Human Resource Capacity Building for Local Governance in Thailand: Current Challenges and Future Opportunities

A thesis submitted to The University of Manchester for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Humanities.

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ABSTRACT

The research investigates individual human resource capacity building for local governance within the context of decentralised human resource management in Thailand by profoundly examining its current implementation of recruitment, selection, training and development and performance management after the decentralisation policy was enacted. The human resource capacity building process in this research includes five stages of core capabilities building: committing and engaging, performing and accomplishing, building relationships and attracting resources, learning and adapting and managing trade-offs and dilemmas. The research firstly focuses on examining the consequences of decentralised human resource practices implementation in Thai local governance. Secondly, it aims to explore the ways in which human resource practices are supportive to individual human resource capacity building. Finally it proposes the prospective implications of effective capacity building through human resource practices for potential policy formulation.

This research is based on three related theories: capacity building, human resource management and decentralisation. The research was conducted by using qualitative methodologies. The case study of Thailand was selected because of the uniqueness of its paradoxical decentralised-Unitarian state. Municipal officials were chosen as the unit of analysis.

The first findings have illustrated that the decentralisation initiative has certainly affected the HRM at the local level of Thailand. However, this scheme has launched some degree of re-centralisation and partially confirms the pseudo-decentralisation in Thai public administration. Secondly, the research also found that HR practices can be supportive and compatible as a capacity building strategies. However, these HR practices must be designed, conducted and evaluated for the purposes of the local government only. The aim of capacitating individual staff must be taken into account as a part of policy to develop the human side of the organisation. Therefore, there have been both challenges and opportunities for human resource capacity building through HR practices.

To conclude, this research has contributed to fill the theoretical gap by examining the capacity building processes through HR practices and it provides the practical suggestion that local context is decisive. The capacity building issue has never been investigated through human resource practices, especially recruitment and selection, training and development and performance management. Moreover, in practice, the research has focused on the development of the local government unit in a country of paradoxically decentralised-Unitarian state like Thailand.
DECLARATION

I, Piyawadee Rohitarachoon, hereby declare that no portion of the work referred to in this thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

Piyawadee Rohitarachoon
Date: 29th October 2012
Degree: PhD, the Faculty of Humanities, the University of Manchester
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DEDICATION

To my beloved and respectful great-grandfather

Lieutenant Petch Rohitarachoon

My grandparents

Mr. Wicharn Rohitarachoon

Mr. Sangwaal Suwannasinth

Mrs. Chintana Suwannasinth

and

All Thai municipal officials
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION
AND RESEARCH DESCRIPTION

This research examines decentralised human resource practices and human resource capacity building (HRCB) processes through human resource practices in Thailand. This chapter covers the research background and rationale why the research is required. It then presents the research focus and brief theoretical underpinnings of the research. After that, the aim, objectives and significance of the study are addressed. Furthermore, a concise summary of employed methodologies has been presented. Finally, the structure of the thesis is presented in the last section of this chapter.

1.1 Background of the study

In order to ensure the capacity of local governance in Thailand, local civil servants’ capacity is an imperative issue. Incalculable academic researchers, international donors and governments in developing countries have conferred over capacity building. They perceived and categorised capacity building into a diverse range of classifications, sections, and breadth. Capacity building for community development, capacity building for poverty reduction, organisational capacity building, and individual capacity building are utterly underneath an umbrella of “Capacity Building” (Honadle, 1981, Grindle and Hilderbrand, 1995, Green, 2005). Notwithstanding the repetitive part of its definition adhered to research papers apiece, it has been claimed that capacity building is still decisive and noteworthy to be explored. Human resource capacity is stated to expectedly convey efficiency and effectiveness to each assignment, project, organisation, task, and policy implementation. Civil servants or officials are the key medium for all civil services provision (McCourt, 2006, Hope, 2009, Mizrahi, 2009).

Concurrently, within the realm of public administration, decentralisation has also been a controversial issue among intellectual discussions. Not only have its theoretical standpoints been considered, but its practices have also been implemented and examined in diverse contexts. Optimistic and pessimistic scrutiny about decentralisation are disputed and disseminated widely (Crook, 2003, Onyach Olaa, 2003, Smoke, 2003, Veron et al., 2006, Ishii et al., 2007, Awortwi, 2010b, Haque, 2010, Rees and Hossain, 2010).
Thailand, a developing country which suffered from an economic recession in 1997, has legitimately adopted decentralisation to its public administration which was evidently verified by the promulgation of the Thai Constitution 1997, the Decentralisation Act 1999 (DA 1999), and the Local Personnel Administration Act 1999 (LPAA 1999), respectively (Haque, 2010). This decentralisation scheme was expected to create transparency, accountability and good governance to civil services. As a result, they initiated an era of transition with vast anticipation that decentralisation would eradicate the gap between people and government and provide local people with hospitable and responsive service provisions. Subsequently, local civil servants are human capital of local organisations. They are people, who carry out services directly to local people in accordance with decentralisation policy, and therefore, they require critical intention of how efficiently and effectively they can conduct their services. More to the point and interrogatively, to what extent can their current capacity provide satisfactory local public services since the civil servants are the essential link that carries out the services towards local people? (Green, 2005, Straussman, 2007, Krishnaveni and Sripiraba, 2008, Aijaz, 2010, Brinkerhoff and Morgan, 2010, Morgan et al., 2010, Pallangyo and Rees, 2010). There are inquisitive assertions of how Thai local people actually perceive local government services and local civil servants. Moreover, there has been another question of how efficiently and effectively can the local civil servants provide services to meet local needs after the decentralisation was initiated.

Hence, the scope of this research is to explore Human Resource (HR) practices and individual human resource capacity building within the context of decentralised human resource management in Thailand by deeply examining its current implementation of human resource practices. These HR practices include recruitment and selection, training and development, and performance management systems. Moreover, the ways (if any) in which human resource practices can be supportive to the human resource capacity building process is another focus of the research. As a result, the theoretical prospective outcome of the research is aimed to fulfil the gap between human resource practices and individual capacity building activities to eventually achieve the local governance capacity. Simultaneously, empirical opportunities and challenges from the field are circumspectly considered. The ideal developed local civil servants capacity could be that of the processes which are initiated, possessed, planned, and directed by local civil servants for their local people (Haque, 2010, Hope, 2010). Eventually, the suggestions for the policy formulation are addressed. The next section subsequently clarifies the aims and objectives of the research.
1.2 Aim and Objectives of the Study

Innumerable studies put their efforts on investigating the local elected staffs; however, the mechanisms of local organisation are carried out by the civil servants (Wunsch, 2001, Bardhan, 2002, Nijenhuis, 2003, Onyach-Olaa, 2003, Smoke, 2003, Bowornwathana, 2005). Individual capacity building through HR practices is aimed to be intensely explored in this context. To critically consider the issue, the major arguments within this research are whether HRM can be genuinely decentralised. Besides this, to what extent is human resource capacity building process at the local level well-designed and implemented locally with local or decentralised autonomy, rather than duplicating the central administrative system to be conducted at the local level? Additionally, would there be any activities that reinforce or support the capacity building process through decentralised human resource practices? Empirically, the understanding of current challenges and opportunities in the Thai local administration context was critically investigated and discussed as a case study of the research.

Therefore, according to the theoretical and empirical background, this study aimed to augment empirical understanding of the individual human resource capacity building (HRCB) through decentralised human resource practices; recruitment and selection, training and development and performance management in Thai local governance context. Consistent with the aim of the study, the research particularly focuses on the following objectives.

1. To examine the consequences (if any; advantages or disadvantages) of decentralised human resource practices implementation in Thai local governance

2. To explore the ways in which human resource practices are supportive (if any) to individual human resource capacity building

3. To propose prospective implications of effective capacity building through human resource practices for potential policy formulation

As a result, the following research questions are addressed to help explore and achieve the aim and objectives of the study. The research questions are presented in the approaching section.
1.3 Research Questions

To attain the aim and objectives of the research previously stated; the following research questions were addressed:

1. How far have the decentralised HR practices and initiatives affected local personnel administrations in Thai municipalities?

2. How can the HR practices contribute to enhance individual Human Resource Capacity Building (HRCB) in Thai municipalities?

3. What are the implications of the findings for the policy formulation and implementation on the HR policy for local governance?

Once again, the HR practices in these questions include recruitment and selection, training and development and performance management only. In addition, the capacity building process means individual person capacity building through five stages of core capabilities building; committing and engaging, performing and accomplishing, building relationships and attracting resources, learning and adapting, and managing trade-offs and dilemmas. Both HR practices and the capacity building process will be thoroughly explained in chapter two.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Capacity building has been perceived as a universal remedy or a panacea for many administrative mal-symptoms (Kauzya, 1997, Morgan, 1998, Crisp et al., 2000). Nonetheless, the considerations on HRM and HR practices together with the capacity building issue have not yet been addressed in Thailand context. Most of the administrative decentralisation discussions have intensified the fiscal decentralisation without taking any further interest towards HRM (Lawler et al., 1997, Bowornwathana, 2000, Mutebi, 2004, Mutebi, 2005, Siengthai and Bechter, 2005). Besides this, elected officials have been the foci of studies rather than civil servants (Vogelsang-Coombs and Miller, 1999). Therefore, the interest of civil servants in the perspective of HRM is distinguishably important to be focused on.
As decentralisation, theoretically and practically, signifies the government’s closeness to its populaces, it is expected to fill the gap between the constituents’ needs and the public services provision. The key medium to undertake these service provisions are civil servants (Green, 2005, Haque, 2010). Due to the fact that Thailand has legitimately commenced the decentralisation initiatives according to the 1997 Constitution, readiness to conduct services in various tasks of local civil servants is decisive. Recruiting potent and effective persons to work for local civil service is as hard as ‘finding a needle in a haystack’. The interrogative notion of how well the existing capacity possessed by local civil servants can contribute the various kinds of locally emerging tasks is rather critical.

