

IMPLEMENTAION OF A STANDARD MANAGEMENT OUTCOMES SYSTEM: ANALYSIS OF A CASE STUDY IN THAILAND

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ABSTRACT

Thai government established standards of Thai public management and public service outcomes that will lead to an achievement of total system outcomes in the public sector. It's achievements and factors affecting the implementation are questions addressed in this study. Results of the study found that the implementation of PSO's data and participation systems of the CDD caused an improvement in the standard of working systems. Both efficiency and quality of work had been increased. Registered to implement PSO work units have had dramatic reductions in concerned work units' complaints, significant reductions in using government budget and increased response rates to people's demands and expectations. Characteristic of a learning organization, perception in PSO standards, executive support, participative management, performance improvement experience, regulation used in work are significantly affecting officials' satisfaction in the work improvements caused by PSO implementation.

INTRODUCTION

PSO (Public Sector Standard Management System and Outcomes) policy is a significant innovative public policy that aims to establish standards of Thai public management and public service outcomes that lead to an achievement of total system outcomes in the public sector. Success in PSO policy implementation is regarded as successful implementation in the entire public sector. All government organizations are required to develop standard outcomes. This study aims to find out the outcomes the CDD (Community Development Department) has achieved from the intervention of PSO implementation. Major factors that significantly contribute to the implementation and their effect are identified, and measures those support the implementation are suggested. Data system and Participation system of PSO standards are scope of study.

Preliminary Conceptual Framework

The initial stage of innovative policy implementation is adoption of PSO policy as a new idea and practice to be put into use in an organization. Policy implementation will be difficult if affected stakeholders do not adopt the innovative policy. (Policy Evaluation Group 1999; Roger, E. E., 1983; Reilly, P. A., 1979; Lionberger, H. L., 1960.) A Participative management strategy that leads to origination of new ideas and practice in organizations is significant to achieve PSO standards. Moreover, an appropriate organizational structure is the main supporting factor of implementation.

Methodology

Case study methodology was used in the study. To find out in-depth about how and why events happened in the process of implementation and variables that are predictors of the PSO standards achievement of The Community Development Department, the qualitative method is used. The duration of collecting all kinds of data was from June 2000 to September 2002. Sources of gathering data or evidence are relevant documents and reports, observation, in-depth interviews, and an open-ended questionnaire. The population subject to in-depth interviews was twenty-five persons who were major informants. Thirty-six persons in each center of the twelve provinces made up the sample for the first open-ended questionnaire. Thirty-five implementers in twenty work units in provinces certified by PSO at that time were the sample for the second questionnaire.

To study the causes and effects of variables found in the qualitative study, the quantitative method or cross-sectional study was employed to examine variables' effect on the PSO implementation. A Questionnaire with reliability and validity of measurement was the instrument used in data collection. Two hundred and twenty six CDD's officials were the population size of the study. An open-ended questionnaire was developed to study the PSO implementation results. Telephone interviews also used to collecting data from persons in work units affected from PSO implementation by the CDD and key implementers in successful work units.

The implementation model of previous studies failed to tell us which variables are more important than others. In this study, compliance or adoption of innovation at the individual level is an independent variable of the implementation model. The study of level and relationship between variables is included to extend previous findings about which variables are more important than others. The integration of related theoretical concepts will create a more appropriate model for studying the PSO policy implementation.

STANDARD MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AND OUTCOMES

PSO was promulgated for implementation on October 27, 1998, requiring every public agency to develop PSO. The Office of the Civil Service Commission was named as the body responsible for the implementation. With the Cabinet Resolution of March, 2000 and by the Regulation of the Office of the Prime Minister, the Certification of Public Sector Standard Management System and Outcomes was proclaimed and put into practice.

PSO development has as its vision to promote, encourage and accelerate all public agencies to develop PSO for enhancing public interests, equality in services, public services coverage and low cost. The performance of standard achievement outcomes consists of standard performance or outputs of a work unit, standard outcomes of a work unit, ultimate outcomes, and prevention of unintended consequences.

