future and the results were in the high level for the education provision to develop careers by exploring the demand of labor in local market, and for the education given to local entrepreneurs on business management of small and medium enterprises.

Findings from the educational experts' focus group discussion were two guidelines for enhancing municipalities learning process to provide vocational education and training for developing career in the community. The first guidelines involve development of municipalities' readiness to provide vocational education. It should focus on promoting awareness of the importance of career development and providing sufficient operational knowledge for municipalities. The second guidelines concentrate in enhancement of municipalities learning process according to three stages of career development which included the knowledge creation in community analysis, education on the performance of each career of local people and education on creativity development for local people.

**Keywords:** vocational education; education provision; municipality

## **Introduction**

In the past, Thailand development at early stages relied heavily on economic growth from the industrial and service sectors. Past governments' policies were emphasized on infrastructure improvements and urban growths to improve Thailand global competitiveness. (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board [NESDB], 2009) On the contrary, the local wisdom was neglected and community development programs were predominantly originated from governments' initiatives. These centralized and top-down "government preferred" policies resulted in homogeneous government's programs which neglected each community heterogeneous characteristics and unique resources. Furthermore, these development programs lacked abilities to enhance each local community resources and knowledge management capabilities. (Ngarmwitayaphong, 2006) After the economic crisis in 1997, nevertheless, the trend of the development of the country changed. The government focused more on community strengthening and economic development in rural areas with the aim at community self-reliance. The King's sufficiency economy philosophy was adopted as a main method so that the country could overcome the economic crisis. Therefore the government had community-based development approach allowing communities to arrange their own development activities in order to be in consistent with community's real needs. (United Nations Development Program, 2006)

Thailand is a country with diverse geography which causes people in different area to have different culture, tradition, lifestyle, and local occupations that use resources available in the area such as natural resources and local wisdom to create income for people in such area so that they can live their lives. This creates economic and social development in the locality. Local administrative organization is one of the important agencies that have a key role in the development in response to problems and needs by using the resources available in each locality.

### **Roles of municipalities in vocational education provision**

A municipality is one form of local administrative organizations in Thailand which is a form of local administration in urban area that has been in use since 1933. The Municipality Act (Vol.10) B.E. 2542 was amended to be in consistent with the Constitution of Thailand B.E. 2540 and pursuant to decentralization principles. Central government will decentralize partially to people or local administrative organizations so that people can have authority in the management and decision making regarding public activities by themselves according to their authority and duty as prescribed by law. Today municipalities are increasingly important since the development process has been creating quick expansion of economic and social system which in turn creates the expansion of community, complication of economic activities, more investment and more money supply, and more employment and education institutions. Such changes are the stimulants for the growing importance and necessity of local administrative organizations in the form of municipality for people. There are three levels of municipalities in Thailand as follows.

Sub-district municipality. Currently there are 2081 sub-district municipalities. The area that is a sub-district municipality needs to have at least 12,000,000 Baht of revenue, 7,000 people, and approval from local people.

**Town municipality:** Currently there are 172 town municipalities. Every area that is the location of city hall will be a town municipality without considering other criterions. But if the area is not the location of city hall, there must be at least 10,000 people in the area to be a town municipality and the area must have enough revenue to perform duties as required by law.

**City municipality:** Currently there are 30 city municipalities. The area that is a city municipality must have at least 50,000 people and must have enough revenue to perform duties as required by law.

Municipalities have duties to perform in the municipality area as prescribed by Municipality Act B.E. 2496. Some of the duties are education, promotion of the development of women, children and youth, and nurture of local wisdom, arts, tradition and culture of the locality. It can be seen that municipality's duties are related to vocational education provision to develop careers for local people. Vocational education is an education for career. In other words, learners can utilize their knowledge to have honest occupations as a practitioner or a self-employed so that they can earn a living in their daily lives (Ramwarangkura, 2011). Therefore, vocational education provision for career development in the locality is an education that aims to provide learners with knowledge, understanding and attitudes about the local career as well as ability and skill of local career enough to use in a career and to create income for families and society. Local career subjects will be different according to the physical nature, natural resources and local wisdom which will lead to a different career.

