

DEVELOPMENT OF A WORK PERFORMANCE ENHANCEMENT MODEL FOR LIFELONG LEARNING FOR NON- FORMAL AND INFORMAL EDUCATION VOLUNTEERS

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**This research was financially sponsored by
THE 90TH ANNIVERSARY OF
CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY FUND
(Ratchadaphiseksomphot Endowment Fund)**

Abstract: The main purpose of this study is to develop a work performance enhancement model for lifelong learning for non-formal and informal education volunteers. It is hoped that the research aspects and findings will be beneficial, practical, and effective for those involved in enhancing the lifelong learning work performance of various non-formal and informal education volunteers, as well as for those who are interested in conducting further research studies on this particular subject.

Keywords: the Work Performance Enhancement Model, Lifelong Learning, Non-formal and Informal Education Volunteers

Background

Currently, in this changing world every day brings changes to the economy and social life by the use of modern technologies. In return, it requires new skills, knowledge, attitudes and new ways of thinking and doing. Those people who want to succeed in the rapidly changing world are ready to learn for their lives and throughout their lives. (Ivanova, 2009)

Lifelong learning is learning across the life span, from cradle to grave (Leong, 2008). It is a process of learning throughout people's lives from early childhood stage to elderly stage. It composes all kinds and forms of education: formal education, non-formal education or informal education. During different periods of one's life, people are capable of learning from different types of education (Sumalee Sungsi, 2009). Moreover, lifelong learning is defined as all learning activities undertaken throughout life with the aim of improving knowledge, skill and competence, within a personal, civic, and social

and/or employment related perspective (The European Commission, 2007). Accordingly, lifelong learning is involved with people's lives throughout education and activities in their daily lives so lifelong learning is important for people who live in a society that is forever changing.

Formal, non-formal, and informal education are the important components of lifelong learning. Formal education is provided for school age people from pre-school level to primary, secondary and tertiary education, while non-formal and informal education have been developed and extended continuously to serve those no longer linked with schools (Sumalee Sungsi, 2009). Hence, people receive benefits from participating in non-formal and informal education. They can seek a wealth of information and knowledge at any time and wherever they want, not only in the classroom.

Not only educational establishments attached to the Office of the Non-Formal and Informal Education can benefit from non-formal and informal education, but also a person, family, community, communal society, local administrative organization, private body, professional body, religious institution, business operator and other bodies as mentioned in section 4 of Promotion of Non-Formal and Informal Education Act, B.E.2551 (Ministry of Education, 2008). According to Saksri Panakul (2006), most of the public and private organizations/institutions cannot respond all people's need in organizing the non-formal and informal education activities. Non-formal and informal education volunteers can help people solve their problems because they can impart knowledge and provide useful information to people in teaching, training, and arranging various activities although they are not in the classroom.

Non-formal and informal education volunteers have a particular unique wisdom/knowledge and competency in different aspects that they have to pass on to the next generations. In addition, they develop themselves and acquire a thirst for knowledge, which is profitable for their duty. Even though, they are the experts, they still seek knowledge continuously for increasing their body of knowledge. Then they pass on this knowledge to the target groups of non-formal and informal education. Self-development will provide quality results to develop. When people have been developed, they will be able to work efficiently and effectively on their tasks.

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Furthermore, experiential learning makes non-formal and informal education volunteers increase their body knowledge because experiential learning allows people the opportunity to explore personally meaningful concepts that are derived from their own feelings and history in order to make connections between one's experiences and learning (Cassidy, 2001), especially non-formal and informal education volunteers do need self-development experiential learning for improving their work performance. They also are involved in the concept / philosophy, personal characteristic, learning / education, environment, and society and culture according to Paitoon Panna, the best village health volunteer in 2002 and Choni Odochao, Thai wisdom teacher (Ministry of Public Health, 2002; Chamaiporn Sangkrachang, 2001)

There are many groups of non-formal and informal education volunteers in Thailand considered for their duty and work performance. This study only focuses on five main groups of non-formal and informal education volunteers: soil doctor volunteers, village health volunteers, social volunteers, non-formal volunteer teachers, and Thai wisdom teachers.

