

Thai Characteristics According to Perspectives of Volunteers Driving the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy

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Abstract

The research article aimed to study the perspectives of volunteers driving the Philosophy of sufficiency economy from each generation on Thai characteristics. Qualitative research methods were used with semi-structured group conversation with key informants who were Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy (PSE) volunteers, distributed in generation and separated into 4 groups of conversation, totalling 32 persons. Analyse the results of volunteers' perspectives by counting word frequency, separated by age group and overall.

The research found that volunteers identified 28 Thai characteristics. Main character is the habit of kindness, and followed characters were friendly, companions, adaptive, and helpful. Generations shown some differences in view such as:

1. The Baby Boomer generation volunteers identified key Thai characteristics as adaptability, application (or practicality), friendliness, helpfulness, kindness, and sharing.
2. The generation X volunteers identified key Thai characteristics as smiley, adaptive, companions, humble, kindness, helpful, sharing, and simplicity.
3. The generation Y volunteers identified key Thai characteristics as kindness, friendly, adaptive, courteous, flexible, and sensitive.
4. The generation Z volunteers identified key Thai characteristics as kindness, companions, apply, friendly, and helpful.

The research results could be used to establish guideline principles that motivate Thai people to join in driving social development according to PSE policy and any societal development, suitable with the characteristics of Thai people.

Keywords: Generation; Thai Characteristics; Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy; Volunteers' Perspectives

Introduction

Societal development policy based on the philosophy of sufficiency economy (PSE) was one of the dominant policies driving in Thai society for the benefit of Thai people and some assumed that it suited Thai people's habit. Habits are the precursor to people's qualities that

drive their activities. All Habits are beneficial if they support the desired goal. However, individual efforts by stakeholders alone are often insufficient as a driving force; the power of collaboration is essential. The driving process involves various contributing factors (Chen, 1989). Most of these are theoretical drives, all utilizing a psychological approach where 'drive' serves as the primary motivating force. Force comes from the tension within people who following their needs. People have a driven to obtain what they need and alleviate strain in their life. (Suwanbundit, 2017).

As a motivation approach, driven people are more animated and have a sense of purpose, are more active, and stay committed to the process through to the final outcome. However, persons construct their own mindset according to their own understanding which lead to the differences in thinking among groups, and impacts the results of PSE policy drives, which are often not successful as intended. Some were asked about the key factors for successful or failure, and Thai characteristics were one of reasons being discussed. To assure the successful implementation of PSE ideology, we need to understand ourselves first. (Takaew, et al., 2023)

The researchers were interested in the Thai characteristics and found that there was a study of the characteristics of Thai people from the viewpoint of Thai and Japanese people in 2001 and summarized that the most 5 characteristics of Thai people that Thai people viewed themselves that were fun, following the trend, superstitious, cheerful, and materialistic, while the Japanese seen that Thai people have outstanding characteristics, including being cheerful, superstitious, talkative, fun and gentle. However, there are 5 characteristics that Thai people saw in themselves, but Japanese people did not see clearly: following trends, being materialistic, extravagant, crafty and charming. Conversely, Japanese identified 5 characteristics of Thai people that were not clearly apparent to the Thai themselves, namely, naivety, lack of solitude, disorganization, a lack of agility, and politeness. (Wuwongse & Washiradilok, 2001)

If these characteristics are accepted, it seems unlikely that the PSE policy can be driven well because Thai habits according to the results of that research, appear contradict the principles of the PSE ideology. Therefore, the researchers never surrendered and sought an alternative way to define a more relevant set of Thai characteristics; the generational framework base on the criteria of The Pew Research Center (2019) was more interesting to define the characteristics of people in the modern era.

Objective of the research

1. To study the characteristics of Thai people base on the generational perspectives of volunteers driving the Philosophy of sufficiency economy

Research Methodology

The research employs a qualitative methodology, utilizing semi-structured focus groups.

A total of 32 PSE (Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy) volunteers, representing a range of ages, participated in the study. The researcher has the following research steps:

1. Data collection by focus group discussion with the cluster of PSE volunteers who were activists in society. Key informants (2 years volunteers or more) are classified into generation by year of birth as shown in Table 1.

2. Group discussion was used and via online meetings, with a group of key informants to obtain clear information and does not interfere with any thoughts. Therefore, the discussion was divided into 4 sessions, with no more than 10 people at a time, through open-ended leading questions to allow key informants to express their opinions.

3. Data analysis, the researcher took the studied data and analysed it according to the objectives. Present facts by using the objective as a guideline to create new knowledge.

