



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and rationale

Strengthening public health services to fulfill health for all Thais initiatives requires organizations in both government and private sectors play an active role in allocating resources to serve people and efficiently achieving goals which have been set in accordance to the government's policy framework and abided by rules, regulations and cultures of the organization. The operation in the organization consists of administration, services and management. Integration of these operational elements is the most important (Treedej, 1987) and it is the participatory process between executives and executors to achieve their shared ultimate goals. The executives, as leaders, have a crucial role in motivating their personnel to appropriately perform their work in response to needs (Hiranto, 1980).

Job satisfaction could be greatly influential towards staff performance. If staff members are satisfied with their work at a high level, they are likely to perform their job more efficiently. Job satisfaction could also stimulate their interests and encourage them to be more eager in their work. Work achievements, respects, job advancement/promotion, increase of salary, organization policy, management and work environment could motivate staff to increase their productivity (Navikan, 1978; Preedeedilok, 1986). Executives must appropriately employ leadership behaviors.

Competent executives must attempt, in every approach, to motivate their staff to achieve the organization's ultimate goals (Kheetunboot, 1986).

Health centers which provide all basic health services are located at the sub-district level covering all rural areas in Thailand. Roles and responsibilities of the health centers in communities are various and involve several activities. In addition, the health centers have faced a critical shortage of resources, especially manpower. As of now, each of the health centers can recruit, on average, just three staff despite the fact that a health center is able to employ up to five persons, according to the approved position master list. The health center is a sub-unit of the district public health office and responsibilities of the health center operation have yet to be clearly assigned. The development of the health center can be classified into three aspects; namely, administration, services and technical cooperation.

The health center is responsible for medical services and treatments, health promotion, infectious diseases control, rehabilitation, monitoring the hygiene and environmental sanitation, strengthening the community development of local organizations and community leaders and supporting the implementation of basic public health services by health volunteers in the village. The health center is the Ministry of Public Health's service establishment which, in terms of budget allocations, is among the last to obtain the budget to solve health problems of people and their budget is insufficient for implementation in response to needs and addressing real problems.

In addition, the health center has been lacking of essential up-to-date equipment to provide high quality health services because of human resource constraints and financial support inadequacy. Weaknesses in coordination to tackle

problems, planning, evaluation and the use of data and information for service implementations result from lack of knowledge and experiences as well as unpractical rules and regulations. What's more, district health officers cannot fully function their executive role to monitor and oversee work because they still have to provide services and work on various other tasks (Ministry of Public Health, 1990; Chucaisangrutt, 1996). Leaders must apply their knowledge and competencies to allocate limited resources to reach the maximum level of efficiency and motivate their personnel to focus on their responsibilities with consciousness and ideology and to work for the sake of the majority. The leaders should be a person with morality and charisma, so their staff will have faith in them. They should also be aware of individualism and support the capacity development of the staff in learning to solve problems. Additionally, the leaders must stimulate their staff to perform work to the best of their ability and concentrate on their work.

To improve the health services to achieve health of all Thais initiatives, the health center which holds responsibilities in providing medical services and treatments to people in the rural areas of Thailand is a very important unit in directly supporting people and it is under the supervision of district health officers who are the middle-level executives. As the district health officers have to allocate limited resources under severe constraint and constantly changing environments, they must be able to reasonably adjust their leadership with their organization and situations and they must motivate heads of health centers to devote themselves and prioritize the public work which benefits the majority of people. In addition, supervisors and subordinates must share some visions. The researcher is the public health staff at the district level and is very much interested in Bass leadership theory which is

appropriately relevant to the current public health administration. Moreover, leadership attributes and characteristics in current situations are similar to the ones needed for the public health administration at the district and sub-district levels and they are extremely vital for job satisfaction of staff in the health center.

The researcher was greatly interested in exploring 1) the level of job satisfaction of public health staff at the sub-district level of Krabi province, 2) the staff demographic characteristics which are independent variables and 3) the association between the leadership and the job satisfaction of the public health staff in Krabi province.