According to research, recently non-formal and informal education volunteers do not clearly understand the work performance enhancement. Most of them are confronted with several problems and obstacles. They need support to participate in the activities, which increase their knowledge and experience that are useful for their work. Encouragement and empowerment as well as having the necessary learning materials and equipment are important in realizing the role and the importance of being a non-formal and informal education volunteer. Besides, the non-formal and informal education volunteers need to be a part of a network party of non-formal and informal education and develop relationships with their colleagues (Worajit Nongkae 1997, Waraporn Sramajcha 1998). The problems and obstacles that non-formal and informal education volunteers confront will also affect the lifelong learning of their learners. For example, if the non-formal and informal education volunteers have not been trained thoroughly, they will not have sufficient knowledge or skills to impart to the learners.

The findings from this research will be useful, practical, and effective for establishments that are involved with the development of the work performance enhancement model for lifelong learning for non-formal and informal education volunteers. Moreover, the non-formal and informal education volunteers are encouraged and motivated to enhance their lifelong learning work performance. I hope that these findings will be beneficial for those who are interested in this field.

Research Objectives

(1) To analyze the pattern of the non-formal and informal education volunteers for lifelong learning.

(2) To develop a work performance enhancement model for non-formal and informal education volunteers.

(3) To investigate the factors conditions for using a work performance enhancement model for lifelong learning for non-formal and informal education volunteers.

(4) To propose policy recommendations of a work performance model for lifelong learning for non-formal and informal education volunteers.

Review of Literature

Lifelong learning

Lifelong learning related to the changes that happen during a person's entire life, from early childhood to the elderly stage. Lifelong learning helps people feel confident, creative, and entertained in every role, every situation, and every environment. It also improves knowledge, skills, and competencies of people (Peterson, 1979; Longworth, Norman, & Keith, 1996; European Society of Association Executives, 2007). Lifelong learning is also about providing second chances to update basic skills and to offer learning opportunities at more advanced levels. All this, means that formal systems of provision need to become much more open and flexible, so that such opportunities can truly be tailored to the needs of the learner, or indeed the potential learner (The European Commission, 2005). It is a deliberate progression throughout the life of an individual, where the initial acquisition of knowledge and skills is reviewed and upgraded continuously, to meet challenges set by an ever-changing society (Brophy, Craven, & Fisher, 1998) and widely espoused as a goal for education and as an essential workplace component. (Kirby, Lamon, & William, 2010)

Lifelong learning has become necessary for people at different ages because in today's world everything, such as economy, careers, politics, information and technology, educational system, and population are rapidly changing. It is essential for people to further their knowledge and experience development in order for them to catch up with all these changes. (Saksri Panakul 2006, Sumalee Sungsi 2002) Lifelong learning is the enabler that will help create an inclusive society in which every citizen is valued, in which every citizen can participate fully and in which every citizen can achieve his or her full potential (Brophy, Craven, & Fisher, 1998).

Lifelong learning embraces five characteristics: (1) openness: available for all; (2) continuity: emphasizing links between various educational activities; (3) integration: including all educational activities in one's life span; (4) flexibility: in objectives, methodologies, time, place, content and processes; and (5) appropriateness: the content relates to the learner's life and/or work (Huang, 1995 cited in Leong, 2008).

Lifelong learning will lead people to know more information that will be useful for their daily lives and enable the development of communities, which support and enrich the lives of all in the changing society.

Non-formal and informal education volunteers

There is no clear definition for non-formal and informal education volunteers. However, considering their duties and work performances, it can be defined that the non-formal and informal education volunteer is a person who dedicates his/her time and capacity for the need of others in non-formal and informal education work without asking for any recompense.

This research study focuses on five main groups of non-formal and informal education volunteers: (1) soil doctor volunteer (2) village health volunteer (3) social volunteer (4) non-formal volunteer teacher (5) Thai wisdom teacher. The definitions of each non-formal and informal education volunteers group are as follow:

(1) A soil doctor volunteer is an agriculturist who volunteers to work with officials in passing on knowledge and manage work regarding lands. The soil doctor volunteer has to work with other agriculturists and the officials from Land Development Department (Land Development Department, 2002).

(2) A village health volunteer is a person who is chosen to be a representative of the village he/she lives in. Then the village health volunteer will be trained regarding health for being a change agent of health behavior for the others in the community (Amorn Nontasud, 1996).

(3) A social volunteer is a person who is willing to work for others. The social volunteer participates in social development projects that are provided by Non-Governmental Organization (NGO). The social volunteer wants to develop his/her attitude and capacity (Thai Volunteer Service, 2009).

(4) A non-formal volunteer teacher is a person who teaches people in non-formal educational settings and connects communities to establishments for providing the projects, which are appropriate, respond to the requirements and meet the needs of the target groups (Sompit Visitsiri, n.d.)

(5) A Thai wisdom teacher is a person who has a unique body of knowledge and skills. The Thai wisdom teacher is an expert on imparting knowledge to the others and uses his/her skills to solve the problems or develops quality of life of his/her own, family, and community until one accomplishes and has been a good model for the others. Thai wisdom teachers can be categorized into 9 fields, namely; (1) Thai wisdom teachers of agriculture, (2) Thai wisdom teachers of handicraft, and cottage industry (3) Thai wisdom teachers of Thai traditional medicine (4) Thai wisdom teachers of management and conservation of natural resources (5) Thai wisdom teachers of funding, and community economics (6) Thai wisdom teachers of fine arts (7) Thai wisdom teachers of languages and literatures, (8) Thai wisdom teachers of philosophy, religion, and tradition; and lastly (9) Thai wisdom teachers of food and nutrition that were honored by the National Education Commission. (The Office of the Education Council, 2008)

Methods

The total purposive samples are 20 non-formal and informal education volunteers. This includes 4 soil doctor volunteers, 4 village health volunteers, 4 social volunteers, 4 non-formal volunteer teachers, and 4 Thai wisdom teachers. Qualitative research methodology is used in this study. The research instruments are interviews and observation forms.

There are seven research procedures based on the research objectives as follows:

Stage 1: Analyze various documents and the media related to non-formal and informal education volunteers for lifelong learning.

Stage 2: Interview the non-formal and informal education volunteers, and then observe them by using participative observations when they are performing their works, finally interview learners that are taught by the non-formal and informal education volunteers.

Stage 3: Gather the results from analyzing the pattern of being non-formal and informal education volunteers for lifelong learning that consists of a thorough interview, the work performance observations from non-formal and informal education volunteers, and interviews of learners who are taught by the non-formal and informal education volunteers. Then, draft the work performance enhancement model for lifelong learning for non-formal and informal education volunteers from the results.

Stage 4: Investigate the use of the factors and the conditions of the draft of work performance enhancement model for lifelong learning for non-formal and informal education volunteers.

Stage 5: Examine the draft of work performance enhancement model for lifelong learning

for non-formal and informal education volunteers by academics.

Stage 6: Use the connoisseurship technique to examine the work performance enhancement model for lifelong learning for non-formal and informal education volunteers.

Stage 7: Summarize the results of development of the work performance enhancement model for lifelong learning for non-formal and informal education volunteers.

Findings

This research is still in progress. However the first objective, analyzing the pattern of being the non-formal and informal education volunteers for lifelong

beliefs, and philosophy of life result in improving and developing their quality of lives. When non-formal and informal education volunteers have better lives and their problems are solved, they desire to assist those who need help or want to improve their knowledge and skills in any field without asking for anything in return. Although, the non-formal and informal education volunteers have extensive knowledge and high skills, they still develop themselves by being trained and/or exchanging their knowledge with the others and they use experiential learning continuously. Self-development and experiential learning help them extend their knowledge and skills, which will be imparted to others.