4. To present the information, the researcher summarizes opinions descriptively and uses frequency distributions to show characteristic types in Table 2 and Figure 1 and 2.

To summary the research results, the researcher concluded base in the findings, create research recommendations and offers suggestions for future research.

Table1 distribution of key informants

Generation	Birth Year	Age	Total
Baby Boomers	1946-1964	>58	1
Gen X	1965-1980	42-57	10
Gen Y	1981-1996	26-41	13
Gen Z	1997-2012	10-25	8

Research results

Characteristics of Thai people according to opinions of different generations were found in the discussion. The researchers have wrapped up and classified into 28 characteristics as shown in Table 2 and figure it out. Characteristics with the highest frequency of mentions was kindness (12 times) and followed characters were friendly (8 times), companions (7 times), and adaptive, and helpful (6 times by each). The another characters were mentioned 1-4 times.

The generations had difference view of the Thai characteristics as below;

1. The Baby boomer generation, there was a view that Thai people have major characteristics that are adaptive, apply, friendly, helpful, kindness, and sharing.

2. The generation X, there was a view that Thai people have major characteristics that are smiley, adaptive, companions, humble, kindness, helpful, sharing, and simplicity.

3. The generation Y, there was a view that Thai people have major characteristics that are kindness, friendly, adaptive, courteous, flexible, and sensitive.

4. The generation Z, there was a view that Thai people have major characteristics that are kindness, companions, apply, friendly, and helpful.

However, only habit of kindness, friendly, and helpful are mentioned with all generations. Apply, adaptive, companion, sensitive, and sharing were character mentioned with at least 3 generations. Whereas, generation X was only generation that think about the bad habit of Thai people. There were self-contradiction, quibble, and jealous.

Table 2 Thai Characteristics mention in generation conversation

Age (yrs.)	>58	42-57	26-41	<25	Total
Characteristics/Generation	Baby Boomer	Gen X	Gen Y	Gen Z	
adaptive	1	3	2		6
apply	1	1		2	4
companions		3	1	3	7
compromise				1	1
courteous			2		2
curiosity				1	1
custom		1	1		2
dare to...		1		1	2
flexible		1	2		3
friendly	1	1	4	2	8
fun			1		1
grateful				1	1
helpful	1	2	1	2	6
homeland love		1			1
humble		3	1		4
jealous		1			1
kindness	1	3	4	4	12
livelihood			1		1
patience				1	1
quibble		1			1
self-contradiction		1			1
sensitive		1	2	1	4
sharing	1	2		1	4
simplicity		2	1		3
smiley		4			4
survival		1			1
sympathy		1			1
timid		1			1