1.2 Research questions

1. Are demographic characteristics of the staff and leadership significantly related to the job satisfaction of the staff?
2. What is the level of the job satisfaction of the public health staff at the sub-district level?
3. The association between the leadership and the job satisfaction of the public health staff in Krabi province.

1.3 Objectives

General objective

To evaluate the job satisfaction of public health staff in Krabi province.

Specific objectives

1. To measure the level of job satisfaction of public health staff at sub-district level in Krabi province.

2. To investigate if the demographic characteristics of the public health staff at the sub-district level in Krabi province are significantly related to their job satisfaction.

3. To explore correlations between leadership and job satisfaction of the public health staff at the sub-district level in Krabi province.

1.4 Definitions

Leadership is the ability to inspire and motivate a group of people to align their interests and efforts towards a common goal while at the same time each person in the group is satisfactorily fulfilled with their work.

Transactional leadership refers to the situation where the district health officer explains and allocates work to subordinates, so they fully understand their role and can finish the work and the subordinates will be rewarded as a result of the work completion to keep them motivated. The reward consists of two elements as follows;

1. **Contingent Reward** – The leader and the follower make an agreement if the follower can accomplish an assigned task, the leader will reward the follower with what he/she wants.
2. **Management by Exception** – The leader intervenes only when his/her employees make a mistake or fail to meet their performance standards.

Transformational leadership of the district health officer is the ability of the district health officer to inspire and motivate his/her subordinates to realize and strive for higher achievements regarding Maslow's hierarchy of human needs. Also, it includes the ability to make them aware of the importance and value of the achievements, approaches to reach them, benefits and sacrifice themselves for the

majority or the organization. Transformational leadership consists of 4 elements as follows;

1. **Charisma** is the ability of the district health officer to clearly set goals in working and possess friendly and kind manners. It also includes fair treatments and interactions with colleagues, based on religious principles and this could become a model for the colleagues to follow, making them faithful, loyal and connected to the district health officer. As a result, they are inspired to work, share and follow some social values with others. In addition, they will feel valued and competent and they would like to perform work to accomplish the goals previously set by the district health officer.
2. **Individualized consideration** is the ability of the district health officer to accept individualism of his/her colleagues, respond to each of their needs by respecting their differences and appreciate their abilities.
3. **Intellectual stimulation** is the ability of the district health officer to stimulate his/her colleagues to be aware of problems and support them to polish their problem solving skills. It also includes the ability to stimulate the colleagues to realize what problems their organization is facing and learn about principles and procedures which will be applied to improve services, the organization and client's quality of life.
4. **Inspirational** is the ability of the district health officer to use words or take actions to encourage his/her colleagues or stimulate them to be more enthusiastic and inspired to work harder or put greater efforts. Words or actions can make the staff feel confident and proud that they can

accomplish assigned tasks and encourage them to begin some new initiatives.

Job satisfaction is the contentment or enjoyment in working to meet expectations and it consists of 5 facets as follows;

1. **Supervision** is the ability of the district health officer to exercise the authority of administration and their leadership which can influence heads of health centers to willingly perform their work.
2. **Job description** is the designated task for staff which is relevant to their knowledge, competency and skills. The work itself should be interesting and the staff should feel challenged and capable of handling it from start to finish.
3. **Pay** includes a monthly salary and fringe benefits; such as, per diem, accommodation, food and medical insurance.
4. **Promotion opportunities** refer to job advancements for staff; such as, salary increase, promotion to a greater level or higher post and training opportunities to further education.
5. **People on the job** refer to the relationship with co-workers, working as a team, respecting, sympathizing and helping one another.

District health office is the agency operating health services at the district level and it is administratively under the Office of the Permanent Secretary of Public Health Ministry.

Health center is the governmental establishment providing health services to people in sub-districts or villages and it is administratively under the Ministry of Public Health.

District health officer is the incumbent for at least one year of the post of chief of the district/sub-district (king amphor) health office which is administratively under the Office of the Permanent Secretary of Public Health Ministry.