Ten standard systems have been identified as parts of the standard management system, while one system makes up the Standard outcomes in the public sector. The standard management system consists of:

1. *Information or Data System (PSO 1101);*

2. *Communication System (PSO 1102);*
3. *Decision-making System (PSO 1103);*
4. *Personnel Development System (PSO 1104);*
5. *Check and Balance System (PSO 1105);*
6. *Participatory System (PSO 1106);*
7. *Service for the Private Sector and People System (PSO 1107);*
8. *Evaluation System (PSO 1108);*
9. *Prediction and Crisis Resolving System (PSO 1109);*
10. *Cultural and Professional Ethics System (PSO 1110).*

As previously mentioned, Standard outcomes in the public sector has one system. It is the Output, Outcome, and Ultimate Outcome System (PSO 2101) (Voradej Chandarasorn and Pairote Pathranarakul, 1999: 1/5)

The development of standards of performance within these systems will create a quality management system. This system leads to an achievement of standard outcomes, which link to ultimate outcomes in the public sector as a whole. The standard achievement outcomes are standards of performance or outputs, standards for outcomes of work units, ultimate outcomes, and systems for prevention of unintended consequences.

The ultimate outcomes of the public sector as a whole are:

- evenness in administration,
- justice in delivering services,
- protection of life and property of people,
- protection of citizen's rights and freedoms,
- provision of services to everyone equally,
- citizen satisfaction with public works and services,
- efficiency of service units in delivering services,
- economic delivery of services to people,
- production of high quality, valid official documents (eg., property titles, passports, etc.), and
- public benefit protection, happiness, and total quality of life of people.

RESULTS OF QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

The data showed that the CDD's management style is characterized by a participative approach. Work units' performance improvement experiences were a good foundation and facilitated in gaining understanding and clarity in the standard criteria in the implementation. This led to the decision to use the standard in work.

Implementers' ability to perform PSO depends on whether the system adopted and the implementing organization has goals that fit neatly with the standard system being implemented. Time used in PSO performance varies according to the characteristics and size of work unit, and the volume of work, which is different in different divisions.

Executive support, innovation performance experience, PSO itself, perception of PSO, participative management, learning organization characteristics and regulation in work are major variables that facilitate PSO implementation. Officials' workload, time for implementation performance, resources (budget, tools and instruments), performance of the Office of the Civil Service Commission officials, discontinuation of the CDD's administrator, and a change in government were also found to influence PSO implementation.

The implementers' experiences in innovation performance come from their involvement in performance improvement activities, such as reengineering programs, ISO 2001, Electricity Saving program, and 5S's. These improvement programs influence the level of perception about new things adopted in work. Success of past projects influences them and gives them confidence in trying to learn, and understand PSO implementation. Moreover, officials' community development experience leads them to have high clarity in PSO and its implementation situations because encouraging participation of people in community development is the main task of the CDD and also the main method of PSO implementation.

Implementers perceive that PSO benefits themselves, their work, and the CDD. It facilitates and is compatible with their work. CDD's administrators give great support for PSO implementation and have high hopes in its success. Participation in work creates innovation in implementation. Clarity in PSO's objectives fosters executive support and the use of a participative management strategy in the implementation, causing the relaxation of rules and regulations in work. Administrators support learning, using new things, innovation in work, time, budget, equipment, as well as moral support in implementation. PSO implementation needs administrators who are pioneers and have high aims in performance standard development.

In the case of certified work units, the study also found that the same factors influence the implementation performance. Executive role is significant to facilitate the implementation. Officials' perception and ability, characteristics of the organization and of management, past experience, and sources of PSO knowledge are factors contributing to successful implementation.

The study found that final outcomes of PSO implementation of the CDD were not yet achieved within the time of study. The outcome achieved is an improvement of work and satisfaction of officials in the CDD and officials in the concerned work units. The improvement achieved is efficiency and quality improvement, which gives officials satisfaction in working and in their work. Characteristics of a learning organization also affects satisfaction in work results achieved from PSO implementation. The improvement achieved from officials' learning and seeking new things to be used to improve work, brings them pride in their efforts to initiate new things and success to their improvement endeavor.

Major factors contributing to PSO implementation found in the CDD's PSO implementation are executive support, PSO perception, PSO itself, participative management, learning organization characteristics, innovation performance experience, and regulation in work.

RESULTS OF QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Intermediate outcome is practical and credible for assessing results from development efforts. Performance improvement is an intermediate outcome of PSO implementation that leads to ultimate outcomes at some point of time in the future. Efficiency and quality improvement are results that bring officials satisfaction in work achieved from PSO implementation.

In examining major factors affecting PSO implementation, satisfaction of implementation results was used as a dependent variable. The results of an analysis (table 1 and Figure 1) verify variable effects found in the fact finding.

Table 1 Regression Coefficients of Structural Equation: Quality Improvement with Predictors

Structural equation	Path coeff.	t	R Square of equation	SEE of equation	F of equation
1. POL = EXP + EDU + PSO	b _{cp} = 0.660** b _{dp} = -0.119* b _{sp} = 0.066	11.212 -2.004 1.114	0.462	4.1958	44.681**
2. REG = POS	b _{sr} = -0.186*	-2.401	0.035	11.0988	5.763*
3. EXP = EDU	b _{de} = -.066	-0.844	0.004	6.9506	0.712
4. EXE = POL + REG	b _{px} = .599** b _{lx} = .140*	9.495 2.215	0.439	8.0811	63.478**
5. PAR = EXE + EXP + REG	b _{xm} = 0.255** b _{cm} = 0.514** b _{rm} = 0.065	3.828 7.822 1.070	0.500	5.9089	53.678**
6. PER = POL + PAR	b _{pc} = 0.697** b _{mc} = 0.240**	13.986 4.805	0.748	8.1613	241.039**
7. LER = PAR + REG	b _{ml} = 0.819** b _{rl} = -0.11*	16.001 -2.145	0.624	4.0219	132.995**
8. EFF = PER + EXE + REG	b _{cf} = 0.624** b _{xf} = .156* b _{rf} = -0.088	8.721 2.184 -1.432	0.488	10.4650	50.864**
9. QUL = PER + LER	b _{cq} = 0.484** b _{lq} = 0.255**	6.669 3.514	0.422	8.3176	62.941**
10. SAT = EFF + QUL + LER	b _{fa} = .835** b _{qa} = .215** b _{la} = .118**	24.484 7.386 3.422	0.869	6.9262	349.752**

(Source: Author, 2004)

p* = < .05

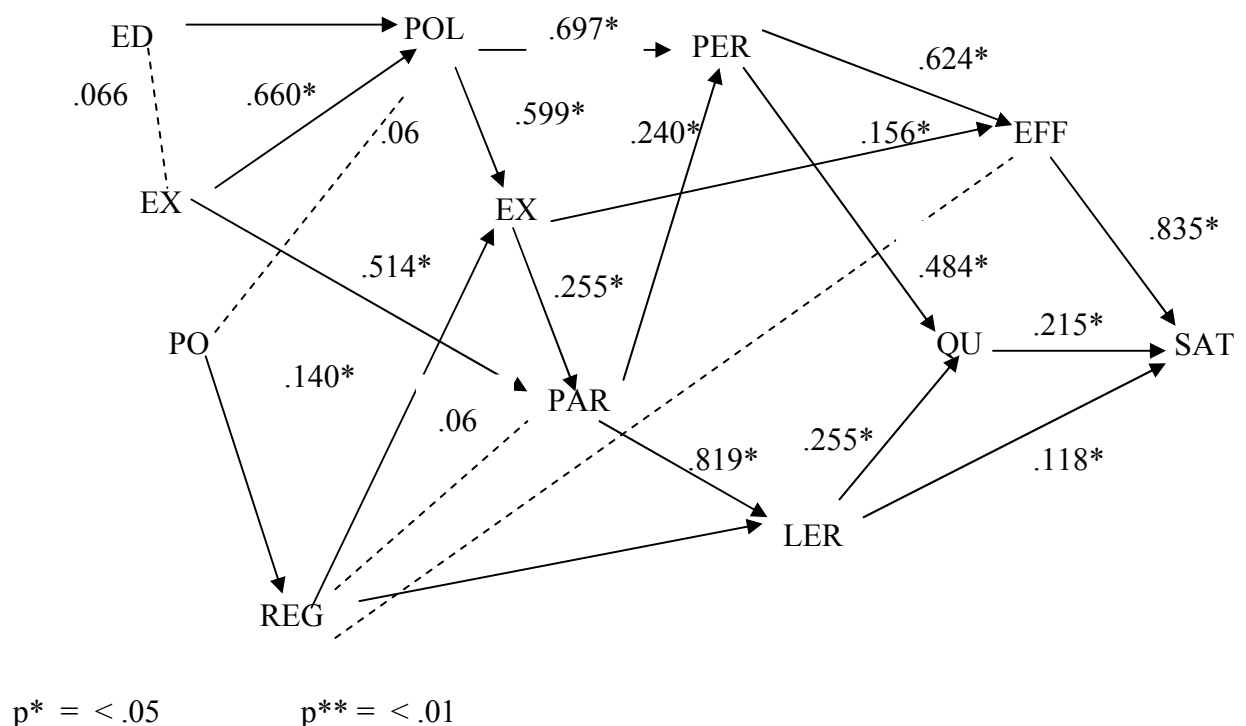
p** = < .01

Remark: e=EXP, d=EDU, p=POL, s=POS, x=EXE, r=REG, m=PAR, c=PER, l=LER, f=EFF, q=QUL, a=SAT

Path Diagram

The results achieved from employing regression technique presented in table 7.5 can be presented as a path diagram or interactions web shaping SAT as follows:

Figure 1 Path Diagram



(Source: Author, 2004)

The study of PSO implementation affirms that PSO implementation results in efficiency and improved quality of work. Officials in the CDD are moderately satisfied with those improvements. The hypotheses of variable effects were tested. Results of the analysis found the efficiency and quality of work and characteristics of learning organization directly affect officials' satisfaction, while regulations in work have no direct effects on satisfaction.

Work efficiency has the greatest effect on the variation of officials' satisfaction in work improvement. Efficiency improvement has more direct effect on satisfaction than quality improvement, and characteristics of a learning organization has the least effect on satisfaction. Other variables—perception of PSO, executive support, participation strategy, performance improvement experience, level of regulation in work, level of education of officials, work position of official, indirectly affect satisfaction. (Figure)

Results of the analysis show that the causal path of the policy itself through the perception of PSO and efficiency improvement to satisfaction has the highest effect on satisfaction. Previous innovative experience is a significant factor that affects clarity in PSO. Executive support facilitates a participative management strategy and leads to increases in the level of a learning organization. Participative management strategy has a high effect on being a learning organization, and indirectly affects quality improvement. Perception of PSO has a high effect on efficiency improvement while executive support has less effect and regulation in work has no effect.

CONCLUSIONS

The CDD implementation model provides factors contributing to PSO implementation that can be taken into account as a prior study of PSO implementation elsewhere. At the time of study, PSO policy was just promulgated, and only one department was implementing it. Therefore, the scope of the study and suggestions has been limited. As a consequence, certified work units in PSO implementation have been used as additional reliable sources for strengthen measures suggested.

The study setting, however, is an organizational structure, which is quite similar in all government departments. For example, there are divisions of personnel, finance, technical and planning, and so on, which have much in common with other public organizations. This study has pointed out advantages and disadvantages, major factors, and factor effect in PSO implementation in the CDD, which may be useful information for improving PSO implementation performance. This can predict occurrences that should be eradicated to cope with problems and to prepare for suitable measures for successful implementation. Measures that this study would like to suggest for support of PSO implementation are as follows:

Distribution of Knowledge and Understanding Concerning PSO

1) Public Relations

Media channel and network for public relations about PSO should be extended in order that the nation's citizens know about and understand PSO, especially primary knowledge about PSO, such as the meaning, benefit of PSO and the certification process.

2) Sources of PSO Knowledge

Books and documents about PSO and the implementation should be available, convenient to find and accessible for anyone who wants to know it. The essence of PSO knowledge in all sources should be clear and easy to understand. Books and documents may be integrated and written by experienced persons in PSO implementation from a variety of work characteristics and environment.

3) Instructors and Consultants

Key implementers of successful work units that do best should be promoted to be provincial instructors of the Civil Service Commission. They have more knowledge and clearly understand PSO implementation strategies, especially PSO intervention in

work that is similar to their job. Provincial instructors would be instructors in work units that have work characteristics similar to their own work, such as work concerning public works engineering, hospital, education, science, and so on. Provincial instructors may be promoted to be regional instructors or consultants. Consultants from the Civil Service Commission may give advice, stressing technical aspects while provincial instructors would give advice stressing the practical aspect and specifics to the characteristics of work.

- 4) Knowledge about PSO should be provided in textbooks for use in classrooms starting at the secondary school. All children in Thailand should know what PSO and its certification processes are.

Increasing Personnel Potential for the Implementation

- 1) In addition to training in technical aspects concerning PSO, practical training should be held for implementers before starting the implementation. It provides implementers the opportunity to try on using new things in work. This will create a clearer understanding and perception of PSO. Practical training not only increases PSO perception, but the work unit may also finish implementing the PSO program in four to six months. Time allotted for learning by doing and writing PSO manuals or reports, may be reduced from four or six months to only one month, and the leave three to five months can be used for system status improvement
- 2) Government or administrators should support training in areas such as computer usage, computer program usage, organization of documentation systems, and other knowledge that is necessary in development of a standard system.

Decentralized Work

- 1) Training

The Civil Service Commission should decentralize training, giving consultation and auditing of PSO and the implementation to regions and provinces. Financial allowances should be provided for all activities. The Civil Service Commission may follow up and support PSO implementation as a whole.