Thai Characteristics All Generations

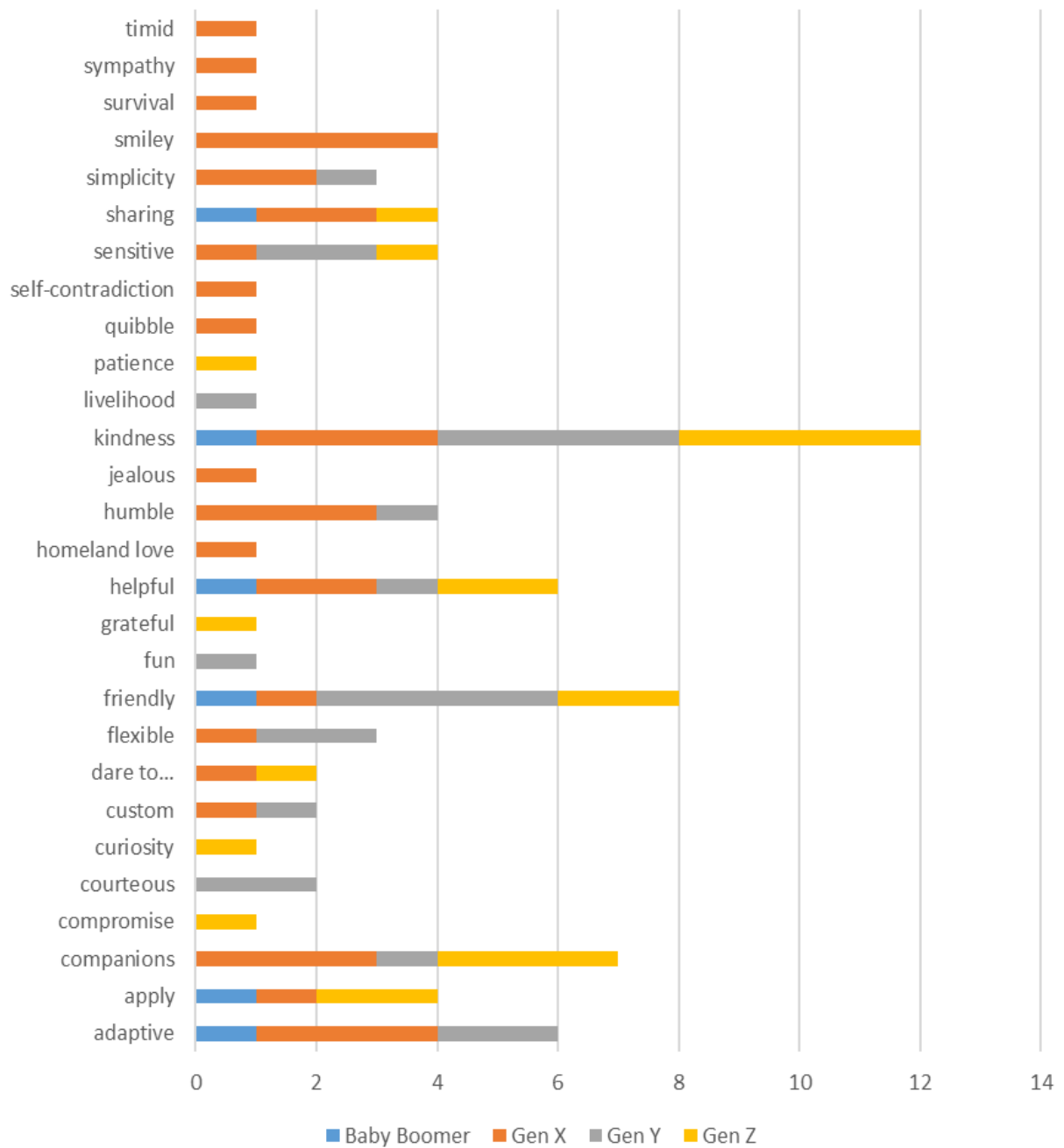


Figure 1: 28 Thai Characteristics

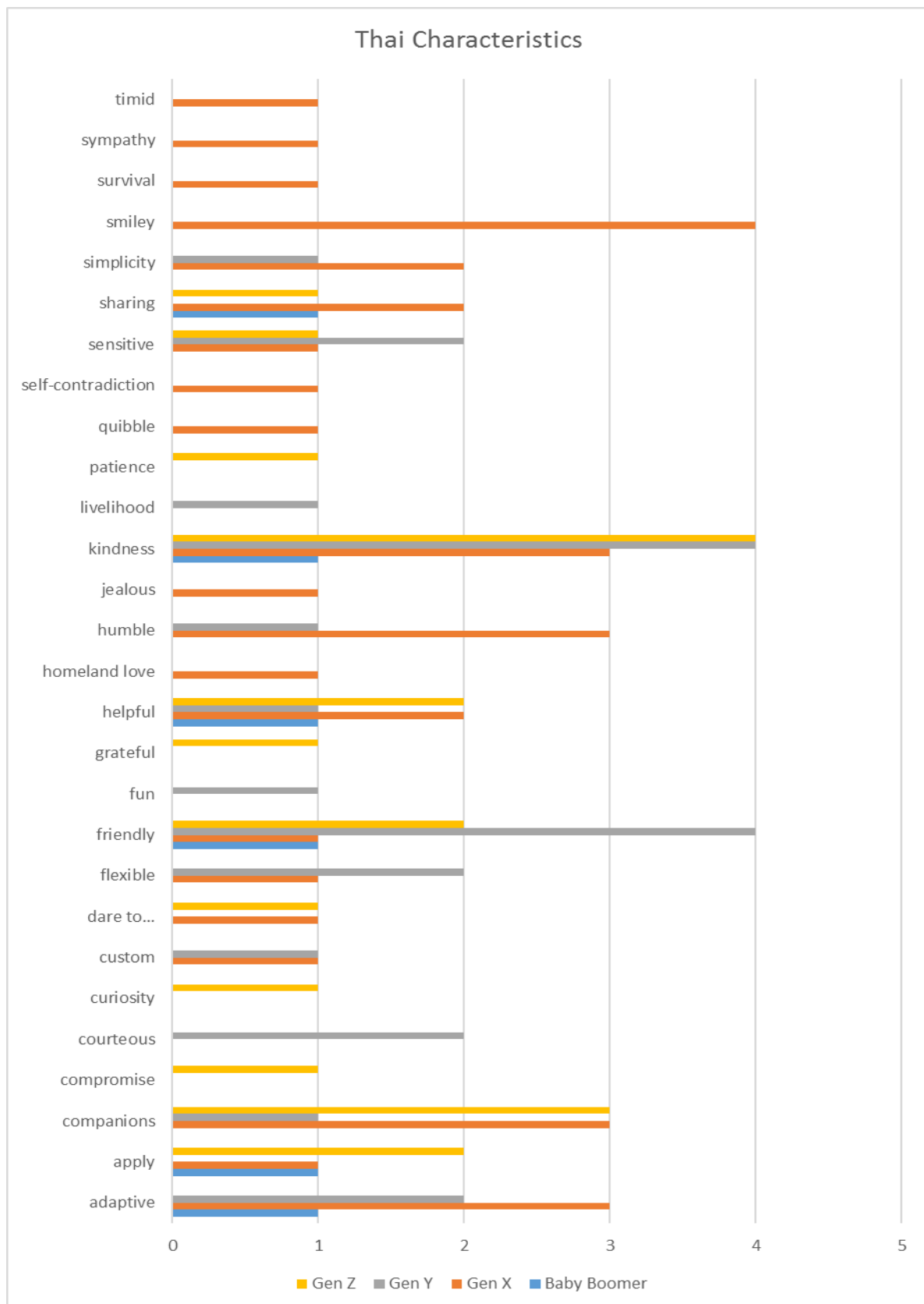


Figure 2: Characteristics of Thai by Generations

Discussion

Philosophy of sufficient economy is about moderation, prudence, resilience, and making decisions based on knowledge and virtue. The characteristics shape how PSE is interpreted and

implemented. The opinions received from the PSE volunteers in this research showed that there are 28 characteristics of Thai people, 25 good and 3 bad were presented. 5 major characteristics were shown such as kindness, friendly, companions, adaptive, and helpful, which value community well-being over individual gain, were some differed from 10 characters on the Thai views themselves in 2001 that were fun, following the trend, superstitious, cheerful, materialistic, extravagant, talkative, crafty, gentle, and charming (Wuwongse & Washiradilok, 2001 p.211) that presented the personal achievement and competition dominant.

These five characteristics were historical or sociocultural shifts that shaped these traits. Kindness was the first characteristics of Thai people in this result could be explain through cognitive development of Thai people that are affected by the widely spread religious teaching in Thailand, such as Metta and Karuna in Bhramavihara in Buddhism, Love your neighbor in Christian, and the teaching of Islam about to be normal man with kindness, and kindness will dissolve all suffering, that were the deeper cultural roots of Thai people. Those are presented in Thai characteristics which correspondence to religio-psychical orientation of Thai trait (Komin, 1990) which regarded as an important value within Thai society.

Thai characteristics, like another four such as friendly, companions, adaptive, and helpful were not random, they evolved through religions, diplomacy, agriculture, and survival wisdom. Even more, to understand in working with Thais, Komin (1990) shown those Thai character through personality trait that were 9 value orientation that were ego orientation (face-saving, criticism avoidance, considerate), grateful relationship, smooth interpersonal relationship (social interaction and the suppression of emotional expression), flexibility and adjustment, religio-psychical (religiously, superstitious beliefs), education and competence (form over content), interdependence, fun and pleasure (everyday life concept), and achievement-task orientation (nature of achievement motivation) which some were mentioned in the characteristics in the results such as friendly, grateful, flexible, fun, livelihood, etc.

The 5 major characteristics could be pay important role in the participation process in driving PSE or any development policies. The social landscape nowadays, the Baby Boomer were nearly 20% of population, and Gen X, Gen Y and Gen Z are totally about 70%, was kept in mind of the policy leader, So the policy driving through the Thai people participation will guide to put the right man on the right job with the person of kindness, friendly, and helpful as the driving facilitation.

From the finding, Gen X had complex characters notice from their viewed, 21 of 28 characteristics. Smiley person is key facilitator of Gen X. While, homeland love which one of PSE ideology will suit only Gen X who are middle adulthood.

Friendly and kindness person is the key facilitator of Gen Y. Sharing is absent in Gen Y view on Thai characteristics which referred to the less value in the eye of this generation, so the promotion of PSE sharing dominance will ineffectiveness. However, livelihood, fun, and courteous could be key character of the early adulthood person which drive Gen Y in any activities forward.

Kindness is the key facilitator of Gen Z and companion is also the characteristics that this generation look at the Thai people. While, the custom and humble characteristics were absent in this generation eye, so traditional PSE life is not fit to promote to this generation. Modern-City PSE life is recommended.

It is necessary to appreciate how these characteristic differences based upon the Thai social system, cultural beliefs and values that influence the relational expectations of the volunteer activists characterized by a tight social framework, in which people expect others in the group of which they are a part to provide care and protection to the group members. The Thai are undoubtedly collectivist (Ning & McAleer, 2017 p 334). So activities design should be adjusted to account for the Thai heightened sensitivity (Moussa et al. 2022).

New Body of Knowledge

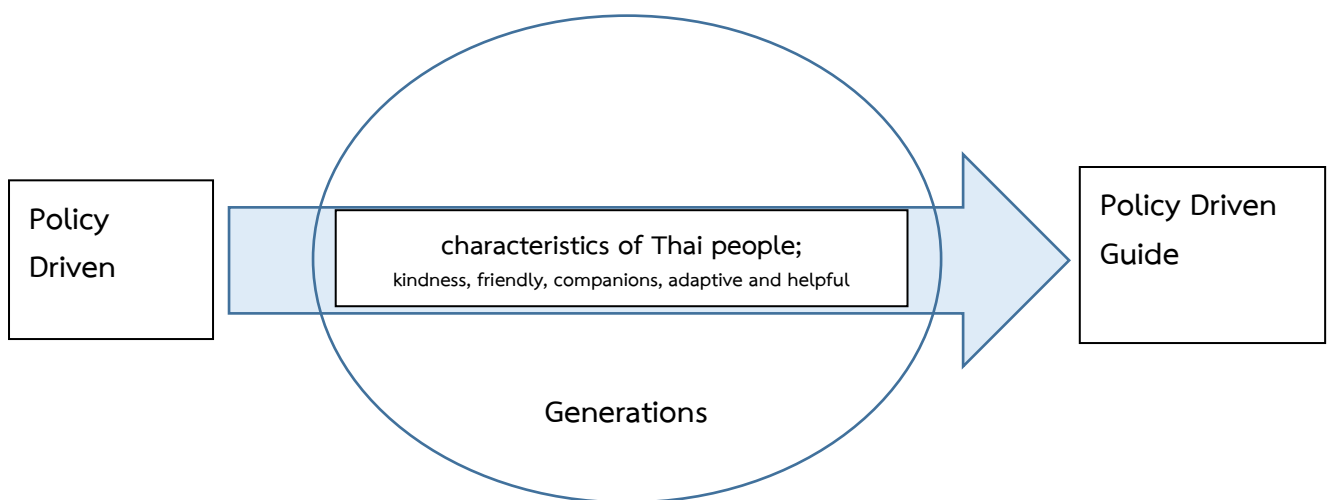


Figure 3: Policy Driven on Thai People through the Thai Characteristics

Policy driven requires a theoretical approach based on driving mechanisms and stakeholder needs (Chen, 1989). When driving in Thailand, it is necessary to consider about Thai people, including understand the Thai characteristics such as kindness, friendly, companions, adaptive, and helpful. Those characters will be guide the approach of the activities held with the people and forward with cooperation and participation in the process.

Conclusion

Thai characteristics were seen through Thai own perspective, with the dominant trait such as kindness, friendly, companions, adaptive, and helpful. These will be counted as a key character or habit of the Thai people. the sample (all were PSE volunteers), and recommend broader studies with different social sectors for future research. If policymakers understand these, they can design better policies that emphasize community-based initiatives, encourage voluntary cooperation, Frame new programs in Buddhist or merit-making terms, use adaptive models allowing local regions to interpret policies flexibly, and promote policies that strengthen

companionship. Then to promote the participation or engagement with the PSE development policies, it could be important to concern about to place the person with these characters on the pace of societal development. The guideline of the PSE theoretical concept to practice should conform set of activities with the characteristics of the people and the driving will be powerful to step towards the advancement of development in terms of quality of life of Thai people, in anyway, the dream of the PSE ideological life come true.

However, this study acknowledges its limitations, particularly in that the focus group consisted solely of PSE volunteers. Future research is recommended to broaden the scope by incorporating participants from a wider range of social sectors, thereby enhancing the representativeness and applicability of the findings.

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