Public health staff at sub-district level are public health officers working in health centers at the sub-district level in Krabi province; namely, head of the health center, community health officer and public health technical officer

Perception is the expression of knowledge and understanding based on inner feelings and people usually behave or react in according to their perception. Their behaviors are instructed and controlled by the perception.

1.5 Conceptual Framework

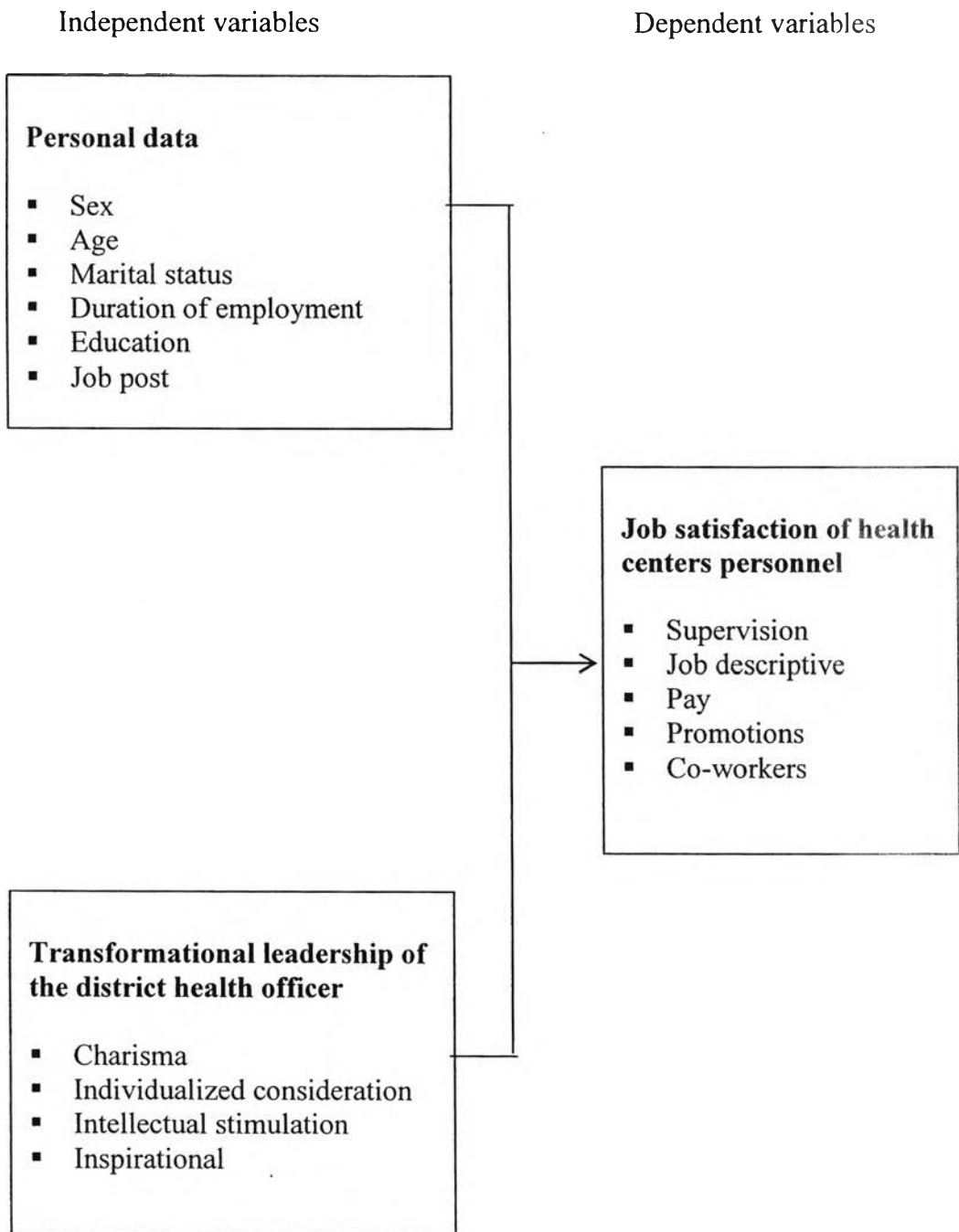


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework