

A Model of Political Participation Development for People in Udorn Thani Province

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ABSTRACT

The research aimed to investigate factors affecting political participation development of people in Udorn Thani province, to design a model of political participation development for people in Udorn Thani province, and to implement and evaluate the model. The research methodology was divided into three phases: contextual study, model design, and model implementation and evaluation. The data was collected by questionnaires from 400 people in Udorn Thani province. The sample subjects were selected by the proportional stratified random sampling method. The multiple linear regression analysis was employed for data analysis. A model of political participation development was designed based on the result of phase 1 and the model was developed through the workshop, focus group and brain storming methods of 30 participants. The model was implemented to 320 people of the experimental group in Darn village, Chiangwang Sub-district, Pen District, Udorn Thani province. MANOVA (Repeated Measures) was used for hypotheses testing at the .05 level of the statistical significance. The findings showed that the factors significantly affected the political participation of people in Udorn Thani province at the .05 level. The factors included catching up with political news, rewards, trust in politicians, political party membership, political campaign, political leaders and faith in political party. The percentage of the variance of variables was 63% ($R = 0.630$). The model of political participation for people in Udorn Thani province consisted of ten major activities: brain storming, training courses of democratic rights and roles, attitude towards democracy, catching up political news, Political Parties Act, roles and rights of political parties, ideology, principles and strategies of political parties for the memberships, political parties administration, motivation for political participation and study visit to the best practice of political administration. Lastly, the findings indicated that the sample subjects participated significantly the political activities after implementing the model more than before implementing the model at the .05 level.

Keywords : Political Participation, Udorn Thani Province

Introduction

The Kingdom of Thailand has legislated eighteen, and the latest Constitution of B.E. 2007 reformed the system of Thai government to be the democratic system especially the main role of Thai people in political participation, political rights and daily issues. The main point of the Constitution of 2007 emphasizes the political participation which refers to the equality of Thai people for laws, education, social rights and services, occupations, expressing ideas, demonstrations, government services, and constitution protection. Thai people are provided the authority to determine the national policies and public policies, including election of national and local candidates of the political parties (Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand (interim edition) of B.E. 2007. <http://www.opdc.go.th/>. [28/12/2012].

One of the most important administrative strategies is a decentralization system of Thailand. Due to the previous centralization of Thai political system, the system caused the structural violence in Thailand. Therefore, the decentralization has been employed to reduce the violence and conflict and the system improves the political stability in Thailand. According to the national report of the election in 2012, the least number of people in Udon Thani province voted in the national election. Additionally, the percentage of people in Udon Thani provided voted in the local election was 50.65% (The Central Registration Office. [online]. 31/12/2012).

Accordance with the issues mentioned, the author has conducted research on factors affecting the political participation of people in Udon Thani province. The factors are useful to design a model of political participation for people in Udon Thani province, and the model is implemented to the target population and evaluated by the experts and the target population. The research results are useful for political participation development of people in Udon Thani province.

Objectives

1. To analyze factors affecting political participation of people in Udon Thani province
2. To design a model of political participation for people in Udon Thani province
3. To implement and evaluate the model of political participation

Methodology

The research methodology was composed of quantitative and qualitative research. The research was conducted in Udon Thani province. The research methodology was divided into three phases:

Phase 1: Factor analysis

The quantitative research was used to analyze factors influencing political participation of people in Udon Thani province.

1. The population was 1,544,786 citizens in Udon Thani province who were over

17 years old in 2013. The samples were 400 citizens in Udon Thani province. The Taro Yamane method was used to calculate the sample size and the samples were selected by the stratified random sampling and the simple random sampling methods.

2. Research Variables

2.1 Independent variables were 13 factors influencing the political participation of people in Udon Thani province: faith in politicians and political parties, belief in political efficiency, political parties membership, voting campaign, attending voting speech, political discussion, influence of community leaders, influence of voting leaders, rewards, influence of promise, transport and catching up political news.

2.2 Dependent variable was political participation of people in Udon Thani province.

3. Research instrument was a questionnaire consisting of three parts: 1) general information, 2) factors affecting political participation, 3) political participation.

4. The questionnaire was designed and developed by documentary study for the conceptual framework and assessed by the experts.

5. The data was collected by questionnaire from 400 research participants.

6. Data was analyzed by the descriptive statistics : percentage, frequency, mean, standard deviation. Hypothesis was tested by discriminant analysis, the Stepwise method and canonical correlation analysis with the .05 level of the statistical significance.

Phase 2 : A model design of political participation

1. The target population was thirty participants : experts, academicians, ones concerned with the political participation. They were selected by the purposive random sampling method.

2. The instrument was a practical strategy for political participation based on the data of phase 1. Workshop approach was employed to design and develop a model.

Phase 3 : Model implementation and evaluation

The model was implemented to 320 sample subjects in Darn village, Chiangwang sub-district, Pen district, Udon Thani province.

1. Research variables

1.1 Independent variable was a model of political participation development of people in Udon Thani province.

1.2 Dependent variable was political participation of people in Udon Thailand province.

3. The data was collected by questionnaires from 320 sample subjects.

4. The descriptive statistics were used for the research: frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. Multiple linear regression analysis was employed to determine the relationship between the independent variables and dependent variables.

Results

1. The seven factors significantly influenced the political participation of people in Udon

Thani province at the .05 level. The factors were catching up political news, rewards, faith in politicians, political parties membership, political campaign, influence of voting leaders, and faith in political parties.

2. The model of political participation of people in Udon Thani province consisted of ten activities: 1) brain storming, 2) training courses of democratic rights and roles, 3) attitude towards democracy, 4) catching up political news, 5) Political Parties Act, 6) roles and rights of political parties, 7) ideology, principles and strategies of political parties for the memberships, 8) political parties administration, 9) motivation for political participation and 10) study visit to the best practice of political administration.

3. The findings indicated that the sample subjects participated significantly the political activities after implementing the model more than before implementing the model at the .05 level.

Discussion

1. The study indicates that the two major factors affecting the political participation of people in Udon Thani province are 1) election conditions and political situations. Lester W. Milbrath (1968: 153) states that people with great faith in the political parties fully participate in political activities. Kamol Somwichain (1973: 91) states that mass media have greatly influenced on the political movement and values, and the mass media is a key factor for giving knowledge, expressing

and sharing ideas, experiences, values, truth and attitudes. James David Barber. (1972 : 27) asserts that the social value of people in community influences the political participation which is affected by mass media. Sithipan Puthahun (1998: 373-374) claims that communication is an efficient strategy for exchanging and expressing knowledge and ideas of political issues.

2. In conclusion, the research findings indicate that the trainees have significantly improved their knowledge of political participation and right, they understand more precisely the political parties. Additionally, the research shows that the trainees are more interested in political news through television, radio, and newspaper. People have many choices to read and believe in the political news. They also believe more in their political efficacy.

Suggestions

1. The seven major factors affect significantly the political participation: faith in politicians, political parties memberships, political campaign, influence of voting leaders, and faith in political parties. People in Udon Thani province should be improved the knowledge relating to the major political factors.

2. The model for political participation should be adapted to the current situation for the practical application.

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