Analyzed of community conditions for enabling to older persons learning[*]

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Abstract

This research aimed to study the community that facilities older person learning and to analyze strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of older persons learning in Patan Subdistrict, Khuntal district, Chiang Rai Province. Key informants were 10 older persons and 10 Subdistrict Municipality Officers. A focus group was used to collect data with 2 sets of semi-structured questions, for older person and Subdistrict Municipality Officers, about older person learning in a community as well as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of older person learning. SWOT analysis was used to analyze strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of old person learning. The results found that there were 8 strengths, 2 weaknesses, 4 opportunities, and 2 threats of older person learning in a community which were (1) strengths: a support of the management team of Sub-district Municipality, school for senior establishment, a team work of Sub-district Municipality officers, having a focal person in managing activities in an school for senior, having an operational plan of the school for senior, committees of the school for senior, a pick-up service from their home to the school for senior, and a location of where the community is located nearby the district office, (2) weaknesses: overloaded work of Subdistrict Municipality officers, insufficient technology and communication devices, (3) opportunities: the participation and cooperation of older person in

all aspects, an inside and outside network, volunteers caring older person, and budget resources from outside a community, and lastly (4) threats: no cooperation from leaders in a community, and the restrictions of budget and funding of Local Administrative Organization. All of strengths and opportunity factors to support older person learning activities and protect weakness/treats factor. This factor from SWOT analysis can to find guidelines to run an older person learning activities properly, to meet the local and authentic context of the community.

Keywords: Community States, Conducive Learning, Older Persons, Case Study

Introduction

Older person is the aging period that one cannot be avoided in terms of physical, mental, and social aspect (Tabloski. 2014) Thailand has reached the aging society in 2005 that was comprised of the population whose ages above 60 years old in about 10% of all population in the country (Foundation of Thai gerontology research and development institute. 2015) whereas there are the greatest number of older persons in the north of Thailand (National statistics organization. 2014). Older person is mostly and traditionally viewed as a "burden" of a society as they are dependent, degenerative, disable, less intellectual, and social isolated. In fact, older person can freely live with a healthy and successful life. This period of life as an old person is the energetic period that could benefit a society or be called "Active ageing" which is a main target of a good quality of life by having a good health (Miller. 2015; Touhy & Jett. 2018). According to this, old person is able to participate in all activities in a society with their life stability (World Health Organization [WHO]. 2002). In order to be an active ageing, they have to learn by themselves, by chance, by their own daily life, by schools, and by their own interpretation, and also consider factors affecting their learning such as the physical degeneration, senses of speed and rhythm, attitudes, the ability to learn, and a work of memory (Glass.1990; Bureau of older promote and protection. 2013b). According to the study of a lifelong learning of an old person by Ratana-Ubon and others (2011), they mostly learn by themselves how to work out, have healthy foods, have a medical checkup, adapt themselves, work, keep rapport to others, study the Buddhist scripts, save money, earn extra by part time jobs, have a report on daily expense, participate in any learning activities for self-development, know rights and laws, make a will or testament and so on. Apart from these mentioned learning activities of old person, to have a vaccination, use drugs, learn new

technologies, and know any learning channels is also crucial for old person to learn in order that they could have a better condition of life.

The study field in this research is at Patan sub-district, Khuntal distruct, Chiang Rai Province where it is claimed as an aged society with 1,224 older people, or 18.49% of older persons in Patan Subdistrict. In a very soon, Patan Subdistrict is completely becoming an aging society by having an older person of about 20% from all population in the region- expected to have 1,346 older people, 721 men and 780 women, ranking from 50-59 years old. Due to the rapid growth of older person in the region, Patan Municipality is aware of developing the system of caring an older person by establishing the senior citizen school in 2015 in order to provide learning activities as well as life skills to older person such as exercises, proper foods and nutrition, extra or part time jobs. (Patan Subdistrict Municipal. 2017) Nevertheless, all mentioned activities locally provided to older person in a community is insufficient to meet their good quality of life as there are many factors and issues that is needed to be learnt by an older person. Consequently, this study aimed to study the community that facilities older person learning and to analyze strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of older persons learning in order to obtain the information to be the role model of forming an old person learning by community.