Currently the municipality has managed education for career development of local people in the forms of formal and informal education. For formal education, 7 municipalities in Thailand has established vocational college under the municipality with objectives to teach knowledge in careers that are in consistent with the demand of labor to local people. In addition, most of the municipalities provide budget and personnel support to basic education institutions in order to manage education about the local career in the extracurricular activities so that learners know careers, local wisdom, and career development that is specifically appropriate to each locality. For informal education, each municipality will have informal and non-formal education centers running short career management training according to the needs to local people. It can be seen that municipalities have a main role in local development by using education as a tool for development, particularly in the vocational education provision that truly fulfills the needs of a locality

### **Objectives of the study**

This research has objectives to

1. Study the trend and factors in vocational education provision of municipalities.
2. Propose guidelines for enhancing municipalities' learning process to develop career in the community.

## Methodology

This research has been taken in two steps as follows.

The first step was to study the trend in vocational education provision in Thailand by using questionnaire in survey research which was the survey of executive's sentiments in order to study the current conditions of vocational education provision of municipalities and trend in the future as well as conditional factors of municipalities in providing vocational education.

The population of this research was divided into three groups which were the executives of 2081 sub-district municipalities, 172 town municipalities and 30 city municipalities, which were collectively 2283 municipalities in total throughout the country. The samples of this research were derived by using the sample size specification of Krejcie and Morgan (1970) as shown in table 1.

**Table 1: Number of population and size of samples for each type of municipalities**

Type of municipality	Number of population	Number of samples
Sub-district municipality	2081	324
Town municipality	172	119
City municipality	30	28

Department of Local Administration, 2013

The researcher sent a questionnaire to the samples via post. Upon answering in the questionnaire, the answerer would send the questionnaire back to the researcher via post as well. The researcher received 265 sets, or 81.79 percent, of questionnaire from the executives of sub-district municipalities, 92 sets, or 77.31 percent, of questionnaire from the executives of town municipalities, and 21 sets, or 75 percent, of questionnaire from the executives of city municipalities.

The second step was focus group discussion in local education provision policies and local management with experts in order to propose guidelines for enhancing municipalities' learning process to develop career in the community. The researcher proposed the results of the study in the first steps and asked attendants of the focus group discussion to propose their opinions related to methods to promote learning process of municipalities to provide vocational education to develop careers for local people.

## Results of the study

From the first step, the analysis from the questionnaire showed that currently 87.9 percent of sub-district municipalities, 92.4 percent of town municipalities, and 81 percent of city municipalities participated in the education provision in the form of budget support, while less than 50 percent of all types of municipalities participated in

the education provision in the form of joining the local curriculum provision. For the trend of vocational education provision in the next three years, it was found that 1.5 percent of sub-district municipalities, 20.7 percent of town municipalities and 33.3 percent of city municipalities had a trend towards the education provision in the form of college by themselves. Furthermore, the survey of executives' opinions regarding the participation of municipalities in the education provision for career development found that:

Sub-district municipalities had increasing average value of trend of participation level in education provision to develop careers in the future and the results were in the high level for the arrangement of community stage to provide community people with awareness of community and resources available to the community, the arrangement of training to create the transmission of locality intelligence to people in the community, the arrangement of short courses to develop career of local people, the education provision to make local people have creativity to use in career development, the cooperation with education institutions to prepare projects to promote local career to students and arrange activities for career development such as internship during summer semester, the support of budget, building, location, and technology for training to develop career for local people, the local career database provision, and the support of activity arrangement to develop knowledge and ability in technology used in career development for local people, as shown in Table 2.



