

Explaining the Growth and Distributional and Fiscal Effects of Public Education, Health, and Welfare Spending in Thailand¹

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Abstract

Social spending in Thailand is allocated in response to several demand and supply factors. Globalization and inequality tend to compel governments, both elected and non-elected, to increase generous education, health, and welfare programs for social sectors that fall behind. An increase in revenue from direct taxes and the previous year's spending level also has had a positive effect on the current rate of public spending on education, health, and welfare in Thailand. Despite the increase in the shares of education, health, and welfare spending and the recent introduction of new social programs in Thailand, with the stated objective of increasing access of the poor to education, health, and welfare services, including an expansion of basic education from 9 to 12 years, a student loan program, a universal health insurance scheme, and the expansion of other welfare services, overall public spending on education, health, and welfare is not very well targeted. Public spending on

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basic education is primarily pro-poor, but disparities in access to education continue to exist at all levels of education. Although the resulting benefit incidence of public spending on health services is less pro-rich compared to the past, the majority of public health spending still favors the higher income classes. The social security scheme coverage is also limited to a small section of the Thai labor force. Moreover, the increase in social spending has also caused an increase in the deficit and public debt in Thailand. These findings pose a challenge to policymakers, and the paper therefore explores their policy implications.

Keywords: public spending on education, health, welfare, social policy, Thailand

The Study of Public Opinion on Fiscal and Budgetary Choices in the Thai General Election B.E. 2554

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Abstract

This study presents the result of a public opinion study on fiscal and budgetary policies, conducted during the Thai general election in 2011 (B.E.2554). The sample consists of 1,500 eligible voters who were selected based on multi-stage, probability sampling techniques. The survey incorporates voter preferences on three public finance issues: (i) the level of taxation and public services Thai government has provided; (ii) the direction for budget allocation; and (iii) tax/revenue raising choices. The findings indicate the need for civic education on taxation and for availability of fiscal and budgetary information such that voters can articulate meaningful fiscal policy discussions and are able to make appropriate fiscal and budgetary choices.

Keywords: Public opinion study, tax attitudes, fiscal and budgetary policy, fiscal illusion

Implementing the Cluster-Based Approach for the Competitiveness of the Rachaburi Orchid Cluster

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Abstract

The objective of the research is to study the approach of competitiveness enhancement and sustainable growth of SMEs. The qualitative research is applied through the focus on Ratchaburi orchid cluster. The study reveals that Ratchaburi orchid cluster is the cluster originated from the initiative of entrepreneurs who are good quality orchid farmers. They reform production system by forming alliances among upstream, midstream, and downstream companies. They build up a good horizontal network of supporting agencies such as research institutes. The cluster formation creates horizontal and vertical alliances so that the farmers easily access information, all of them are collectively motivated to produce good quality orchids, develop innovation, and generate specific advantages for their sustainable development

Keywords: cluster, small and medium enterprises, Ratchaburi Orchid cluster

Public Professionalism in Local Government Setting: A Comparative Analysis of Thai and Illinois Municipal Chief Administrators' Perceptions of Public Professionalism

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Abstract

In this article, the researchers examine the perceptions of public professionalism among Thai and Illinois municipal chief administrators. Based on an extensive review of extant literature on good governance and public management, public professionalism is defined in this article as the ability to balance political, legal, bureaucratic, and professional accountabilities. The researchers seek to answer two central questions. First, how do differences in municipal government form influence chief administrators' public professionalism? Second, to what extent is public professionalism influenced by the municipal chief administrators' membership in professional associations? With both questions, the researchers seek

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to identify the factors contributing to Thai and Illinois municipal government officials' ability to manage different, and sometimes conflicting, expectations and accountabilities. In other words, the research objective is to find out whether the degree of public professionalism among municipal government officials could be enhanced by appropriate institutional design of the municipal government and encouragement of municipal government officials' membership in professional associations.

Talent Retention in the Thai Public Sector

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Abstract

The article “Talent Retention in the Thai Public Sector” is an excerpt version of the research entitled “The Determinants of Talent Retention in the Thai Public Sector”. The main objective of this research was to investigate HR practices related to talent retention by employing the two models of HRM, namely “Utilitarian Instrumentalism” and “Developmental Humanism”. In addition, examination of talent engagement as the mediator between HR practices and talent retention was included. Apart from that, factors of personal characteristics, organizational characteristics and job characteristics have been integrated into the analytical model of this study. Those government officials who participated in the High Performance and Potential System (HiPPS) were defined as talented people in this study.

The “mixed methods” design was employed in this study. This method focuses on collecting and analyzing both quantitative and

qualitative data in a single study. The findings from both methods were finally analyzed using parallel mixed data analysis. The findings revealed a low level of talent retention in the Thai public sector since only 34.1% of respondents revealed that they would work until retirement. Furthermore, HR practices, both utilitarian instrumentalism and developmental humanism, did not relate to talent retention. Only talent engagement and educational background of respondents were significantly related to talent retention, while the rest of the variables did not reveal such relationships.

Keywords: Human Resource Management (HRM), Talent Management, Engagement, Retention