

# STUDY OF PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS FOR ORGANIZING RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE ELDERLY IN THE LOWER CENTRAL REGION OF THAILAND

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to study problems and solutions for organizing recreational activities for the elderly in the lower central region of Thailand. This cross-sectional study included 420 recreational activity organizers who had managed recreational activities in the lower central region, Thailand. Data were collected using questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics.

The results revealed that most participants were female (69.0%), aged over 50 years (37.9 %). Most were at the bachelor's degree level (57.9 %), have job positions as officers/employees (54.5%), and working for the Subdistrict Administrative Organization (45.0 %).

Analysis of problems in the operation of recreational activities for the elderly and solutions to 4 issues, namely in the personnel aspect, it was found that there was a lack of personnel with expertise in the respective recreational activities and a lack of people to initiate the activities. In this case, the local government organization must act as a stimulant or facilitator to bring about the recreational activities in the first place by providing support in the form such as budget, location, personnel, or coordinating with other agencies such as asking for cooperation. from the Provincial Tourism and Sports Office in sending physical education officers to participate in the operation. In terms of budget, it is necessary to establish specific projects by selecting activities from a joint meeting of the elderly in the area of responsibility. Then allocate the budget. In terms of location, the solution is areas here activities can be organized conveniently and easily accessible are temples and/schools near the community. Recreation activity organizers need to analyze nearby areas and easy to access in order to organize activities efficiently.

**Keywords:** recreation activities, elderly, participation, problem, solution

## INTRODUCTION

The elderly population is likely to increase in the future. Data from the National Statistical Office's population of Thailand, surveyed in 2019, showed that Thailand had a total population of 66.56 million people and being older in 55 years about 24.83%. Population structure data of Thailand during 2015 -2030 shows that Thailand is in a situation of "Aged society" (aged society) and in next 10 years it begins to enter the aging society completely (completed aged society) [1].

The change in the population structure affecting the society and economy of Thailand especially in elderly person. The elderly is considered an age with changes in deterioration both physically, mind and psychosocial. It was shown from the report of the survey of the elderly population in Thailand by the National Statistical Office in 2000 that less than half (43.0%) of the elderly assessed themselves as healthy. It was found that the percentage of the

elderly had high blood pressure (3.17%), diabetic (13.3%), heart disease (7.0%), cancer (0.5%), cerebral artery stenosis (1.6%) and paralysis/paresis (2.5%) [2]. Moreover, mental health problems were also found as effects of physical changes such as illness, deterioration of body systems etc.

The psychosocial changes in old age may vary depending on the individual's internal composition such as philosophy of life, attitude towards oneself and others, the ability to face or deal with problems and adapting to the changing environment. If the elderly is unable to adapt to changes, it may cause psychosocial effects. This may be caused by lack of physical ability when sickness requires treatment for a long time and causes a feeling of loss of well-being, loss of independence, loss of mind. It causes stress, anxiety and depression and abnormalities in recognition.

According to Robert Havighurst's activity theory in 1960, it believes that activities are important for people of all ages. If a person is very active, they can only be more adaptable and have satisfaction in life that leads to happiness in continuing to live [3]. This concept exhibited that activities are important in the elderly. When entering old age or retirement, it is easy to find leisure activities, learn new things or serve others. It will lead to satisfaction to make it lively. In fact, various activities can stimulate our lives to flourish. It will help the elderly to develop in different parts of the body to suit their age.

Recreational Activities that should be organized for the elderly include various hobbies, volunteer work, being a consultant to various agencies and is a member of the Elderly Club. Most of the activities on leisure time, there is often a problem in selecting activities. However, if considering activities in leisure for the elderly can be divided into three main principles: recreation, learning and serving others [4].