**Table 2: Opinion level of sub-district municipality executives regarding the participation in education provision for career development both in the present and in the future**

Education provision for career development of municipalities	Current participation level			Expected participation level in the future		
		S.D.	Meaning		S.D.	Meaning
Arrangement of community stage to provide community people with awareness of community and resources available to the community	3.19	1.166	Medium	3.75	1.101	High
Arrangement of training to create the transmission of locality intelligence to people in the community	3.37	1.044	Medium	3.93	.999	High
Arrangement of short courses to develop career of local people	3.18	1.151	Medium	3.74	1.198	High
Support of budget, building, location, and technology for training to develop career for local people	2.96	1.124	Medium	3.57	1.192	High
Cooperation with schools to prepare projects to promote local career to students	2.80	1.181	Medium	3.48	1.187	High
Cooperation with education institutions to prepare activities for career development such as internship during summer semester	2.95	1.266	Medium	3.54	1.181	High
Support/promotion of activity arrangement to develop knowledge and ability in technology used in career development for local people	2.92	1.152	Medium	3.60	1.127	High
local career database provision	2.89	1.139	Medium	3.51	1.162	High
Education provision to make local people have creativity to use in career development	2.95	1.134	Medium	3.60	1.154	High

Remark: For reference of meaning, the average of 1.00-1.80 means Lowest, 1.81-2.60 means Low, 2.61-3.40 means Medium, 3.41-4.20 means High, and 4.21-5.00 means Highest.

Town municipalities had increasing average value of trend of participation level in education provision to develop careers in the future and the results were in the high level for the arrangement of community stage to provide community people with

awareness of community and resources available to the community, the arrangement of training to create the transmission of locality intelligence to people in the community, the arrangement of short courses to develop career of local people, the education provision to make local people have creativity to use in career development, and the education arrangement to various learning sources or communities successful in education provision for career development, as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Opinion level of town municipality executives regarding the participation in education provision for career development both in the present and in the future**

Education provision for career development of municipalities	Current participation level			Expected participation level in the future		
		S.D.	Meaning	()	S.D.	Meaning
Arrangement of community stage to provide community people with awareness of community and resources available to the community	3.10	1.276	Medium	3.49	1.236	High
Arrangement of training to create the transmission of locality intelligence to people in the community	3.32	1.309	Medium	3.70	1.315	High
Education arrangement to various learning sources or communities successful in education provision for career development	3.36	1.237	Medium	3.64	1.419	High

Remark: For reference of meaning, the average of 1.00-1.80 means Lowest, 1.81-2.60 means Low, 2.61-3.40 means Medium, 3.41-4.20 means High, and 4.21-5.00 means Highest.

City municipalities had increasing average value of trend of participation level in education provision to develop careers in the future and the results were in the high level for the arrangement of education provision for career development by exploring the demand of labor in local market, the curriculum development that was consistent with future industrial trend in the locality, the cooperation with entrepreneurs to provide education that corresponded to the entrepreneurs' demand, the knowledge provision to local entrepreneurs regarding small and medium enterprise business management, and education provision so that people in the community had creativity to use in career development. In addition, there was a trend of education provision in foreign language for career development after the country entered into ASEAN Economic Community, student exchange program arrangement with the countries in ASEAN community for career development, arrangement of project/education to create value and good attitude towards vocational education, development of vocational education teachers to have knowledge that was in consistent with the

demand of locality and society, and support of research studies and inventions of students and teachers in vocational education, as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4: Opinion level of city municipality executives regarding the participation in education provision for career development both in the present and in the future**