Since the decentralisation has been inaugurated, to what extent does the central government allow local autonomy in managing their own human resources? Theoretically, the power has been vertically transferred. Nevertheless, is the local level ready to obtain that delegation? At the same time, in the horizontal component, would local civil servants realise how to manage amongst each other on the new tasks entrusted? These questions are appear crucial in the case of Thailand, which was transformed from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional democratic regime in 1932. The Thai administration at the national level has always been perceived as a classic case study, best reflected in Fred Warren Riggs’ notion of the ‘Bureaucratic Polity’ and ‘Prismatic Model’ (Riggs, 1966, Riggs, 1978). He argued that the Thai bureaucracy was administered by Thai elites and technocrats with development centred at the central administration level. Policies were constructed by central government and this action was confirmed by the issue of the first National Economic Development (NED) plan which was launched in 1961. The first NED plan (1961-1966) was initiated in accordance with the advice from the World Bank. It was designed and conceptualised by Thai senior economists in the public sector who had been influenced to perceive ‘Development’ from the ‘Growth Concept’ and ‘Modernization’, solely as an economic expansion. As a result, it focused mainly to accelerate and energize economic growth (Bello et al., 1999). The name of the plan was transformed to the Thai Economic and Social Development Plan since the second plan (1967-1971) was launched, due to the fact that the first plan could solve the economic problems but not Thai society as a whole (Bello et al., 1999).

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1 The plan was firstly issued by the National Economic Board (NEB) which was established in 1950. This organisation was later reformed into National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) in 1972.
As a consequence, the regional and local level governments had minor functions, merely anticipating the policies to be implemented, expecting that the trickle down effects would conduit efficiently and effectively the development to the local level. Hence, in reality, it is centralisation that has been an important system in Thai public administration ever since (Haque, 2010).

The reformation has been apparent since the 1997 Constitution. In accordance with the New Public Management (NPM) approach, the Thai government also adopted the administrative decentralisation. For this reason, innovations regarding the democratisation have surged into Thailand. To people in both the international and national levels, the features of the 1997 Thai Constitution appeared to support accountability, transparency, open government, combating with corruption, and an emphasis on conducting a less important central government (Bowornwathana, 2008). Consequently, the Decentralisation Act 1999 (DA 1999) was enacted in accordance with the 1997 Constitution which expectedly empowers the local authority and transfers critical tasks to local government. The Bangkok Metropolitan, Pattaya City, Provincial Administrative Organisations (PAO), Municipalities, and Tambon (Sub-District) Administrative Organisations (TAO), were all either created or given new authorities with regard to aspects of fiscal administration and human resource management.

According to the promulgation of the Tambon Council and Tambon Administrative Act of 1994 and the Constitution of 1997, decentralisation and the establishment of self-governing authorities obtained national and international attention. Under an administration and the direction of the cabinet, the central ministries and departments played major roles in policy formulation and implementation. Consequently, there have been several acts promulgated due to the new constitution; however, the most important one regarding the decentralisation was certainly the Decentralisation Act 1999. The Local Personnel Administration Act 1999 was afterwards transmitted as a part of decentralisation process. It has highlighted the significance of local public personnel management. Therefore, the conception of grass-root development, the bottom-up administration and definitely the decentralisation; have become foremost to the national and local administration in Thailand. Especially in the aspect of public officials, their capacity and competency are expected to convey good public services to local people. It was McCourt who stated firmly that public employees are the development resources, and that staff administration is such a vital constituent which may contribute to positive output and outcomes to the organisations (McCourt, 2006, Lengnick-Hall et al., 2009). Besides this, the management of public servants is also at the heart of conducting good
governance (Bana and McCourt, 2006). Therefore, it would be of worth to investigate how staff can contribute to better performance for the organisation and which motivates them. Characteristically, HRM process includes the human resource planning, recruitment, selection, training and development, salary and fringe benefit management, and performance evaluation (Brown, 2004, Lengnick-Hall et al., 2009, Turner et al., 2009, Brown and Warren, 2011).

Therefore, the civil service capacity building at the local level should also be addressed as an indispensable element towards the public service implementation. It is worth exploring how the decentralised administrative initiatives towards HR practices have contributed to the HRCB within the local administration. As a result, it is vital that the effects of decentralisation on recent HR practice implementation and the capacity of current human capital at the local level are explored, in order to get the essence of how to reach future opportunities and overcome the current challenges for local personnel administration.

In conclusion, without any effort at studying HRCB at the local level, the bridge to effective, efficient and successful public services cannot be made. Therefore, this research fills the theoretical gap between the HR practices and capacity building in the Thai local governance context. However, prior to the understanding of the research itself, related theories in the area of this study must be explored. The approaching section concentrates on the theoretical underpinnings of the research. The concise academic disputes, discussion and arguments relating to HRM, HRCB and decentralisation are presented.

### 1.5 Concise Theoretical Underpinnings

This study is based on three main areas of related theories; capacity building, human resource management and decentralisation. The approaching chapter on theoretical perspectives will explain the intertwined linkages amongst the three areas. Decentralisation is fundamentally applied as a context for the research. At the same time, capacity building in this research only signifies individual capacity building through five stages of core capabilities building; committing and engaging, performing and accomplishing, building relationships and attracting resources, learning and adapting and managing trade-offs and dilemmas. Similarly, the HRM issues have been scoped and focused on three main activities; recruitment and selection, training and development and
performance management. Therefore, theoretical arguments in this research are based on these three areas only.

First of all, it is indispensable to cautiously consider and emphasise the differences amongst capacity and its acquaintance jargons; capability and competence. Capacity on its own refers to the general ability of the individual or group to carry out their responsibilities and tasks (Hussein, 2006, Morgan et al., 2010). According to the Cambridge Dictionary, capacity can be defined as the ability of a person or an organisation to do a particular thing (Cambridge, 2008). On the other hand, competence of the public sector, as perceived by Morgan and Baser, designates the skills held by persons within the government that structure parts of the cooperative capabilities and capacity (Morgan and Baser, 2007). In addition, Wojtczak has defined competence in the medical field as a holistic integration of understandings, abilities and professional judgments (Wojtczak, 2002). The third term, Hussein has stated that capability signifies the knowledge, skills and attitudes of an individual's, either on their own or as a group (Hussein, 2006). Furthermore, it may be defined as specific abilities that must be gathered together to reach the overall capacity. Likewise, Kaplan stated that capability would denote the action taking on capacity in order to become conscious of each person’s potential (Kaplan, 2000). He also concluded that capacity, capability and competence are interconnected. The three concepts are to enhance any unit’s or level’s status they aim for; ‘with capability developing and expanding capacity to attain competence’ (Kaplan, 2000: 271). In essence, it can be insisted that the capacity, capability and competence are related to the abilities to carry out the tasks required to reach the ultimate goals sought by the individuals or organisations.

With the considerations amongst capacity, capability and competence, capacity building is the focal point to be explored because capacity building can be perceived as a process to obtain or reach the expected capacity. Capacity building plays its pivotal role in connecting the realms of human resource management and public administrative decentralisation. Moreover, Capacity building has been perceived as a panacea process for a diverse range of development areas (Honadle, 1981, Cohen, 1995, Grindle and Hilderbrand, 1995, Eade, 1997, Christensen and Gazley, 2008). In order to define capacity building, units and levels of analysis towards capacity are remarkably vital to pinpoint (Straussman, 2007).
Capacity building has always been recognised as an unwell-defined term and practice (Morgan and Baser, 2007). Two notorious decades of discourse over capacity building is still ongoing. Honadle addressed that ‘capacity building’ is a problematical term and concept. She argued whether capacity could be defined as survival or service, politics or rationality, as input or system in itself, means or results improvement, and finally, about whom capacity building is for (Honadle, 1981). Primarily, she perceived that capacity building is meant for organisational development and a capable organisation is one that attracts resources from its environment (Honadle, 1981). Meanwhile, Antwi and Analoui perceived ‘Capacity Building’ in regards to human resource development. Apparently, the case in the research conducted in Ghana demonstrated how policy and the agenda of decentralisation could be transmitted into implementation; the human resource development for organisational capacity building being the target issue. Its conclusion was that in order to build up capacity for human resource development; the strategies across the aspects of local government institutions must be adopted in three levels; organisational culture, organisation structure and individual levels (Antwi and Analoui, 2008a). Therefore, capacity building can be performed in every step or level in an organisation, from an individual to the entire organisation. This allows capacity building to be more decisive in regard with its unit and levels of analysis (Jurie, 2000, Potter and Brough, 2004).

The concept of capacity building makes prominent the opportunities for the enhancement of individuals and organisations. Moreover, capacity building is likely to be categorised into the retention stage of human resource management and this is nothing new to scholars, public sectors and non-governmental organisations (Grindle and Hilderbrand, 1995, Eade, 1997). It has been a buzz jargon since the late 1980s especially for NGOs along with the terms ‘Empowerment’, ‘Participation’ and ‘Gender-equity’ (Eade, 1997). It signifies the process of building up the capacity of community and organisation as well as the individual (Mizrahi, 2009). According to many scholars, the concept of capacity building is rather bewildering and resilient to being pinned down. In regard to this perception; capacity building varies in different levels as follows; societal, inter-organisational, organisational, and individual (Mengesha and Common, 2007, Aijaz, 2010, Pallangyo and Rees, 2010, Watson and Khan, 2010).