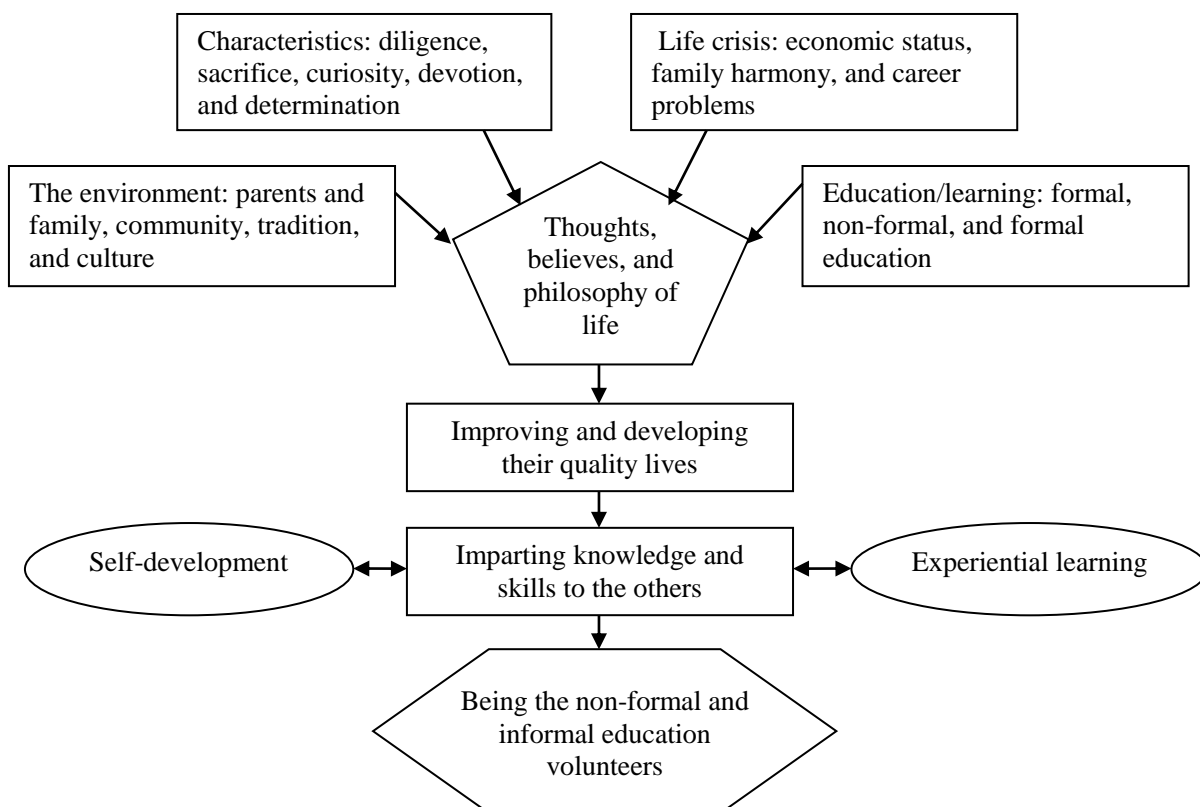


Figure 1: The Pattern of Being the Non-formal and Informal Education Volunteers

learning, has been done. After studying the documents and the media which relates to non-formal and informal education volunteers for lifelong learning, the findings show that the non-formal and informal education volunteers have their thoughts, beliefs, and philosophy of life from: (1) the environment around them: their parents and family, community, tradition, and culture; (2) their characteristics: diligence, sacrifice, curiosity, devotion, and determination; (3) life crisis: economic status, family harmony, and career problems; (4) education/learning: formal education, non-formal education, and formal education. Then their thoughts,

Expected Benefits of the Research

(1) The results from analyzing the pattern of being non-formal and informal education volunteers for lifelong learning will be important and useful information for any organization and those involved in developing the pattern of being non-formal and informal education volunteers.

(2) The work performance enhancement model and policy recommendations for lifelong learning for non-formal and informal education volunteers will be used to make strategies or ways of developing the personnel in organizations and communities for performing work efficiently which

will be profitable to the target groups of non-formal and informal education.

(3) The body of knowledge from this research will be beneficial to anyone who is interested in conducting further research on the subject.