- 2) Internal Auditing

A work unit or province's internal auditing committee should be established. It should be composed of administrators or chiefs who clearly understand PSO, but are not PSO implementers of the unit. Outsiders, such as people, and community organizations who are concerned with the unit's work should be assigned to the committee. The auditors, except outsiders should have successful experiences in PSO implementation and be trained and examined to become provincial auditors of the Civil Service Commission. The internal audits should be continuous for increasing intensity, participation, effort, etc. The auditing results should be sent to a committee in central office to use as information for consideration of giving PSO certification.

Incentives

- 1) Incentives should be provided to give officials and work units recognition for the best practices in the implementation. Incentives will motivate and increase officials' morale in the implementation process. Incentives need not be only finance. It may be a certificate of appreciation or achievement, declaration sheet or coin, and chance to be a provincial or regional instructor or auditor, etc.
- 2) A successful work unit that is certified by PSO should receive a reward from the government and these should be publicized. PSO policy has been promulgated for four years, but most people do not know about PSO certification. Intrinsic rewards for quality work units certified by PSO include social pride, social status, prestige, increased people participation in public work, increased bargaining power, etc. Government should provide special rights for certified work units in extra funding or give first priority in budget allocation.

Performance Facilitation

- 1) Time for PSO Implementation Activities.

Administrators should set aside office hours for PSO implementation activities, particularly the stage of writing PSO reports or manuals. As found in the study, to allow implementers to schedule activities, when everyone in a work unit has available time, is difficult. PSO implementation can be effectively implemented only when everyone at work participates in the implementation. The problem of finding time after work and on weekends to learn and understand PSO standards, criteria and indicators, and to write a manual report can be solved, if time at work is allocated.

- 2) Equipment Used

Government organizations that have the responsibility to motivate and follow up the development of PSO standards system in the public sector should have modern technology. For instance, computer systems electronic data base systems, online consulting systems and so on, should be linked among consultants and work units who are involved in the PSO program. Work units that apply to the PSO program can reduce the cost of doing reports and documents, and the amount of duplication of PSO reports. All reports and documents should be on diskettes. Reports could be sent by file attachment in e-mail to consultants and auditors. Sending reports or documents this way is convenient and rapid. PSO reports and documents in the form of paper would be reduced. It also helps to solve the problem of finding space to store them, and it is convenient for consultants to take and keep many reports.

CONCLUSIONS

PSO systems are practical tools to assist users in government to assure the quality of their outputs, outcomes and services, and to manage the impact of their activities on the environments. The PSO quality process can be an important step on the road to total quality management.

The study found that PSO can contribute significantly to improving quality, and enhancing development of an excellent work culture. It leads to a more systematic management of quality, and provides an instrumental for consolidating quality management systems in the public service. It can help government establish a transparent internal public organization that is clear to all officials and citizens.

PSO is a new thing and it is too early to put it into all public sectors and social organizations. When the concept of a standards management system was introduced, many work units saw it only in terms of increased workload or burden and budget. PSO needs time to prove the results. Efforts toward performance improvement according to PSO program result in improvements to the work process and services. Now, there are examples available to show that there are considerable opportunities to reduce budget and time. The social and political impact through innovations that re-design work systems, service processes, and methods of working as a result of adopting PSO, can change the working and services image of the public sector. It is fortunate for people in Thailand that PSO was initiated. The success of PSO implementation will facilitate good governance, and give a great advantage to people as a whole.

Although PSO implementation policy has just been initiated and the CDD is the only department that is implementing PSO, the investigation has been brought onto the scene early enough to establish baseline data. In practice, experimental research-pre-testing could not be conducted before implementation, and the study cannot wait for post-test data to be collected until ultimate outcomes are achieved. Thus, a case study method is well suited to a study of the CDD's PSO implementation. A longitudinal and in-depth case study approach is more likely to be more productive, because it emphasizes understanding processes as they occur in their context. To strengthen or increase confidence in the findings, further research should not only be a longitudinal approach but also be a multi-case comparison to modify existing concepts of implementation on the basis of the empirical study. More than one case research should be undertaken by increasing cases and numbers of variables that does not only specify critical variables. Correlation of variations in implementation performance will differ in different programs operated and in different government units. For further research, examining a single setting and varying the program contents, or examining a full range of outcomes of a single program across multiple settings to predict and explain implementation behavior and its effects are also very significant for implementation research. It is a challenge for implementation scholars to design research that is genuinely comparative, longitudinal, and systematic in approach.

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