However, Potter and Brough argued that capacity building is recuperating the stock of people rather than managing whatever that is existing (Potter and Brough, 2004). By and large, capacity building can be stated to be a process as well as the HRM within an organisation. The notable issue to be addressed here is that the dual processes should
be organised and supportive to each other. Thereupon, through consideration of the intertwined processes, a compatible link must be profoundly investigated. Hence, in general, capacity building might be perceived as equivalent to the training stage within human resource management. However, the argument that capacity building does not only signify training is affirmed at present (Christensen and Gazley, 2008, Hope, 2009). The notion of how individual capacity could be progressed in a direction which is accurately relevant to the organisational objectives is worth exploring. Besides this, how can the organisation enhance and sustainably maintain their staffs’ capacity or competency to serve or provide people with targeted public services is also crucial to be taken into account (Brinkerhoff and Morgan, 2010). The implication is individual training or development single-handedly is insufficient to contribute to expected effective performance for public services. Especially considering the open system approach, individuals do not stand alone in organisations (Morgan and Baser, 2007, Straussman 2007, Christensen and Gazley, 2008). Therefore, analysing capacity building interventions and processes can range between in-situ and ex-situ angles. The interrogative argument has emerged of how stakeholders - the local people, local politicians, civil society - can take part in addressing their expected qualified civil servants.

By and large, capacity building should be explored on the basis of a question that to what extent capacity building is interconnected to human resource management in the local administrative decentralisation in the case of Thailand. In comparison to the strong evidence base on administrative decentralisation in Thailand, fiscal management has surpassed the issue of human resource management. There is very partial information and research regarding local or decentralised human resource management. Human capacity building should not be perceived as a complementary issue or low-priority topic within organisations (Green, 2005). Capacity of local government actually depends on the individual staffs’ capacity.

If the arguments have been considered regarding capacity building and New Public Management (NPM), decentralisation has been a controversial concern amongst academics. Southeast Asia, as well as Thailand has also been involved in the action of decentralisation (Haque, 2010). However, the focal investigation of this research is with reference to the administrative decentralisation, especially with regards to human resource management, and human capacity building aspect. The main theoretical argument within this research is that human resource capacity building at the local level in Thailand is suggested to be designed and implemented locally with local or decentralised autonomy rather than imitating the central administrative system to be conducted at the local level.
Moreover, would there be any linkages which can reinforce the capacity building process through decentralised human resource management? In conclusion, decentralisation, human resource management and capacity building; are justifiable to be explored in order to gain the theoretical perspectives and understanding for this research. They are studied as primary elements for building up some new knowledge as a result.

1.6 Methodology

Since the research was investigated through a case study method, contextualisation influentially manipulated the research (Smith, 1975). It could be said that there are different perspectives to perceiving things in this world, so that there ought to be something right at the right time and right place. Therefore, the context of any situation does matter in the constructivist approach (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

The study is primarily intended to produce a rich practical resolution for the human capacity building challenges and suggest possible opportunities in the future. Fieldwork was directed originally by the studying of a literature review generated from diverse disciplines and methodological backgrounds. It was expected, however, that lines of investigation would consequently be developed and revised in an iterative process according to the fortitude of emergences in the field.

The research was designed to be qualitatively conducted. Academic journals or published articles regarding the HR practices in local governance from both academics and practitioners were explored. Based on the literature reviewed, constructive discussion in regard with the analytical framework based on the theories and conceptual framework was completed to fine-tune and prepared as framework for the study. Simultaneously, documents and secondary data related to the evolution of local HRM and the capacity building plans of the local officials were intensely investigated. The documentary research was also accessed at the local administration committee office archive based in Bangkok, Thailand. The capacity building plans, recruitment and selection policy and other related issues over HR practices for local administration were also collected.

Moreover, primary data was collected through extended fieldwork at the research sites; four municipalities in four regions of Thailand and the Office of Local Civil Service Commission (OLCSC) in Bangkok. The administrative procedures of capacity building
at stages of recruitment and selection, training and development and performance management were deeply examined in order to connect the gap amongst the HR practices and capacity building tasks.

Furthermore, in order to perform the triangulation technique in terms of source variety, stakeholders of the local governments were explored. Initially, data was collected mainly through direct observation and semi-structured interviews with officials at the Office of Local Civil Service Commission (OLCSC) in order to assess how they perceive and what they expect out of local civil servants.

Moreover, secondary data on people’s satisfaction was collected from local villagers who receive services from local governments in selected provinces within four regions in Thailand: Central, North-east, North, and South. This data was examined in order to gain some evidence on how local people perceive and think of their local civil servants. Thirdly, volunteers from among the local civil servants were invited to attend focus group discussions in order to obtain their perspectives on their capacity building processes and expected capacity building activities. These focus group discussions with the local civil servants were carried out to probe how effective the capacity building processes are and obtain their arguments en route of their own needs.

Concurrently, selected key informants were invited to be interviewed in-depth. These semi-structured interviews with officials within the head office and the local civil servants in four regions were conducted to identify the different points of view towards capacity building. These key informants were purposively selected in accordance with their positions in the municipalities; such as mayors, municipal clerks and personnel officers at each municipality.

As a matter of fact, the research has definitely involved many people, so the issue of ethics has always been taken into account. The consent forms were designed in Thai language along with the translated version in English. All participants invited for the focused group discussion, or an interview were requested to carefully read the forms and were explained the reasons for the study beforehand. They were invited to take part in the interviews or focus group discussion on the basis of their own free will. Additionally, they were permitted to leave the interview or conversation at any time if the questions or conversation caused them any difficulties or worries.
Since the research was conducted qualitatively, the discussion and the analysis was parallel to the analytically theoretical framework as addressed in the theoretical background in the following Chapter. Throughout the data analysis, triangulation is used to determine how solidly the disputes and the empirical data obtained from the field can be presented. Likewise, the statistics and information from the secondary data was also imported to the discussion in order to concretely present the case study and the theories applied.

1.7 The Structure of the Thesis

The research was refined and composed into seven chapters. Chapter One enfolds the essential introductory background and research explanation. It chiefly introduces the research motivation, summarises the theoretical gap which the research would satisfy, presents a concise version of methodologies used, addresses the expected benefits of the research and stated the significance of the research. Chapter Two demonstrates the theoretical framework applied through the research. It concentrates on the concepts of the three main areas of theory used in the study and offers a systematic framework for subsequent data analysis. The chapter presents the situation and conceptual amplification of the main concepts which formed the configuration of the entirety of the discussion. A discussion regarding the theoretical framework is being presented in order to draw the scope of the discussion topics.

The research methodology approach and the epistemology standpoint will be presented in Chapter Three. It explains the rationale of how the research was conducted based on reliability and validity. Chapter Four draws on the context of Thai administrative decentralisation, decentralisation, and decentralised human resource management circumstances. The chapter presents detailed account of the Thai local governance structure of Thai public administration, and the four selected municipalities.

The findings on decentralised administrative initiatives on HR practices especially on recruitment and selection, training and development and performance management system at municipalities’ level are presented in Chapter Five. Especially, the affects of decentralisation policy on HR practices are addressed in this chapter to answer the first research question.
In Chapter Six, the findings on how HR practices can contribute to individual HRCB are presented in parallel with its adherent theoretical discussion. The chapter aims to respond to the second research question. Finally, Chapter Seven draws on conclusions and suggestions for policy formation and implementation.

1.8 Summary of the Chapter

To reaffirm; ensuring the capacity of local governance in Thailand by human resource capacity building (HRCB) throughout decentralised human resource management is vital to be explored. It must be remarked here that the interrogative notions underpinning the research embrace the objectives of the study which are to identify the possible effects of administrative decentralisation towards local human resource management, with specific attention on individual capacity building in the context of Thailand. Moreover, it examines the current process of HRCB for local officials and finally proposes prospective ways forward to effective capacity building through human resource practices.

Throughout this research, individual HRCB for local governance within the context of decentralised HRM in Thailand is investigated by intensely scrutinising its current implementation of recruitment, selection, training and development, and performance management after the decentralised policy was announced. The theoretical prospective outcome of the research is bridging the gap between human resource practices with the process of capacity building to reach the local governance capacity. Concurrently, empirical opportunities and challenges from the field are circumspectly considered. The ideal developed capacity of local civil servants capacity could be that of the processes that are initiated, possessed, planned, and directed by local civil servants for their local people. ‘Expectantly, this research’s contribution is that theoretically there is a viaduct between capacity building and HRM that can be adopted as Thai national policy at a later date’
CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES
ON DECENTRALISED LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND
HUMAN RESOURCE CAPACITY BUILDING

This chapter explores prevailing theoretical perspectives and academic arguments of the research area. The initiative of New Public Management (NPM) is firstly elucidated due to the fact that it is claimed to be the derivation of a new era of Public Sector Reform (PSR). Afterwards, the three main intertwined issues of decentralisation, Human Resource Management (HRM) and Capacity Building (CB) is presented, as the theoretical underpinnings of the research. Decentralisation plays an important role in the contemporary context of many developing countries, including Thailand. Moreover, the chapter allows the researcher to explain, rationalise and argue in regards to the theories employed. The chapter also introduces the three main concepts and their associations amongst one another. Especially, it argues that the three concepts are intertwined and highly influential to one another. Eventually the chapter also touches upon the theoretical gap and analytical framework which was employed to guide the subsequent discussion and the analysis.