There are many types of recreational activities for the elderly that can be organized, such as arts and crafts activities, games and sports activities dance activities, hobby and professional activities, music and singing activities, literary activities (reading, speaking, writing) and volunteer service activities. Many recreational activities have the effect of promoting the health of the elderly, such as arts and crafts affecting talent, delicacy, creativity. The relation of physical sensory and develop ideas, ability to work and develop to professional skills were developed in leisure time [5]. Since, recreation is also an activity that promotes physical, mental, and emotional health. It is necessary to consider that appropriateness and safety should be considered. Recreational activities can be easy, convenient to operate locally and choosing activities that are consistent with lifestyle or living conditions of the elderly [6].

In Thailand, there are many agencies, both public and private, organizing recreational activities for the elderly, such as the Department of Physical Education, the Department of Health, the Department of Elderly Affairs. Local government organizations, hospitals and various private sectors. Elderly recreational activities were found, for example, the Department of Physical Education organized various recreational activities in the form of projects such as elderly sports. karaoke singing contest, Department of Health and Hospital In particular, sub-district health promotion hospitals organize recreational activities in the manner of health promotion and prevention. exercise and various exercises. The Department of Older Persons has organized recreational activities into the senior school on the private sector, there are recreational activities in the form of social gatherings belonging to various clubs or associations [7].

From the review of the roles and responsibilities of the aforementioned agencies, it was found that local government organization is regarded as the main agency with direct roles in responsibility to promoting the quality of life of people in the community. Since the local government organization is an organization working closely with local people, therefore, the organization of recreational activities is the mission of the local government organization that must be carried out in the local people according to the mission of helping the elderly and

providing public services for the people according to the Planning and Distribution Procedures Act [6]. The activities are formally conducted as an occasional event with a group of club members. However, the local government organization does not have a standard pattern for conducting their recreation activities.

The researcher is therefore interested in study problems and solutions for organizing recreational activities for the elderly in the lower central region of Thailand for being used as a guideline for the development of recreational activity programs and the development of correct guidelines for workers in local government organizations. The study focused on the lower central provinces which consists of 14 provinces including Saraburi, Lop Buri, Suphan Buri, Chai Nat, Sing Buri, Ang Thong, Ayutthaya, Nakhon Nayok, Pathum Thani, Nonthaburi, Nakhon Pathom, Samut Songkhram, Samut Sakhon and Samut Prakan is a group of provinces with similar social conditions, way of life, occupation, and culture contexts. There are also many natural resources which can be used in organizing recreational activities considered as a group of provinces with high potential for the development of recreational activities which led to a drive for the organization of recreational activities in the lower central provinces which will lead to applied guidelines for organizing recreational activities to improve the quality of life of the elderly that are suitable for the context of other areas.

## **OBJECTIVE**

The purpose of this research was to study problems and solutions for organizing recreational activities for the elderly in the lower central region of Thailand.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***3.1 Research Objectives***

To study problems and solutions for organizing recreational activities for the elderly in the lower central region of Thailand

### ***3.2 Research Design***

*3.2.1 Sample;* The sample group is 420 recreational activity organizers who had managed recreational activities in the lower central region of Thailand 14 provinces including Saraburi, Lop Buri, Suphan Buri, Chai Nat, Sing Buri, Ang Thong, Ayutthaya, Nakhon Nayok, Pathum Thani, Nonthaburi, Nakhon Pathom, Samut Songkhram, Samut Sakhon, and Samut Prakan.

*3.2.2 Research tools;* The tools used in this research was a questionnaire which are a 5- level rating scale questionnaire, scores are interpreted based on Srisathit Narakun's criteria [8].

*3.2.3 Data Collection Method;* The researcher made a request for permission from the provincial governor to collect data from 14 provinces between November 2020 – January 2021. The obtained questionnaires were checked for accuracy and completeness for statistical analysis and summarize project findings. The preparing a manuscript of a complete research report.

*3.3 Data analysis and statistics used;* Data analysis and data processing from the questionnaire was done using a packaged program by statistics used is frequency distribution percentage average standard deviation. Data analysis and data processing from the interview form. The researcher will summarize the issues and individually separated according to the components provided.

*3.4 Research ethics;* This research study was conducted through human research ethics considerations. by Ethics Committee human research Suan Sunandha Rajabhat

## RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1 Results of general data analysis of recreational activity organizers in the lower central region, Thailand

The frequency and percentage of 420 respondents divided by personal characteristics were shown in Table 1.

**Table 1:** frequency and percentage of respondents divided by personal characteristics.

Personal characteristics	Number (5600)	Proportion ( %)
<b>Sex</b>		
Man	171	40.7
Female	249	59.3
<b>Age</b>		
Less than 31 years old	49	14.7
31 – 40 years old	90	21.4
41 - 50 years old	122	29.0
51 years or older	159	37.9
<b>Educational qualification</b>		
Elementary school	9	2.1
Grade 9	16	3.8
High school/Vocational Certificate	37	8.8
Diploma/Diploma	41	9.8
Bachelor degree	243	57.9
Higher than Bachelor degree	74	17.6
<b>Job position</b>		
Administrator	40	9.5
Officers/employees	229	54.5
Folk philosopher	16	3.8
Local leaders/community leaders	90	21.4
Other	45	10.7
<b>Work for</b>		
Provincial Administrative Organization	2	0.5
Municipality	30	7.1
Subdistrict Municipality	76	18.1
Subdistrict Administrative Organization	189	45.0
Other	123	29.3

4.2 The results of analyzing problems and solutions in organizing recreational activities for the elderly in the lower central region of Thailand

**Table 2** Problems and solutions in organizing recreational activities for the elderly in the lower central region of Thailand

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Solution</b>
<b>Personnel aspect</b>	
1. No one initiated the activity.	Request that relevant agencies come and support personnel in helping communities initiate activities.
2. Travel problems for the elderly	Organize activities in places where seniors can easily travel to participate.
3. Elderly health problems	Organize activities that are appropriate for the health of the participants.
4. There are not enough staff to organize activities.	Encourage people in the community to participate in helping organize activities.
5. There are not enough staff to organize activities.	Encourage people in the community to participate in helping organize activities.
6. There are not enough staff to organize activities.	Encourage people in the community to participate in helping organize activities.
<b>Budget aspect</b>	
1. There is insufficient budget to organize activities for the elderly thoroughly.	Find funding sources from the public and private sectors and the budget is used efficiently.
2. Lack of unique activity venues	Explore the neighborhood and determine recreational areas according to the needs of the elderly in that area.
3. Defective equipment	Present needs to the local government organizations for budget allocation.
4. Lack of leaders for activities that cannot be done, such as dancing, games, and various sports	Present to the local government about the roles and responsibilities of physical education officers and create a list of experts in recreational activities in the area and nearby areas.
<b>Location aspect</b>	
1. The activity location is far from the senior citizen's residence.	Find a place that is in the area where most seniors can easily travel to participate in activities.
<b>Organizing recreational activities</b>	
1. There aren't many interesting new activities.	Providing activities that meet the needs of the elderly.
2. There are not many activities organized often.	Provide budget and personnel to help organize more activities.

## DISCUSSION

Analysis of problems in the operation of recreational activities for the elderly and solutions to 4 issues, namely in the personnel aspect, it was found that there was a lack of personnel with expertise in the respective recreational activities and a lack of people to initiate the activities. In this case, the local government organization must act as a stimulant or facilitator to bring about the recreational activities in the first place by providing support in the form such as budget, location, personnel, or coordinating with other agencies such as asking for cooperation. from the Provincial Tourism and Sports Office in sending physical education officers to participate in the operation. In terms of budget, it is necessary to establish specific projects by selecting activities from a joint meeting of the elderly in the area of responsibility. Then allocate the budget. In terms of location, the solution is areas here activities can be organized conveniently and easily accessible are temples and/schools near the community. Recreation activity organizers need to analyze nearby areas and easy to access in order to organize activities efficiently.

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