Materials and Methods

This qualitative research is a case study aimed to study the community that facilities older person learning and analyze strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of older person learning in Patan sub-district, Khuntal district, Chiang Rai. There were two groups of key informants which are (1) 10 out of 1,224 representatives of the older person in Patan Subdistrict, Khuntal District, Chiang Rai Province selected by the use of purposive selection according to its criteria: age above 60 years old, have been living in the community for at least a year, be a member of senior citizen club and school for senior, and (2) 10 out of 64 Patan Subdistrict Municipality Officers selected by the use of purposive selection according to its criteria: have been working in Patan Sub-district Municipality for at least a year, have been managing the school for senior for at least a year, and being a committee of developing the center of senior citizen caring and learning.

Research Instrument: The research instrument was two 2 sets of semi-structured questions, for older person and Subdistrict Municipality Officers respectively. Those were questions relating to the ways of learning and the learning condition of an older person in a

community including strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of older person learning. The questions were validated in terms of content appropriateness, or the content validity, by five experts in the fields. An index of item-objective congruence (IOC) between 0.80–1.00 in each question was acceptable to be used for a focus group session.

Data Collection: This research was granted in terms of research ethics in human from Srinakharinwirot University no. 179/61. The researcher coordinated with Patan Subdistrict Municipality Officers in order to study the document relating to the learning activity management as well as the way of life of an older person in a local community, and to basically understand the community context for writing a guideline of questions for the focus group session. Then the researcher selected participants from two groups for a focus group session according to the criteria mentioned earlier. The consent letter was sent to participants for the focus group where it was held at The Wellness Center of Patan Community during July 2018. The focus group in each group lasted for 60-90 minutes conducted by the researcher as a moderator who recorded the data of the focus group in the field note. Therefore, the data were collected from both related documents and the focus group session.

Data Analysis: The data codes were assigned before analyzing: OKI code was for data of an older person and SKI code was for data of Patan Subdistrict Municipality Officers. The data from the two groups of the focus group session were analyzed by (1) the content analysis method to form the conclusion of the community conditions that facilitates an old person learning, and (2) The SWOT analysis to describe its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of old person learning. The qualitative data were validated by the data triangulation technique which were from many sources such as data from the focus group of an old person and Patan Sub-district Municipality officers, the data from the related documents as well as the data validation from a peer debriefing of 3 experts: an advisor, an older person expert, and the community expert in all phases of a study, and lastly a member check was used by letting participants to check the data reported and gained by them.

Results

1. The learning condition of an older person in the community of Patan Subdistrict, Khuntal District, Chiang Rai Province

1.1 The context of Patan sub-district, Khuntal district, Chiang Rai Province, Patan Subdistrict is one of three sub-districts in Khuntal district. There are 14 villages which are governed by Patan Subdistrict Municipality. It is located away from the center of Chiang Rai Province around 60 kilometers covering 45,156.25 rai and dominated the area of Khuntal

District Office. Its geography is consisted of the plain from the east to the west. The mountainous area is found in the east of region whereas the river plains, Ink River, are found in the west. There are 2,662 households with its 7,800-population consisted of 1,501 old people and 219 old person learners. The major occupation are agriculture and Buddhism are the main religion based on Lanna tradition and custom. There are 6 levels of the social capital driving managing and caring an old person: (1) 75 personnel capitals who are role models in participating and volunteering in any activities, (2) social capital such as the senior citizen club of the village, (3) 21 organizational capitals such as 2 Sub-district Health Promoting Hospital, Community Wellness Center, 10 local temples, (4) 5 group of village capitals such as the Cremation Group of the Village, The Volunteer group of Caring an Older Person and so on, (5) 10 Sub-district capital such as The Volunteer Group for Public Health, The Community Welfare Funds, The Senior Citizen club of the Sub-district, and (6) the network capital, such as the Chiang Rai network of Senior Citizen School. With all these 6 levels of the social capital plays a significant role in promoting and supporting the management and caring an old person in a community.