2.1 New Public Management and Decentralisation

Amongst the lexicon of public administration and management, New Public Management (NPM) has embraced the hegemony of being an influential term and approach to public administration since 1970s (Osborne, 2006). It has become the foremost issue in public administration academia since Christopher Hood elaborated the Doctrine of NPM in 1991 (Haque, 2007). Even though the discourse over NPM has fluctuated, from its advantages to its disadvantages or from its apex to its lowest tide of arguments, it has been an unavoidably legendary item of terminology. It has initiated an era and principles which have affected the world of public administration and public sector administrative science. There has scarcely been a chance to evade discussing or arguing about NPM and its effects on the public sector in both OECD countries\(^2\) and later in developing countries (Manning, 2001).

\(^2\) OECD stands for Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) was officially established on 30\(^{th}\) September 1961, when the Convention entered into force. It was founded in order to achieve economic strength and prosperity as they
As mentioned previously, Hood has been the key scholar who conferred and argued on the term ‘New Public Management’. He has discussed and examined NPM and public sector reform for decades (Hood, 1991, Dunleavy and Hood, 1994, Hood, 1995, Hood and Peters, 2004). However, he also addressed NPM as a very ambiguous and ill-defined term. The emergence of NPM is exceedingly remarkable. Hood metaphorically claimed that NPM has established like “a marriage of opposites” (Hood, 1991: 5). Scholars have agreed that there have been two different theoretical thoughts which were combined, and the emerging ‘NPM’ has been initiated (Aucoin, 1990, Hood, 1991, Dunleavy and Hood, 1994, Turner and Hulme, 1997, Gruening, 2001). ‘New Institutional Economics’ or ‘Public Choice Theory’ was the first school of thought. Their argument was that bureaucracy lead to ineffectiveness and ineffectiveness of governments. Therefore, they proposed that the power of bureaucracy should be reduced by delegating the authority to lower level of government. One way of delegating power to be decided in the local level is ‘Decentralisation’. Decentralisation will be further clarified in another approaching section. The Market and customer-driven approaches have also been inherited into NPM, afterwards (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2000). Noticeably, public choice theory suggested that government should be more concerned with its resources, especially ‘the public purse’ which should not be generated in a way that gives more benefit to bureaucrats than politicians and the constituents (Aucoin, 1990: 116).

Simultaneously, ‘Managerialism’ proposed that the bureaucracy required innovative means of managing; in other words, administrative reform. For them, it has been rather obvious that the private sector has done better than its public counterpart, so this means the public sector required a ‘debureaucratized organisational system’ (Aucoin, 1990). However, these movements have been encouraged by some catalytic drivers. There were some requisites that governments should act in response to international economic and fiscal trauma. Moreover, there have been more demands from citizens who needed better government services, and this was the public pressure on the government (Aucoin, 1990, Mathiasen, 1999). To sum up, NPM has emerged amongst the chaotic period during which pressure was put on the government, so that the design of new governance is necessitated to solve the public sector problems.

are essential for the attainment of the purposes of the United Nations, the preservation of individual liberty and the increase of general well-being of people in the member countries. (http://www.oecd.org accessed on 15-06-2012)
Since NPM has emerged, it has been expected to carry out better administrative practices. Theoretically, there have been various desirable outcomes from NPM. However, several advocates of NPM stated that the ultimate goals of NPM mainly are enhanced efficiency, effectiveness and service quality (Hood, 1991, Dunleavy and Hood, 1994, Ocampo, 1998). Holmes and Shand have rigidly illustrated the expected government after adopting NPM as being more strategic, result oriented, transparent, accountable, replacing the centralised hierarchical central government with decentralised management style, etc (Holmes and Shand in Mathiasen, 1999: 93). These anticipated outcomes are well described and rather buoyant.

However, there have been noted loopholes of NPM which numerous scholars have been cautious about. There are issues that both Pros and Cons of NPM have always criticised. Firstly, the question of whether NPM is nationally or contextually centred; has always been raised. Besides, the context of politics, socio-economic and culture effects on the adaptation and adoption of NPM has been criticised. Some of the scholars also stated that NPM is compatible with just a particular kind of national context (Gray and Jenkins, 1995, Turner and Hulme, 1997, Minogue et al., 1998, Ocampo, 1998, Manning, 2001, Turner, 2002, Drechsler, 2005, Haque, 2007). Secondly, the notion of the paradigmatic status of NPM has also been frequently conversed. Especially prominent is Osborne, who has explored and accrued scholars’ arguments on NPM, and who stated that NPM was not new to public administration realm (Osborne, 2006). Similarly, Gruening also firmly claimed that NPM is not a new paradigm for public administration (Gruening, 2001).

Thirdly, the notion as to what extent is NPM the best fit for all types of public sector problems has also been argued. This latest argument has been quite rigid and vibrant since the NPM practices would empirically affect the implementation of any governments who had adopted it. Especially, one scholar claimed that NPM has been viably successful in the ‘Western capitalist nations’ (Haque, 2004). Therefore, these arguments have raised awareness to scholars and practitioners in regard with NPM practices.

The forthcoming sections portray arguments and paradoxical scholarly discourse over NPM and decentralisation. This section is presented to identify and clarify the linkages between NPM and its descendant, decentralisation, as well as its influential effects on the new era of public administration. It will be argued whether decentralisation has been a crucial element of NPM. After that the definition of decentralisation will be explained. Further on, the issue of whether decentralisation is universally a new hope for public
administration is discussed. And finally, the notion whether recentralisation is a solution for decentralisation’s drawbacks is addressed.

2.1.1 Decentralisation: is it a crucial element of NPM?

Notwithstanding the discourses and arguments over NPM’s originality or whether it has transformed the public administration paradigm, NPM has focused at reforming the public sector. This public sector reform worldwide has created some specific characteristics of being in the ‘NPM’ category. Gruening (2001) has collected and studied both the unquestionable characteristics and controversial attributes of NPM which were observed by scholars. They will be presented in table 2-1 below.

Table 2-1: The Characteristics of New Public Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unquestionable Characteristics</th>
<th>Controversial Attributes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Budget Cuts</td>
<td>- Legal, budget and spending constraints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Vouchers</td>
<td>- Rationalisation of jurisdiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Accountability for performance</td>
<td>- Policy analysis and Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Performance auditing</td>
<td>- Improved regulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Privatization</td>
<td>- Rationalisation or streamlining of administrative structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Customer-Oriented (One stop shop, case management)</td>
<td>- Democratisation and citizen participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>Decentralisation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Personnel Management</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Strategic Planning and Management</td>
<td>(Incentives)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Separation of provision and production</td>
<td>- User Charges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Competition</td>
<td>- Separation of Politics and Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Performance Measurement</td>
<td>- Improved financial management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Changed management style</td>
<td>- More use of Information Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Contracting out</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Freedom to manage (Flexibility)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Improved accounting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gruening (2001: 2)
According to table 2-1, it is obvious that NPM has encouraged many changes and reformations in the public sector. Customers-orientation, accountability for performance, and competition are in the list. These characteristics conveyed some extent of the private sector model to be adopted by the public counterpart. Decentralisation, also, is a characteristic amongst the list in the table 2-1. It has become a critical and vital issue in the NPM context. The decentralisation issue always comes with the decentralised authority and wider service delivery apparatus (Manning, 2001). It is because the local government is expected to deliver public services to the citizens - or in terms of NPM - customers. ‘Citizen-centred’ has become one of focal points for public sector reform. Needs proposed by the citizens in a local unit’s area of responsibility are influential for local government. Consequently, it is crucial to consider how much better a decentralised local unit can provide for its constituents.

Most NPM proponents included decentralisation as an element to achieve NPM’s doctrines or principles (Aucoin, 1990, Hood, 1991, Dunleavy and Hood, 1994, Hood, 1995, Awortwi, 2010b). Hood surely recommended in his forth doctrine that there must be some ‘disaggregation of units in the public sector’ (Hood, 1991: 5). Aucoin described decentralisation as a component inherited in NPM via managerialism which can be perceived as a kind of management structure (Aucoin, 1990). Additionally, Mathiasen has claimed that NPM has emerged by an inductive process. After the phenomenon of public sector reform was observed, NPM included the characteristic of aiming at results and decentralising the management environment (Mathiasen, 1999). Eventually, Turner contributed his research on NPM in Southeast Asia, revealing that decentralisation has obviously been an action implemented by some countries in that region (Turner, 2002, Carlson and Turner, 2008).

All in all, NPM has certainly been perceived as new hope for public sector management. Regarding decentralisation, a descendant of NPM, scholars, practitioners and citizens have expected rather miraculous outcomes. This may lead to an open-ended cycle of problems to both developed and developing countries due to the same fact that has happened to its forefathers like the public choice school of thought and NPM. To allow more comprehension of decentralisation, the coming section is presented to illustrate the definition of decentralisation, discourse over decentralisation and local governance as an alternative for public sector reform.
2.1.2 Decentralisation: the definitions

Academics have defined decentralisation in various ways. Smith considered decentralisation in a territorial perspective and perceived decentralisation as the jumble of both reversing the concentration of administration at a single centre and conferring powers to local government (Smith, 1985). In another aspect, Turner and Hulme looked at the nature and basis of the transfer of authority innate in any form of decentralisation and added onto the functional dimension of decentralisation (Turner and Hulme, 1997).