Education provision for career development of municipalities	Current participation level			Expected participation level in the future		
		S.D.	Meaning		S.D.	Meaning
Arrangement of education provision for career development by exploring the demand of labor in local market	3.00	1.265	Medium	3.43	1.434	High
Knowledge provision to local entrepreneurs regarding small and medium enterprise business management	2.90	1.221	Medium	3.48	1.250	High
Education provision so that people in the community had creativity to use in career development	3.29	1.102	Medium	3.71	1.271	High
Curriculum development that was consistent with future industrial trend in the locality	3.05	1.024	Medium	3.57	1.287	High
Cooperation with entrepreneurs to provide education that corresponded to the entrepreneurs' demand	3.10	1.044	Medium	3.62	1.284	High
Education provision through e-learning in community ICT learning centers	3.14	1.153	Medium	3.62	1.359	High
Education provision in foreign language for career development after the country entered into ASEAN Economic Community	3.33	.913	Medium	4.05	.865	High
Student exchange program arrangement with the countries in ASEAN community for career development	2.76	1.136	Medium	3.71	1.056	High
Development of vocational education teachers to have knowledge that was in consistent with the demand of locality and society	2.95	1.396	Medium	3.33	1.238	High
Arrangement of project/education to create value and good attitude	3.24	1.091	Medium	3.57	.926	High



Education provision for career development of municipalities	Current participation level			Expected participation level in the future		
		S.D.	Meaning		S.D.	Meaning
towards vocational education						
Support of research studies and inventions of students and teachers in vocational education	3.05	1.071	Medium	3.67	.966	High

Remark: For reference of meaning, the average of 1.00-1.80 means Lowest, 1.81-2.60 means Low, 2.61-3.40 means Medium, 3.41-4.20 means High, and 4.21-5.00 means Highest.

However, city municipalities had the average value of current participation level in education provision for career development in the high level and also had the average value of participation level in education provision for career development in the future in the high level as well in many aspects such as education arrangement to various learning sources or communities successful in education provision for career development, cooperation with schools to prepare projects to promote local career to students, and support/promotion of activity arrangement to develop knowledge and ability in technology used in career development for local people.

The results of the comparison of the difference of priorities of the factors that affected the vocational education provision of municipalities classified by the types of municipalities by using ANOVA analysis showed that the factors that affected the vocational education provision of municipalities in the high level and were not statistically significant at .05 confidence level as per types of municipalities were the participation of municipalities with community in gathering local wisdom and education source, and the full term in office and the continuity of executives, as shown in Table 5 and 6.

**Table 5: Average of significance level of factors affecting the vocational education provision of each type of municipalities**

Topic	City municipality			Town municipality			Sub-district municipality		
		S.D	Meaning		S.D	Meaning		S.D	Meaning
The municipality executive had good understanding on vocational education provision.	3.81	.814	High	3.42	.975	High	3.26	.967	Medium
The municipality executive had policy about the management of vocational education provision to achieve the three-year municipality development	3.19	1.436	Medium	2.27	1.250	Low	2.06	1.108	Low

Topic	City municipality			Town municipality			Sub-district municipality		
		S.D	Meaning		S.D	Meaning		S.D	Meaning
plan.									
The municipality executive had budget for the establishment of vocational education institutions.	2.48	1.167	Low	1.92	1.141	Low	1.57	.931	Lowest
The municipality executive prepared to provide vocational education institution with management executive.	2.33	1.155	Low	1.76	1.103	Lowest	1.56	.899	Lowest
The municipality explored the demand of career development of community people.	3.10	1.300	Medium	2.90	1.196	Medium	3.29	1.216	Medium
The municipality had good cooperation with the community to manage vocational education.	3.05	1.322	Medium	2.70	1.211	Medium	2.66	1.179	Medium
The municipality prepared building, material, supplies and facilities for the provision of vocational education.	2.76	1.091	Medium	2.04	1.148	Low	1.87	.992	Low
The municipality prepared the curriculum development with entrepreneurs and community people.	2.14	1.276	Low	2.29	1.172	Low	2.09	1.113	Low
The municipality created a network with private sector for the establishment of vocational school.	2.24	1.261	Low	1.95	1.062	Low	1.68	.916	Lowest
The organization located in municipality area cooperated in vocational education provision.	2.67	1.278	Medium	2.18	1.185	Low	2.10	1.056	Low
The municipality had system to support further education and employment for community.	2.48	1.436	Low	2.30	1.077	Low	2.14	1.005	Low
The municipality had a plan related to manpower of vocational personnel.	2.76	1.546	Medium	1.95	.987	Low	1.86	1.009	Low

Topic	City municipality			Town municipality			Sub-district municipality		
		S.D	Meaning		S.D	Meaning		S.D	Meaning
The municipality had more than 10 percent of average annual revenue spent on education.	3.52	1.123	High	3.05	1.235	Medium	2.69	1.268	Medium
The municipality cooperated with the community to gather local wisdom and education sources.	3.81	.928	High	3.42	1.051	High	3.45	1.010	High
The municipality executive completed his term in office and there was continuity in office.	4.14	1.153	High	3.89	1.190	High	3.83	1.202	High
The municipality had database related to vocational education provision for career development.	2.62	1.071	Medium	2.40	1.158	Low	2.22	1.010	Low
The municipality had a connection with other local administrative organizations to provide vocational education.	2.62	1.244	Medium	2.34	1.198	Low	2.06	1.041	Low
The Ministry of Interior had clear policies and practices related to vocational education provision in municipality areas.	2.76	1.179	Medium	2.60	1.250	Low	2.14	1.111	Low
The Department of Local Administration created knowledge and understanding and supported municipalities in vocational education provision.	2.95	1.117	Medium	2.70	1.238	Medium	2.25	1.124	Low

Remark: For reference of meaning, the average of 1.00-1.80 means Lowest, 1.81-2.60 means Low, 2.61-3.40 means Medium, 3.41-4.20 means High, and 4.21-5.00 means Highest.

**Table 6: Comparison of significance level of factors affecting the vocational education provision of each type of municipalities**

Topic		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
The municipality executive had good understanding on vocational education provision.	Between Groups	6.925	2	3.462	3.744	.025*
	Within Groups	346.739	375	.925		
	Total	353.664	377			
The municipality executive had policy about the management of vocational education provision to achieve the three-year municipality development plan.	Between Groups	25.770	2	12.885	9.524	.000*
	Within Groups	507.354	375	1.353		
	Total	533.124	377			
The municipality executive had budget for the establishment of vocational education institutions.	Between Groups	21.741	2	10.870	10.880	.000*
	Within Groups	374.664	375	.999		
	Total	396.405	377			
The municipality executive prepared to provide vocational education institution with management executive.	Between Groups	13.156	2	6.578	7.033	.001*
	Within Groups	350.749	375	.935		
	Total	363.905	377			
The municipality explored the demand of career development of community people.	Between Groups	10.272	2	5.136	3.476	.032*
	Within Groups	554.133	375	1.478		
	Total	564.405	377			
The municipality had good cooperation with the community to manage vocational education.	Between Groups	2.862	2	1.431	1.002	.368
	Within Groups	535.540	375	1.428		
	Total	538.402	377			
The municipality prepared building, material, supplies and facilities for the provision of vocational education.	Between Groups	16.208	2	8.104	7.536	.001*
	Within Groups	403.273	375	1.075		
	Total					

Topic		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
		419.481	377			
The municipality prepared the curriculum development with entrepreneurs and community people.	Between Groups	2.917	2	1.459	1.129	.325
	Within Groups	484.651	375	1.292		
	Total	487.569	377			
The municipality created a network with private sector for the establishment of vocational school.	Between Groups	9.422	2	4.711	4.964	.007*
	Within Groups	355.911	375	.949		
	Total	365.333	377			
The organization located in municipality area cooperated in vocational education provision.	Between Groups	6.326	2	3.163	2.608	.075
	Within Groups	454.774	375	1.213		
	Total	461.101	377			
The municipality had system to support further education and employment for community.	Between Groups	3.452	2	1.726	1.566	.210
	Within Groups	413.267	375	1.102		
	Total	416.720	377			
The municipality had a plan related to manpower of vocational personnel.	Between Groups	15.983	2	7.991	7.398	.001*
	Within Groups	405.089	375	1.080		
	Total	421.071	377			
The municipality had more than 10 percent of average annual revenue spent on education.	Between Groups	19.615	2	9.807	6.253	.002*
	Within Groups	588.208	375	1.569		
	Total	607.823	377			
The municipality cooperated with the community to gather local wisdom and education sources.	Between Groups	3.865	2	1.932	1.788	.169
	Within Groups	405.355	375	1.081		
	Total	409.220	377			