1.2 The learning methods of an older person in the community of Patan Subdistrict, Khuntal District, Chiang Rai Province, the common learning methods of an older person in the community is mostly an informal and non-formal education by their own interests and community based education. In terms of their informal and non-formal education, they learn through their daily life by receiving information and news via technology and other accessible sources such as a community radio and television. From here, they are able to learn about a healthcare and hygiene, politics, economics, environment, society etc. In terms of the learning methods through the community-based education, a school for senior is established which is administrated by Patan Subdistrict Municipality. The community-based education in this kind of school explicitly provides learning methods and plans such as lecture, practice or practicum in terms of exercises, vocational skills training and so on. These learning activities are conducted into each activity station which encourages an older person to participate. There are 3 dimensions needed to be learnt by an old person which are as follow:

1.2.1 Learning to have a good wellness of old person which consisted of 3 topics: exercise, consumption, and sanity.

Exercise, an exercise is always embedded into any learning activities of the senior citizen school and promoted an old person to exercise by themselves at home. The excerpt of an old person is shown below.

"The Petanque is included … exercise, cycling, both individual and group cycling" (OKI 2) *"We pay homage to the Buddha image in the morning, then we do exercises"* (OKI 11) *"we are divided into groups for each kind of sport or activity, Thai traditional dance …"* (SKI 10)

Consumption, good foods, alcohol drinks, and cigarette are introduced by public health officers. The excerpt of an older person is shown below.

"How to eat for a long- lived life, avoid spicy and salty taste, avoid eating minced meat (with vegetable and chili) (OKI 1) "there are some officers telling us about how to eat" (SKI 10)

The use of medicines, they are taught how to use medicines by public health officers. Ways to perceive and aware of using medicines such as the regular use of drug for those having a chronic disease. The promotion of medicines use is still not covered all group of older persons.

"I am recommended to buy medicines prescribed by the doctor instead of buying them by myself" (OKI 5) *"We tell them to buy and use medicines prescribed by the doctor only. Without this, it is unsafe"* (SKI 10)

1.2.2 The participatory learning in community of an older person: there was laws and the rights of an older person. This kind of learning topics includes general laws, traffic regulations by police officers, but this is too broad for an older person. Thus, an applied learning should be provided for them.

"The police officer taught me something about laws" (OKI 5). *"Khuntal Police Station here is also our network, they sometime teach us the general laws, laws of inheritance, and traffic regulations"* (SKI 3).

1.2.3 Learning about a stable life of older person: good environment, life and property security, and work.

Good environment, there partly was the learning of the importance of providing good environment, and also the learning of renovating their own houses for proper conditions caused no accidents.

"At school for senior, I was taught to provide handles in a toilets, for those having an old person living together" (OKI 2)

Life and property security, they were encouraged to be aware of this at the school for senior by police officers, but to be being cheated and other harmfulness of an older person was not mentioned in this kind of learning.

"To be being cheated by a group of call center will be introduced shortly … another kind of cheating activities to an older person was also used to be discussed" (SKI 3)

Work, the continuing learning of an older person is existed in terms of forming body of knowledge and professional skills to produce handicrafts and other products for their extra earnings. Work resources should be included in a learning process.

"They were about group activities of the school for senior such as sufficient economic group, herb group, and flower group etc. We can do it at the school or do it by ourselves at home. All of our handmade products can also be sold at the school for senior" (SKI 10)

2. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of older person learning by community

Data of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of older person learning by community were from an analysis of a community that facilitates an older person learning administered by Patan Sub-district Municipality. SWOT Analysis of community making the older adults learns could be summarized as follows:

Strengths	Weaknesses
1) A support of the management team of Sub-district Municipality 2) School for senior establishment 3) A team work of Sub-district Municipality officers 4) Having a focal person in managing activities in a school for senior 5) Having an operational plan of the school for senior 6) Committees of the school for senior 7) A pick-up service from their home to the school for senior 8) A location where the community is located nearby the district office	1) Overloaded work of Sub-district Municipality officers 2) Insufficient technology and communication devices
Opportunities	Threats
1) The participation and cooperation of older person in all aspects 2) An inside and outside network 3) Volunteers caring older person 4) Budget resources from outside a community	1) No cooperation from leaders in a community 2) The restrictions of budget and funding of Local Administrative Organization

All of strengths and opportunity factors to support older person learning activities and protect weakness/treats factor. This factor from SWOT analysis can to find guidelines to run an older person learning activities properly, to meet the local and authentic context of the community. There were 4 aspects of strengths, weakness, opportunity, and treats in providing an older person learning in the community which were classified by 4M theory include personnel, finance, resources, and management.

2.1 Personnel is comprised of 4 strengths, a weakness, 2 opportunities, and a treat.

2.1.1 Four Strengths of personnel were as follow:

A support of the management team of Sub-district Municipality, these administrators were local politicians and local governmental officers who play a significant role in promoting, supporting, and driving all kinds of activities of an older person such as Meet and Greet activity.

A team work of Sub-district Municipality officers, it was a teamwork of officers in any sections or departments by allocating officers to run all activities to an old person based on their own knowledge, competence. Some of officers were also resources of providing an old person learning.

Having a focal person in managing activities in a school for senior, there was a focal person in providing and running activities to an older person in Patan Sub-district which were a part of an organization of the school for senior.

Committees of the school for senior, it was consisted of older people from 14 villages. Each representative of a village was a moderator between all learners in further running all older person activities.

2.1.2 A weakness, there was an *overloaded work of Sub-district Municipality officers*. This caused an insufficient manpower of officers in the Sub-district Municipality in running all activities in the school for senior.

2.1.3 Two opportunities were as follow:

An inside and outside network, there were human resources in promoting an older person learning from many sectors such as officers from Sub-District Health *P*romotion Center, Khuntal Hospital, monks of 10 temples in those particular areas, police officers, teachers from Khuntalwittayakhom School, and officers from Khuntal Community Welfare Funds etc.

Volunteers caring older person, those were qualified by a training course on elderly care. They always look after an older person learner at the school for senior in every Wednesday including a basic medical checkup, and also a follow up activity for those who needs a special care at home.

2.1.4 A Threat, *no cooperation from leaders in a community* was be complained which affected the motivation and encouragement of officers in the Sub-district Municipality to provide and run all activities at the school for senior.

2.2 Finance is comprised of 2 strengths, an opportunity, and a treat.

2.2.1 Two strengths were as follow:

A support of the management team of Sub-district Municipality, the local administrators highly pay attention to add the school for senior issue into the Municipal Law by allocating the budgets running all activities in the school for senior and find other budgets outside in the Sub-district Municipality, too.

A team work of Sub-district Municipality officers, officers wrote a proposal for funding a project in case of an insufficient internal funding to run the activity and project.

2.2.2 An opportunity, it was *the budget resources from outside a community*. Some expenses of an older person learning which could not be reimbursed according to the criteria of internal budgets from the local administration can be alternatively funded by the budgets from other sources out of in the Sub-district Municipality.

2.2.3 A Threat, it was *the restrictions of budget and funding of Local Administrative Organization* which affects the operation and administration of the learning activity.

2.3 Resources is comprised of 3 strengths, a weakness, and a threat.

2.3.1 Three strengths were as follow:

School for senior establishment, it was one of the learning sources developing an older person to master the knowledge and life skills. The senior citizen school consequently is the center of the knowledge that is necessary for an old person in all aspects including the proper location and place to run all various kinds of activity.

A pick-up service from their home to the school for senior, it conveniently served an older person to school for senior. There was a shuttle bus service operated by the Sub-district Municipality to pick up and transfer old people from a remote area to school, also who may have difficulties in travelling themselves to a school.

A location where the community is located nearby the district office, the surrounded area of Khuntal Sub-district covers all Patan District and also provides a variety of learning resources for older people such as the hospital of the district, the non-formal school, the police office, and Khuntal secondary school.

2.3.2 A weakness, an *insufficient technology and communication devices* such as computer, internet access. Without these, it was difficult to promote an old person learning.

2.3.3 An opportunity, there were both *inside and outside network* which serves the Sub-district Municipality providing many learning resources that meets the needs of older people as some resources were affordable in terms of a procurement.

2.4 Management is comprised of 7 strengths, a weakness, 3 opportunities, and 2 threats.

2.4.1 There were seven strengths, the details were presented as follow:

A support of the management team of Sub-district Municipality, the school for senior was included in the municipal law, budgeting to run all activities in the school, co-advertising old people to become an old learner, and lastly, consulting as well as co-operating all concerns of running activities in school by its management team.

A team work of Sub-district Municipality officers, it was a collaboration of the Sub-district Municipality officers in all sections to run all activities in the school by brainstorming, planning, preparing, finding learning sources, operating, summarizing, revising and improving for a better operation.

Having a focal person in managing activities in a school for senior, a key person in running all activities in the school could enhance the work efficiency in many aspects such as planning, solving problems, coordinating all concerned stake holders, as well as recruiting guest speakers and experts in the field.

Having an operational plan of the school for senior, it consisted of a meeting detailing on outlining an operational plan, roles and responsibilities of teams, concluding session of its operation for further developing and strengthening.

Committees of the school for senior, older people- without their administrative roles, were involved in this kind of the committees. They played an important role to continually drive and support all kind of activities in the school by being coordinators and advertisers to all older people in villages weekly.

A pick-up service from their home to the school for senior, it provided the travel convenience to older people as some of them living far away from the school. With this service, older people were continually convenient to participate and join all activities in the school.

A location where the community is located nearby the district office, its good location enables Patan Sub-district Municipality to be rich of learning resources for older people. Dispute resolution by the Chief District Officer was also be included.

2.4.2 A weakness, *Overloaded work of Sub-district Municipality officers* could cause the difficulties in providing learning activities which should be diversified and needed by older people.

2.4.3 Three opportunities were shown as follow:

The participation and cooperation of older person in all aspects, it promotes their learning activities at the school for senior. According to this, they could continually run and do all kind of activities, and it was also one of mechanisms driving to smoothly run all activities at the school for senior.

An inside and outside network, these networks provide Sub-district Municipality opportunities to allocate a variety of learning sources and meet the expectation of older people in terms of manpower, resources, and budgets of its management.

Volunteers caring older person, all volunteers were all around the villages to be ready for look after older people in the community. This also helped to reduce the burden and workload of Sub-district Municipality officers and enhanced the quality of learning activity management at the school for senior.

2.4.4 Three threats, there were presented below:

No cooperation from leaders in a community, it was an obstacle in running all activities of older people at the senior citizen school at Patan sub-district. It sometime interrupted some learning activities, made it unsmooth, and also demotivated Sub-district Municipality officers.

The restrictions of budget and funding of Local Administrative Organization, some learning activities could be done as a result of this, and it seemed to be sophisticated to manage.

Disscussion/Conclusion

The results found that there were 8 strengths, 2 weaknesses, 4 opportunities, and 2 threats of older person learning in a community which were (1) strengths: a support of the management team of Sub-district Municipality, school for senior establishment, a team work of Sub-district Municipality officers, having a focal person in managing activities in an school for senior, having an operational plan of the school for senior, committees of the school for senior, a pick-up service from their home to the school for senior, and a location of where the community is located nearby the district office, (2) weaknesses: overloaded work of Subdistrict Municipality officers, insufficient technology and communication devices, (3) opportunities: the participation and cooperation of older person in all aspects, an inside and outside network, volunteers caring older person, and budget resources from outside a community, and lastly (4) threats: no cooperation from leaders in a community, and the restrictions of budget and funding of Local Administrative Organization.

There were two ways of older person learning which were (a) a non-formal education, they could provide their own learning environment based on their interests as they were willing to learn themselves in those particular topics. This was also consisted with the daily-life learning of old people by interacting with situations and environment. (Bureau of older promote and protection. 2013b). Television, radio community, the news center of the village were examples of the available learning resources in the village (Patan sub-district municipal. 2017), and (b) a community-based learning, it was in the form of the school for senior where older people were older learners there. The community play a significant role in managing all learning activities in the school for senior, so their daily-life content could be brought to learnt and be adapted to meet the specific context of old people in the community. (Jadesadalug & Pienvimungsa. 2018). Therefore, different activities had been used in different area to promote the learning process and develop older person's potentials based on the community participation and network. Older people were aimed to gained knowledge of their basic life. The awareness of values and importance of active aging in participating all social activities was also focus (Department of older persons. 2016).

Community-based learning can be formed into 3 aspects which are health, participation, and stability which were consisted with the concept of active aging that focusing on developing older people to have a better life and health. It also promoted old people to live with others happily and have a life stability (WHO. 2002) which were consisted with the Elderly Person Act, B.E. 2546 (2003) that brings the concept of active aging to be applied for all

work and activities of older people. This could lead to Elderly Person Development Plan in 2nd edition (B.E. 2545-2564) that focus on developing and promoting an older person's potentials to be a great manpower of the society by associated themselves in organizations and society such as an older per club (National board of the elderly. 2010). The school for senior is an alternative to develop and promote an older person's potentials. It encourages a lifelong learning to form a body of knowledge and necessary life skills. Activities in the school for senior were crucial for the life of an older person. However, the school for senior seemed to provide learning activities based on the needs of older people, the school also needed to provide its learning activities based on the core curriculum as some issues and aspects to be learnt were left behind from the learning activities of the Patan Subdistrict school for senior. (Department of older persons. 2016) Those were needed to learn by older people such as (a) health issues: physical development of older person, annual medical checkup, excretion, and vaccination, (b) participation: no learning activity on the technology, required information channels, and (c) stability: no learning activity on saving and the family stability. (Bureau of older promote and protection. 2013a; 2013b; 2013c; 2013d; WHO. 2002)

There were 4 aspects of strengths, weakness, opportunity, and treats in providing an older person learning in the community which were personnel, finance, resources, and management. (1) Personnel aspect was consisted of 4 strengths, 1 weakness, 3 opportunities, and 1 treat which was consisted with the 4M theory in the Man aspect that has both strengths and opportunities in providing an older person learning. Qualified and responsible man can work properly and effectively even they were encountered by some external obstacles (Bangmo. 2015; Visitsorasak. 2017; Srisran & Polpanthin. 2017), (2) Financial aspect was consisted of 2 strengths, 1 opportunity, 1 treat, and no weakness. It was consisted with the 4M theory in the Money aspect that has greater strengths and opportunity than treats as there was a great expense of running all learning activities. With restriction of budget and funding from Local Administrative Organization, its opportunities and strengths could deal with it (Bangmo. 2015), (3) Resource aspect was consisted of 3 strengths, 1 weakness, 1 opportunity, and no treats. It was consisted with the 4M theory in the Material aspect that was necessary for learning activities of older people. A variety of learning resources and materials was mentioned. Having greater strengths and opportunities than its weakness promotes the continuing operation (Bangmo. 2015), (4) Management aspect was consisted of 7 strengths, 1 weakness, 3 opportunities, and 2 treats. It also was consisted with the 4M theory in the Management aspect that Patan sub-district team used all strengths to manage their operation

that made them be able to prevent and solve problems in relating to personnel, finance, and resources (Bangmo. 2015). According the mentioned 4 aspects, they were factors affecting the older person learning development in the community, promoting and supporting all learning activities to be run continually and directionally. To have an active strategy by having its greater strengths and opportunities rather than its weakness and treats could indicate the potential village. The strengths of the village could be used to harvest all benefits from outsiders. To have ST strategies by using its strengths in the community and avoiding or decreasing treats from outside as well as to have WO strategies by solving their weakness in the community and tried to benefit from outside were examples of this community (Pattaphongs. 2015)

Research Recommendation

An older person learning indicates that it can be reached by other older people in the community. To study the community context is the first priority prior to provide all learning activities to meet their own needs and community needs. The temporary issues on the local community for the learning should be considered such as how to provide the learning activities to promote their better quality of life, to what extent additionally needed to be included in learning activities comparing to the concept of "active aging" presented by WHO to develop an older person to have a good quality of life. Moreover, to study and analyze its strengths, weakness, opportunity, and treats in providing an older person learning in the community is crucial to find guidelines to run activities properly and consistently, to meet the local and authentic context of the community, and finally to strengthen an old person learning with the sustainability.

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