Another parallel definition is of Crook which states that decentralisation involves bringing government closer to the governed in both the spatial and institutional senses (Crook, 2003). Pollitt and Bouckaert, on the other hand, defined it in a more general way which is not limited only in governments, as ‘the authority being spread from a smaller to a larger number of actors - from central authority to others’ (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2000).

The international organisations, especially the World Bank, also played a vital role in spreading this concept to the less-developed countries. According to the World Bank, decentralisation is the transfer of authority and responsibility for public functions from the central government to subordinate or quasi-independent governmental organisations and the private sector (Aucoin, 1990, Hood, 1991, Dunleavy and Hood, 1994, Rhodes, 1996, Gruening, 2001, Manning, 2001).

Therefore, the definition of decentralisation can be precisely and concisely concluded that a central government transfers its autonomy to lower level governmental bodies in order to facilitate the administrative tasks of local civil servants. The decision process is expected to be at the local level. This would prospectively and ultimately provide more effective and efficient services to local people. Central government should function as a mentor or a facilitator for the local governments. However, it is noteworthy that the implementation of decentralisation varies in accordance with national context. Consequently, an issue of good local governance is also required to be explored.

As a result, decentralisation and good governance are debatable as Public Sector Reform (PSR) agendas in many developing countries (Wunsch and Olowu, 1996, Wunsch, 1998, Hope and Chikulo, 2000, Wunsch, 2001, Nijenhuis, 2003, Onyach-Olaa, 2003, Brillantes Jr, 2004, Olowu et al., 2004, Dauda, 2006, Steiner, 2007, Antwi and Analoui, 2008b, Hope, 2010, Li, 2010). They have been promoted by international organisations, especially the World Bank, as a means to progress the well-being of people. However, there are forms, levels and degrees of decentralisation. The form of decentralisation that is considered as a just transformation and has been promoted to developing countries...
over the past two decades is ‘devolution’. Theoretically, decentralisation establishes good local governance since it would accelerate and encourage the local officials to be more liable to constituents. It can be more responsive to local needs as well as encouraging more participation of the public in local affairs. Despite the persuasive theoretical affiliation between decentralisation and good local governance, surprisingly few studies have examined this empirical relationship and most of the studies published tend to challenge the expected governance gains from decentralisation (Prud'Homme, 1995, Bardhan, 2002, Smoke, 2003, Campos and Hellman, 2005, Bardhan and Mookherjee, 2006, Fritzen and Lim, 2006).

To conclude, in terms of administrative structure, it is unavoidable to consider decentralisation without local governance. This structure of local governance units would also illustrate the forms of decentralisation that local government has adopted. Therefore, forms of decentralisation are also another vital issue which must be clarified. The approaching section portrays the theoretical forms of decentralisation.

2.1.3 Forms of Decentralisation

In accordance with the previous section, the forms of decentralisation, or in other words, patterns of reformation; are crucial to be explored since the form of decentralisation would certainly affect the relationship between local government and central government. The various forms of decentralisation could be categorised into four types; administrative, fiscal, political and market (Fritzen and Lim, 2006). However, the four are interrelated and moreover, these four types of decentralisation can be further considered by which style or pattern of decentralisation it adopts. The most debatable issue regarding the forms of decentralisation would be between ‘devolution’ and ‘deconcentration’ (Wunsch, 1998). Based on African countries’ cases, Wunsch perceived devolution as ‘distribution of authority to make decisions and to take action by local governments independently of central administrative oversight’. On the contrary, deconcentration signified “the redistribution of central resources to localities on the sufferance of those central authorities” (Wunsch, 1998: 20). No matter which form of decentralisation each African countries selected, the most important outcome from Wunsch’s research was that there are three crucial rudiments which certainly would enhance the effectiveness of local governments; these being resources, authority and a working grassroots-based political process.
Two other scholars who have accumulated and explored much local governance and identified its typology are Hope and Chikulo. They also rationalised how decentralisation emerged. They found that decentralisation arose because it was stimulated by political *raison d'être* which stated that local governance would be considered as ‘good’ if it work closer to its citizen and local communities. For them, decentralisation can be both horizontal and vertical. It would be horizontally decentralised when power is disseminated amongst the institutions at the same level. Simultaneously, it would be vertically decentralised when authority and autonomy is passed on to the lower tier of government. Moreover, they classified decentralisation patterns into six forms; deconcentration, delegation, devolution, privatization, top-down principal agency, and up principal agency.

Hope and Chikulo categorised these patterns in accordance with its degree to rely on the central government or the headquarters. There are three main forms which must be declared. Deconcentration was rated as the lowest level of decentralisation while delegation is a slightly higher level. Delegation is perceived as a more business–like organisation structure. It is a transfer of power to a unit not under government control and is not included in the bureaucratic structure. Devolution on the other hand is expected to be the top form of decentralisation. It offers the lower tier unit full responsibility of decision making power without referencing back to the authorising government (Hope and Chikulo, 2000: 30).

By the same token, Rees and Hossain also quoted types of decentralisation classified by Rondinelli and Nellis who claimed that there have been four types of decentralisation; deconcentration, delegation, devolution and privatization (Rondinelli and Nellis, 1986 in Rees and Hossain, 2010: 583). It is apparent that deconcentration, delegation and devolution are three major patterns or forms of decentralisation pointed out by scholars. However, the argument made by Rees and Hossain is that ‘different types of decentralisation, implemented by different types of agencies will inevitably be steered by different aims and objectives and hence be evaluated using a wide range of criteria’ (Rees and Hossain, 2010: 583).

In regard to the scholars’ argument on decentralisation; the types, patterns or forms of decentralisation are certainly influential to organisational structure and managerial style of any organisations or governments. However, it is important to argue here that the criteria of a decentralisation category can also vary in accordance with individual countries. It should also depend on the legacy, history and culture of management or administration.
in a country. Besides, it is more important for each country to consider which types or patterns of decentralisation are most suitable for their context. As well as that, a country is required to prepare to adapt its decision once its government has reached another stage or another situation, so the type of decentralisation they had chosen must be changed or reconsidered. Moreover, there have been some drawbacks or loopholes of decentralisation which must be taken into account. Decentralisation and its flaws are depicted in the next section.

2.1.4 Is Decentralisation Unanimously a New Hope for Public Administration?

In the case that decentralisation is perceived as an heir of NPM, decentralisation becomes emphatically claimed to be the universal remedy for the world's public administration. Therefore, logically, decentralisation must then be a new hope for public administration at the international level. Although there have indeed been some gains from the decentralisation process, it might be rather optimistic not to take its flaws or disadvantages into account.

Scholars have argued over the risk of decentralisation in many aspects for decades. ‘Danger of Decentralisation’ by Prud’Homme has been renowned for its critique of the bad side of decentralisation. Paradoxically, he claimed that decentralisation could undermine efficiency and effectiveness, including creating corruption. He argued that decentralisation even generated inequality and distressed the allocation of equity (Prud’Homme, 1995). This argument was very much opposite to the expected outcome from decentralisation.

On the contrary, McLure claimed that decentralisation is not an outrageous approach. He disagreed with Prud’Homme and stated that the analysis by Prud’Homme has been judged by only one point of view which emphasised fiscal disparities, which is the ‘Fiscal Federalism’ aspect only (McLure, 1995). As well as Prud’ Homme, Hutchcroft (2001) based on the dimension of authority and power, he asserted that strategies of decentralisation may contribute hazard than advantages (Hutchcroft, 2001). Moreover, he intensified the issue by quoting the ‘Five Pitfalls of Decentralisation’ which were originally claimed by Diamond. These pitfalls are; (1) creating or deepening local enclaves of authoritarianism (2) encouraging intolerance toward minorities (3) exacerbating inequalities (4) promoting redundancy and waste and (5) fostering greater ethnic or national consciousness (Diamond, 1999 in Hutchcroft , 2001: 43).
Moreover, in terms of poverty reduction, Crook articulated that decentralisation could not be the way to allow people to become empowered unless the elite at the local level or the local community are sincere in developing the local government (Crook, 2003). On the other hand, Smoke interpreted decentralisation in an alternative way. He declared that decentralisation supposedly encourages stronger local administrations. Conversely, there might be some people who loose while other people gain from the process. Decentralisation is not recommended to be perceived as a massive concept (Smoke, 2003, Hossain and Helao, 2008). It has a well-rounded character which can be positive and negative to both the people and the local government. Moreover, central and local government relations are an excessively crucial component to generate a healthy decentralisation system (Smoke, 2003). Nijenhuis also stated that decentralisation is not a magic potion for all problems in developing countries. Especially in term of democracy, devolution of power and authority may cause unaccountability and opacity. He gave an example of villages in Mali where established elite power existed which could worsen the situation because decentralisation might fall into the trap of ‘Elite Capture’ (Nijenhuis, 2003). Relevant to Nijenhuis, Véron et al., Fritzen and Lim and Priyadarshee and Hossain have also proclaimed the jeopardy of decentralisation as it allowed ‘Elite capture’ which certainly would increase inequality and political instability (Fritzen and Lim, 2006, Veron et al., 2006, Priyadarshee and Hossain, 2010). Therefore, it is also crucial that the cultural and political legacy of each country is considered if decentralisation would be adopted.

Not only have aspects of fiscal and political decentralisation been considered, but civil services and employment policy of government has also been reiterated. Decentralisation was alleged to generate discretion in human resource management (Venugopal and Yilmaz, 2009). However, decentralised human resource management has only just emerged to the interest of scholars. According to Hope, who argues that within the milieu of NPM or PSR in recent times; decentralisation, HRM and development are very crucial as elements for reformation (Hope and Chikulo, 2000, Hope, 2010). Decentralisation is anticipated to bridge the distance between the government and its citizens.