Topic		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
The municipality executive completed his term in office and there was continuity in office	Between Groups	2.004	2	1.002	.700	.497
	Within Groups	536.843	375	1.432		
	Total	538.847	377			
The municipality had database related to vocational education provision for career development.	Between Groups	4.765	2	2.383	2.156	.117
	Within Groups	414.378	375	1.105		
	Total	419.143	377			
The municipality had a connection with other local administrative organizations to provide vocational education.	Between Groups	9.740	2	4.870	4.082	.018*
	Within Groups	447.416	375	1.193		
	Total	457.156	377			
The Ministry of Interior had clear policies and practices related to vocational education provision in municipality areas.	Between Groups	19.380	2	9.690	7.330	.001*
	Within Groups	495.763	375	1.322		
	Total	515.143	377			
The Department of Local Administration created knowledge and understanding and supported municipalities in vocational education provision.	Between Groups	20.483	2	10.242	7.712	.001*
	Within Groups	497.993	375	1.328		
	Total	518.476	377			

\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

The results of focus group discussion in local education provision policies and local management with experts in order to find methods to promote learning process of municipalities to provide vocational education to develop careers for local people derived two methods. The first method was the method of municipality development so that the municipality was prepared to provide education process for career development of people in the locality. This method was derived from the awareness of importance of career development for local people. The second method was the method promote to promote learning process of municipalities for career development according to career development process which comprised of 1) the knowledge creation to analyze community so that the municipality could provide the vocational education that meet the needs of the community by using local wisdom and learning center in the community 2) education on the performance of each career of local

people so that the municipality could provide the education to develop local people to meet such necessary performances 3) and education on creativity development for local people so that people could apply it to career development.

### **Discussion**

For the trend in vocational education provision done in the form of vocational college by the municipality itself, it could be seen that town municipalities and city municipalities were large and had rather high amount of budget for operation, and their personnel were more ready. Therefore they were more likely to establish a college more than a sub-district municipality which was a small municipality. In addition, for the trend of participation level in education provision for career developments, it could be seen that the city municipality emphasized on career development by exploring the demand of labor in local market because the city municipality was large and had its own labor market to support the labor in its locality. The city municipality also prepared people in its municipality for ASEAN Economic Community as it saw the importance of providing education of foreign language for career development after the country entered into ASEAN Economic Community. The city municipality also arranged the exchange program for students with other countries in ASEAN Community to create career development that was in line with changing labor market. Then, the municipality should develop cooperative strategy of local administrative organizations in vocational education provision, for example, municipality should cooperate with private companies in order to provide internship location for students through network associated. (Ramwarungkura, 2013)

From the survey of municipality executives, it was found that one factor that affected vocation education provision of municipalities in the high level was the participation of municipalities with community in gathering local wisdom and education source. It could be seen that career development for people in locality needed to utilize the resources available in community, all of which were local wisdom, natural resources, and cooperation network of community people.

For the learning process promotion of municipalities for career development of local people, besides the method of creating awareness and knowledge to the municipalities, the Department of Local Administration needed to support the basic database that was necessary so that a practitioner could access the information to apply to career development in locality, and best practice guidelines so that the practitioner could see the concrete and clear operating method.

### **Conclusion**

The author of this study expect that trends in vocational education provision of municipalities and the establishment of proposed guidelines for enhancing municipalities' learning process to develop career in the community will not only strengthen local communities but also simultaneously support Thailand as a whole to withstand the dynamic of global changes.

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