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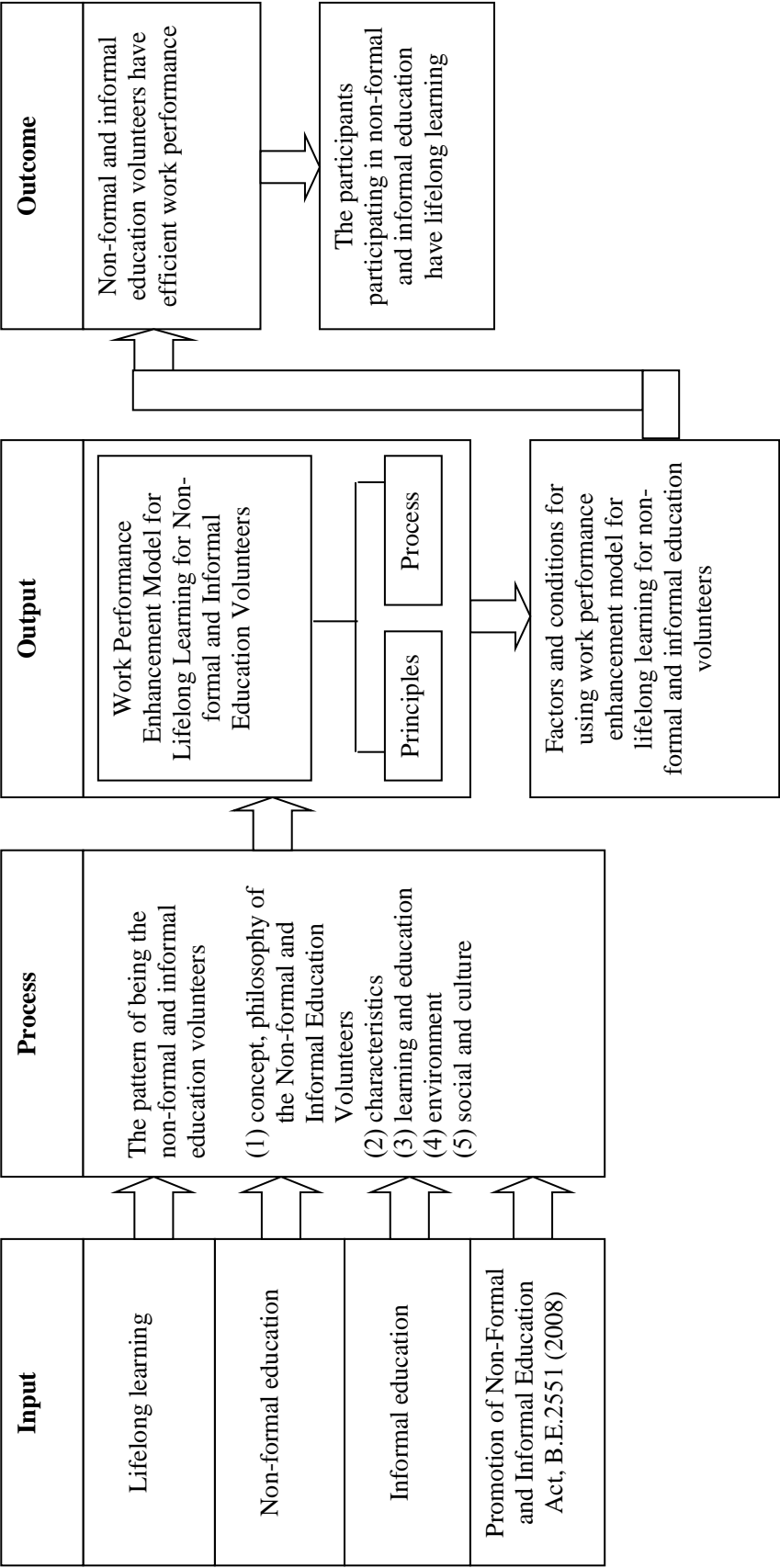


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework of the Research
Development of a Work Performance Enhancement Model for Lifelong Learning for Non-formal and Informal Education Volunteers