Therefore, in conclusion, decentralisation has certainly been a universally new hope for public management and administration. However, how each government transforms it, employs it and transfers it from policy to implementation levels is essential. Decentralisation, once again, is the process which transfers the power, autonomy, responsibility and public tasks to the local government. As a result, it is then imperative for local government to consider its notion of capacity after their decentralisation or reform because capacity of local government can be an issue which could turn the
decentralisation bad or good in the blink of an eye. This means the relation between decentralisation and capacity building is very important. This will be explored in the upcoming section 2.2.

2.1.5 Recentralisation: an emergence of pseudo-decentralisation?

Recently there has been momentum where the pendulum between the decentralisation and centralisation dichotomy has swung back to reach to the point of ‘recentralisation’ (Kessy and McCourt, 2010, Li, 2010). It is noticeable that recentralisation has become an up to date term amongst scholars. In accordance with their arguments, it is challenging to appoint this phenomenon as ‘Pseudo-Decentralisation’. This is because some decentralised units or local governments have pretended to perform as if they have autonomy whereas in reality they have none. There are several evidences to claim that decentralisation can be employed in disguise and that this can lead to a stage where decentralisation has become contrived. Firstly, there has been what Wunsch has called ‘central reluctance’ in handing over some authority in some key areas of management (Wunsch, 2001). He has given the exemplar of African states where local governance has been performed for twenty years but their performance was still in question. Still, complicatedness in reassigning authorities and tasks to local units exists. Central governments have been claimed to withhold their authority, especially in the key areas of fiscal management and personnel systems. It is rather obvious since there has been legislative consent for the central government to recheck or supervise the local governments. Wunsch has explored the recentralisation phenomenon in four main functions of local government units; planning and capital investment, budgeting and fiscal management, personnel systems and management, and finance and revenue. The result was that many African states have eventually tried to overcome recentralisation since decentralisation results have been quite positive and there have been rigid arguments that decentralisation is still expected to bring better effectiveness and efficiency for local people (Wunsch, 2001).

On the contrary, Awortwi stated resolutely that decentralisation has been a ‘pretext’ in the cases of Ghana and Uganda (Awortwi, 2010b:631). There has been a swing back moment where decentralisation has been withdrawn or reversed. Recentralisation has been exploited as a tactical tool to regain some status of the central government, especially in personnel management schemes. This recuperation of central government
status was not implemented illegally, but legislatively promulgated by law (Awortwi, 2010b). Akin to Awortwi, the description of Rees and Hossain in regard with the motive for decentralisation has implied that there could be a case for recentralisation, especially from the political aspect. Since there has been motivation to decentralise from the central government, the dominant political party would also be influential in the local level. This might logically lead to a recentralisation stage where the national level and local level belong to the same political party. As a result, hierarchy of demand may occur (Rees and Hossain, 2010). In the Tanzanian case, Kessy and McCourt articulated that ‘an ostensible decentralisation can be recentralisation in disguise’ (Kessy and McCourt, 2010: 690). Besides this, they also concluded that a structure which is apparently decentralised may not directly entail the decentralisation in reality. They assure that ‘the inherent de jure structural tension in the relationship between central and local government shows that decentralisation will always end up as de facto centralisations’ (Kessy and McCourt, 2010: 695).

Therefore, it is possible to conclude that there have been cases where decentralisation has reached the standing point of ‘Pseudo-Decentralisation’. As a result, it is interesting to explore this issue of recentralisation in other countries in order to academically contribute to some means to avoid or accept the momentum of recentralisation. In this research, the South East Asian country, Thailand, is investigated to ascertain whether recentralisation may be the case there. As a result, the next section shed some light on local governance and decentralisation in the context of Thailand.

2.1.6 Local Governance and Decentralisation in the Context of Thailand

This section demonstrates how one country adopted the decentralisation approach. The Thai government reformation has been obvious since the 1997 Constitution. According to the NPM approach, the Thai government also adopted administrative decentralisation. For this reason, innovations regarding democratisation have surged into Thailand. The features of the 1997 Thai Constitution appeared, to the people, to support accountability, transparency, open government, combating corruption and, with emphasis, conducting a less important central government (Boworkwathana, 2000, Boworkwathana, 2006, Boworkwathana, 2008). Consequently, the Decentralisation Act 1999 was enacted in accordance with the 1997 Constitution which expectantly empowered the local authority and activities of local government. The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA),

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Pattaya City Administration, Provincial Administrative Organisations (PAO), Municipalities, and Tambon (Sub-District) Administrative Organisations (TAO), were all either formed or given new authorities with regard to the facets of fiscal administration and human resource management.

According to the proliferation of the Tambon Council and Tambon Administrative Act of 1994 and the Thai new Constitution of 1997, decentralisation and the establishment of self-governing authorities obtained national and international attention. Under an administration and the direction of the cabinet, the central ministries and departments played major roles in policy formulation and implementation. Subsequently, there have been several acts promulgated due to the new constitution; however, the most important one regarding the decentralisation was certainly the Decentralisation Act 1999. The Local Personnel Administration Act 1999 was afterwards transmitted as the part of decentralisation process, highlighting the significance of local public personnel management. Therefore, the conception of grass-root development, the bottom-up administration and undeniably the decentralisation; have become foremost to the national and local administration in Thailand. Especially in the aspect of public officials, their capacity and competency is expected to convey good public services to local people. In conclusion, Thailand has obviously been involved in the international current of decentralisation and public sector reform. The detailed description regarding with Thailand as a case study is provided in the chapter four of the research.

2.2 Decentralisation and Capacity Building: is capacity building a key component for decentralisation?

It certainly would be an inexperienced step to commence the discussion about capacity building of local governance without mentioning decentralisation. This is due to the fact that the underlying principle of decentralisation is to allow proximity between the government and the people. Moreover, after the decentralisation process is conducted, local governance must is expected to be prepared for various kinds of transferred tasks. The capacity of single local government units is another decisive issue since it can vary according to the staff who carries out the public services. Civil servants are the crucial link between public services provision and the taxes paid by the civilians (Kolehmainen-Aitken, 1998, Martineau et al., 2003, Green, 2005, Turner et al., 2009). Hence, the relationship between capacity building and decentralisation is a remarkable topic to be
investigated. The following sections describe how important capacity building is in the context of decentralisation and how the issue has been discussed in the wider context in developing countries.

There have been various arguments which can be conferred in accordance with capacity building and decentralisation. Since decentralisation is the process which transfers power, autonomy, responsibility and public tasks to the local government; the preparedness of local governments is decisive. However, there are several kinds of decentralisation which are variously defined by diverse scholars (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2000). In this study, decentralisation is characterised as administrative decentralisation only. Administrative decentralisation refers to the redistribution of authority and responsibility of policy-making, planning, financing and managing within the public administrative or parastatal structures from central to local levels to its agencies in the field (Turner and Hulme, 1997).

As a result, good local governance is the rather anticipated outcome of the decentralisation process. Kauzya (1997) has clarified the term ‘local governance’ as the exercise of authority at the local community level. The local governance can hardly connote only to ‘the local government’. Local governance should include the needs, interests, priorities, participation, control and well being of the local people. Therefore, effective local governance involve with two dimensional characteristics; vertical and horizontal. The vertical dimension engages with the transfer of authorities, functions, responsibilities and resources from the central government to local government structures. Meanwhile the horizontal aspect embraces the empowerment of grass-root communities (Kauzya, 1997). Along with the expected effective restructuring by decentralisation, building up capacity of local governance to support the new structure would not be a bad idea.

Formerly, in 1975, Burgess argued on capacity building and public management. He addressed that decentralisation was an intergovernmental relation and its main objective was to reinforce the public management capacity of federal, state and local government (Burgess, 1975). However, a critical issue which he emphasised was that capacity building has stayed behind as a neglected and disjointed issue amongst the governments. He also addressed that ‘capacity building should support local officials to be able to manage their programs, provide services to constituents and manage over all jurisdictions’ (Burgess, 1975: 706). Therefore, from this point of view, decentralisation may not be a new approach for public administration. Existing public administration might have
just been renamed. In other words, the interrelation between the central and local government has only been emphasised.

In 1997 Columbia was chosen to be a site of a research which explored the process of capacity development in local government which resulted from decentralisation. Fiszbein from the World Bank conducted that research by looking at how local initiatives could build up capacity for a local community in Columbia. She found that human factor is one of the key issues that she explored. Her unit of analysis aimed at local elected officials in 16 municipalities in Columbia (Fiszbein, 1997). As well as this, Vogelsang-Coombs and Miller investigated the local elected officials’ perspectives at Northeast Ohio in order to examine the development of governance capacity. They regard the local elected officials as crucial group of people who, once chosen, must be responsible to their voters at the local level as policy makers (Vogelsang-Coombs and Miller, 1999). The two quoted cases illustrated how important the elected officers are for local government. However, this also indicated that an element of the human aspect in local government has also been neglected, and that is the civil servants.

Afterwards, in 2003, Klinken carried out a study in Kilimanjaro, Tanzania (Klinken, 2003). The capacity building has been perceived as “a process of privatization of tasks, contracting out of services, better design of administrative and planning systems and training for improved skills in the application of bureaucratic procedures” (Klinken, 2003: 73). Therefore, in this case, the autonomy of local government is indeed vital. In 2004 Brillantes Jr. has perceived capacity building at the community level as transferring the activities to be implemented to the local level, which are mainly those in the form of training (Brillantes Jr, 2004). Once again, capacity building has been addressed as a challenging issue in local government reform in Malawi. Decentralisation and public sector reform had played an important role as the research context in this case. The researcher articulated that the accomplishment of a reformed government is dependent on the preparedness of sufficient capacity in the local government (Hussein, 2006). Akin to previous scholars, Straussman has confirmed that decentralisation is the medium of how Macro meets Micro. However, because of their responsibility to the citizenry, local civil servants are likely to be alert on how well they should perform. Capacity building, as a result, has been the chief vehicle to sustain their performance (Straussman, 2007).

In case of Ghana, Antwi and Analoui have further clarified that public sector reform and decentralisation have certainly challenged capacity building, especially on human resource capacity (Antwi and Analoui, 2008b). It has affected on the ‘policy, task, skill and
organisational issues and performance motivation’ (Antwi and Analoui, 2008b: 504). They emphasised the importance of capacity building issue, noting that to obtain enhanced local governance, the skills of officials are vital. The development of HR has become a bullet in the listed policy in Ghana (Antwi and Analoui, 2008b). Simultaneously, based on a Mozambique case, Awortwi has described that training has become the ‘key ingredient being used in bridging the gap between what public sector reforms prescribe and the competence of government employees to absorb’ (Awortwi, 2010a:725). According to the public sector reform process in Mozambique, NPM philosophies have been the ones selected. Preparing the capacity of their local employees was one of their key issues (Awortwi, 2010a).

To conclude, the connected relations between decentralisation and capacity building make them inseparable, especially in the wider context of decentralisation. However, the cases have been mainly in the context of African countries rather than Asian ones. This scarcity of such studies is then a knowledge gap in capacity building based on the context of decentralisation, which must be explored. All the cases which have been examined have confirmed how critical and vital capacity building is for decentralisation. However, the notion of when local governance’s capacity should be built and whose capacities should be focused on in order to support the decentralisation process and the local governance is also significant. Since local civil servants are the major element who transmits all of the local public services to local people, their capacity is certainly the focus of this study. To draw a conclusion on capacity building and decentralisation in developing countries’ perspective, the table 2-2 illustrates these trajectories. Consequently, as well as administrative decentralisation, this study particularly focuses on human resource management for local government. In the forthcoming section 2.4, the inter-connections between Capacity Building and HRM will be further portrayed.
### Table 2-2: Decentralisation and Capacity Building Literatures Reviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of publication</th>
<th>Author’s name</th>
<th>Researched Country</th>
<th>Unit of Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Kauzya et al.</td>
<td>Rwanda, South Africa and Uganda Local</td>
<td>Community and participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Fiszbein</td>
<td>Columbia</td>
<td>Local community capacity building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Low et al.</td>
<td>Ghana, Tanzania and Zambia</td>
<td>Assessment of alternative capacity building approaches at local community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Merrick L. Jones</td>
<td>Sweden, Laos, Namibia</td>
<td>Sustainable Organisational capacity building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Hussein</td>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>Critical contingencies, administrative technical and economic capacity in the context of local reform and decentralisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Straussman</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>Strategic Cycle for Municipal Capacity: Government Reform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Mangesha and Common</td>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>Civil Service Reform and Decentralisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Antwi and Analoui</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Open system theory &amp; HRs attitude, motivation and performance, the absence of capacity necessitate Capacity Building.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Watson and Khan</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Capacity development, training providers, and training content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Morgan et al.</td>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>Capacity building for public service reform</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Self

Table 2-2 illustrates examples of the literature which has examined decentralisation and capacity building issues. The example papers have been categorised in accordance with the year of publishing in order to show that the issues have ultimately ceased. The researched countries were various in developing countries both in Asia and Africa. However, it is obvious that the focuses of the research in regard to capacity building have been diverse. This emphasises how vibrant the issue is.
2.3 Decentralisation and Human Resource Management

Most debates on administrative decentralisation have focussed on fiscal decentralisation while HRM issues have scarcely been discerned (Green, 2005, Turner et al., 2009). In reality, the key persons who carry out the interaction between local people and local government are local civil servants. Green argued that ‘the relation between decentralisation and civil service management has been formed in a two way process’ (Green, 2005: 129). It could be concluded that this relation is reciprocal; the civil servants’ activities and implementation influences the outcome or performance of the local unit while the government’s policy indicates the direction of civil servants procedures and daily tasks.

In addition to this, the United Nations consider HRM quality as an indicator of government performance (United Nations, 2005). Therefore, it is worth query the extent decentralisation would profit or undermine the human resource management at the local level. Moreover, the UN report in 2005, also suggested that when reforming HRM in decentralisation, the readiness of legal and established institutions are essential. Along with the history of the government, it affects how local government and central government would behave. ‘It is this Path-Dependent character of public service institutions and procedures which resulted by its history’, claimed the UN report (United Nation, 2005). McCourt asserted that public officials are the development resources and staff administration who are a vital component in supplying a constructive output and outcome to the organisations (McCourt, 2006). Above and beyond this, the administration of public servants is also the heart of certifying good governance (Bana and McCourt, 2006). It is significant to investigate how employees can contribute to better performance of the organisation and in what ways they can be encouraged and motivated, especially in the decentralised context. Conventionally, human resource management processes include human resource planning, recruitment, selection, training and development, salary and fringe benefit management, and performance evaluation (Krishnaveni and Sripirabaa, 2008, Torrington et al., 2009). The details of HRM and HR practices will be described in the section 2.4. Hence this later section aims to explain how decentralisation and HRM are interconnected. It is crucial to instigate a discussion of how significant the local civil servants are for local civil services. Besides, it would be remarkable to observe whether decentralisation and NPM are compatible with the fundamental principles of HRM.
2.3.1 Challenges for Decentralised HRM

Administrative decentralisation itself is very attention-grabbing issue. To emphasise, decentralised HRM is much more exigent to some scholars (Kolehmainen-Aitken, 1998, Martineau et al., 2003, Green, 2005, Turner et al., 2009). As a matter of fact, decentralised HRM also requires the redistribution of authority and responsibility of policy-making, planning, financing and managing within the area of HR in the same ways as administrative decentralisation does. If the HR is not well-prepared, the organisation capacity would definitely fall short (Smoke, 2003). Through exploring the literature on decentralised HRM, it has been noticeable that there are three main challenges; legal or policy availability, political issues in HRM, and readiness of individual local civil servants.

First of all, legitimacy in transferring the authority of HRM is necessary for decentralised HRM initiative and its strategies (Martineau et al., 2003, Green, 2005). The availability of decision making at the local level can only be implemented as long as the law consents it. Legality and policy on HRM of the country is important in this case. In 2003, Martineau et al. conducted research on decentralisation and its impact on HRM in China and South Africa. The first issue addressed was the policy context. This policy comprised the national regime, employment budget and political pressure. This made China and South Africa different because the two have embraced different policies (Martineau et al., 2003: 3).

Concurrently, Green studied the HRM in the decentralised contexts of East Asia; the Philippines, Indonesia, China, Vietnam, Thailand, and Cambodia. The results are varied. These countries can be categorised and named in accordance with how the HRM policy was adopted. The Big Bang and Beyond, in the case of the Philippines and Indonesia; the Cautious for Cambodia and Thailand; and the Transitional Decentralisation for China and Vietnam; were the names given according to the character of each country’s policies (Green, 2005). In 2006, Bana and McCourt evidently studied the legislation to promote civil servant management in Tanzania. A sufficiency of principal legislation seemed to be compulsory for the very first stage of decentralised HRM (Bana and McCourt, 2006). These policies certainly designated the direction of how central government and local government were to react and perform. Throughout these cases in developing countries it has been illustrated how important the role of policy is. It conveys to the citizens and civil servants in both local and central levels which direction the government is headed in regards to HRM implementation.
The second concern is the political issue in staffing and HRM. Politics and the administration dichotomy have been discussed for decades (Awortwi, 2010b, Awortwi, 2010a). Decentralised HRM is part of the public administration, and therefore it is likely to have been influenced. In terms of politics in HRM, fairness is one amongst the issues. Harris has claimed that in both local and national government, it should be a paradigm for their HR practices, which in this study are recruitment and selection. The practice is suggested to be indiscriminate in gender, ethnicity and disability, so that any candidate can enjoy fairness and equality (Harris, 2000).

The notion of merit and patronage or spoil system has also been in the category of political action in an organisation. It has been observably practiced for decades. This might be inherited by the decentralised HRM. Merit can be defined as "the appointment of the best person for any given job" (McCourt and Awases, 2007: 5). However, this plain definition does not signify the complicatedness of merit in reality (McCourt and Awases, 2007). The negative counterpart of Merit is the 'patronage or spoil system'. If merit in HRM could be defined by applying merit principles for every position in an organisation, always choosing the best candidates from their qualifications only, carrying out the process of recruitment, selection and promotion with transparency and in systematic way; then patronage would be the opposite to all these characteristics.

McCourt has rationalised how important ‘Merit’ is. What he described certified how HRM can be involved the political pull and push game. There can be political supporters, relatives, or friends selected as officials in the stage of recruitment and selection (McCourt, 2000). This can be called a ‘moneyless form of corruption’. In other words, it is a patronage system, which McCourt addressed thus: ‘patronage is important and insidious’ (McCourt, 2000: 2). He also proclaimed that the merit system can be a pillar for anti-corruption techniques. Besides this, the important point is that the merit system can enhance selection methods and the consequent performance of the staff selected (McCourt, 2001).

Hence, this can be the link with which individual capacity and efficient and effective HRM are merged. Moreover, Elite Capture, especially of the major resources at the local level, is another critical issue. As a result of decentralisation, local elites have been emphasised from being an unofficial power to an officially authorised power. Human Resource can also become alternative ways to spread his or her power (Fritzen and Lim, 2006, Veron et al., 2006, Ishii et al., 2007, Priyadarshee and Hossain, 2010).
The third concern must be the readiness of individual local civil servants. The capacity of an individual civil servant to be compatible with new tasks is challenging for decentralised HRM. This is not just an important issue for the personnel officer at the local units, but also for officials who work in the newly allocated organisation and the central government who would play the important role as mentor. This readiness of local civil servants is related to the awareness of institutions which are related to decentralised HRM.

Moreover, another controversial issue for decentralised HR is the argument on professionalism versus generalism. It has been disputed that the more decentralisation there is, the more professionalism will decline in the core civil service. This aside, there could be such disjointed policies from the central government which being interpreted and performed in quite divergent activities which would eventually obtain rather different results than intended. This could create distorted aims and objectives of the core policies (Demmke et al., 2006). This may cause some conflict between officials at the central level and the local level. Therefore, the coordination system between the levels must be well designed and performed (Smoke, 2003).

Hence, it can be summarised that the cautious preparation for individual capacity and coordination amongst the levels of government is crucial for HRM in decentralisation context. Moreover, at the individual level, the personnel officer or the mayor who shall be the one who administers more on the HR issue is also of great significance. Peterson claimed that to be a good administrator, he or she must be qualified as a generalist who has administrative skill (Peterson, 1964). The personnel officer also has a responsibility in HR managing as a professional in an organisation. Therefore, the compatibility between the two must be smooth. Unevenness from the two may cause conflicts in an organisation.

To conclude, there have been challenges for decentralised HRM; a political aspect, an institutional aspect and a systematic one. However, this might lead to another tracing back to see whether NPM is relevant to HRM. The next section, then, discusses the compatibility between decentralisation and HRM at the local level.
2.3.2 Are NPM and Decentralisation Compatible with HRM?

There are evident differences, when comparing the conventional bureaucracy with the modern ways of public management like NPM as discussed in previous section. HRM is an issue which has been mechanically affected by the change (Brown, 2004). When mentioning ‘change’, it implies the degree to which some scholars accept that HRM existed in an open system (Verbeeten, 2008). As a result, this change also placed HRM in an environment of contingencies rather than bureaucratically conventional ways. It was obvious that bureaucratic administration did indicate how HRM could play its role. Responsibilities or duties of people in an organisation would be designated by the functions of their positions. It was formalised and officialised to gain legitimacy and authority for each employee. It has been rare that an arbitrary role would be set aside from the employee’s main mission. Demands and orders have been completed through an organisational hierarchy. This conventional administration has been in the form of centralisation. Therefore, when the era of NPM arrived, HRM was certainly involved and some sense of decentralisation has emerged.

...The adoption of New Public Management then may have opened the possibility of managers acquiring or developing sophisticated HRM techniques. Thus NPM principles allow a more flexible and responsive approach to questions of recruitment, selection, retention, training and development of public sector employees... (Brown, 2004: 305)

NPM has been renowned for its market based, managerial and flexible character. Most scholars have concerned themselves more on efficiency, effectiveness and performance of employees in accordance with NPM approach (Verbeeten, 2008). The argument here is that success as an amount of saved budget could be easier to notice and count than how a better performance from a ‘human being’ could be achieved. Moreover, Brown has clearly presented that a life time career and service of employment have certainly been disputed and questioned by adopting NPM (Brown, 2004). Trust amongst colleagues, long tenure of employee careers and loyalty to an organisation are in danger. Individual performance, output which could be used as an indicator for higher performance, might gain a higher priority than the unity of a department. Employees would rather be generalists than professionals in each position, since the contracting out idea and downsizing of an organisation may affect their employment. Brown claimed that ‘multitasking, restructured career paths, abolition of seniority as a basis for promotion,
greater emphasis on equity considerations and the removal of rigid employment categories have been shifted’ (Brown, 2004: 308). However, it is worth arguing here that being performance based is also very important. It could encourage employees to be productive rather than conducting only routine chores. In addition, cultivating the mindset of ownership and realising the ultimate goal of the organisation would certainly enhance the organisational capacity, eventually. Therefore, to answer the question on how compatible NPM and HRM are, it could be argued here that there are both compatibility and undoubtedly the vice versa. However, one argument which is worth pointing out here is that NPM is based on theories which are market driven, managerial, and public choice, which are mainly economics theories. It scarcely aims at the ‘human side’ of an organisation which is fundamentally based on behavioural science. Therefore, it is likely to be that NPM is more on the negative side of the of the compatibility aspect with HRM. In the shoes of a civil employee, tasks, functions and roles might vary and it would be rather difficult to perform efficiently and effectively while career development is uncertain. Fast tracking and contracting out can do harm to an employee’s motivation and loyalty. While at the same time, pure and real performance based approaches could also eradicate or at least diminish the patronage and spoil system as a legacy of bureaucracy. Well-performing employees would therefore be benefitted with more opportunities.

Again, it would be rather more interesting to question on how these HRM as HR Practices can function in the decentralised context, especially relating to the supportive issue on capacity building. The next section will describe how HRM and capacity building are interlinked. There exists a notion of how HRM can function as supportive activities for enhancing the capacity of individuals and organisations.

### 2.4 Human Resource Management and Capacity Building

HRM and capacity building are certainly entangled. It is obvious, that many aspects of capacity building have been discussed and conversed about by scholars. In particular, though, the notion of crucial linkages between HRM and capacity building must be described. Appendix I clarifies how different capacity and capacity building are. Apart from that, it illustrates the series of thoughts and initiatives related to capacity building by scholars according to time. Noticeably, the meaning varies among the organisational level, public and private sector, individual person and also its tools (see also Appendix I). Hence, it is obvious that capacity and capacity building are terms which
need to be specified and focused, in order to conduct research. Therefore, this section portrays the significant concept of capacity building, its relation to HRM, its meaning, the specification of selected terminologies of capacity building, the selected HR practices and their rationales. Finally, gap of theoretical knowledge from previous literature and an analytical framework for the research will be introduced.

2.4.1 HRM: the means to an end for human resource capacity building?

Since capacity building is a process that academics have mostly approved of in helping an organisation to attain its mission, it shares an underlining philosophy with HRM. HRM can also be perceived as a process in the system theory. Thus, HRM can be seen in action as HR practices: recruitment and selection, training and development, and performance management. Through the lens of system theory, a person enters an organisation as an input by the organisation’s recruitment and selection, and is then processed to become an effective employee through a training and reward system. His or her performance will be evaluated since it shows his/her output, which definitely influences the organisational evaluation. Finally the individual may be retained or retired from that organisation.

Through these parallel processes and practices, the three most important HR practices are recruitment and selection, training and development, and performance management (Krishnaveni and Sripirabaa, 2008). Krishnaveni and Sripirabaa conducted their research regarding the capacity building process for HR excellence. The principal focus of their research was on non-profit organisations; and their programs and projects. They explored the deliberate amalgamation of HR practices with business plans. This validated the point that HR practice is very crucial for organisations and this lead to the notion of how capacity building could be strategically conducted through the local government in developing countries. Their research was carried out using a quantitative approach. On the contrary, the present study attempts to reflect similar notions via the qualitative approach since the researcher believes that factors and truth of how individual and organisational capacities can be enhanced are far more indicative than the concepts. To the crucial issues of validity and reliability of the research and the key activities of each HR practice will be adopted from Krishnaveni and Sripirabaa’s research. This will be explained and explored in the approaching section.
It was firmly stated by McCourt that public employees are the development resources and staff administration is a vital constituent which may contribute to positive output and outcomes for the organisations (McCourt, 2006). Besides this, the management of public servants is also at the heart of conducting good governance (Bana and McCourt, 2006). As a matter of fact, it is worth investigating how staff can contribute to better performance of the organisation and the reasons that motivate them.


However, it is important to state here that conventionally in the HRM textbook; ‘training’ has been considered an important HR practice. It directly prepares and provides an organisation’s staffs with better knowledge, skills, experiences and attitudes which are compatible with the organisation’s needs. The question of whether the organisational reinforcement or training activities is the most proficient approach to build up capacity has been thought about for some time (Grindle and Hilderbrand, 1995). Grindle and Hilderbrand have ascertained that capacity building can be carried out through training activities; however, that ‘organisational culture’ must be taken into account. Moreover, it has been claimed that the quality of civil servant performance should be relevant to their career development. The job itself should supply better meaningfulness as well as promote the execution of the highest potential in oneself (Grindle and Hilderbrand, 1995). Hence, it can be summed up that training is just one component of capacity building, and capacity building is not limited to training alone. In order to merge or combine the capacity building processes into HR practices or vice versa, it is crucial to deeply examine the HR practice implementation through five core capabilities which will be further illustrated in figure 2-1.

The application of each HR practice will be explored and analysed through capacity building characteristics presented in Table 2-3 (Krishnaveni and Sripirabaa, 2008). The main arguments here expect to claim that to reach organisation capacity, it is necessarily to enhance individual human capacity and this can prospectively be conducted through HR practices. Therefore, recruitment and selection, training and development and performance management play important functions in HRM, and are thus selected to be explored and examined profoundly in this research.
Table 2-3: Key Practices of HR Functions in the Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HR Activities</th>
<th>Key Practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment and Selection</td>
<td>- Recruitment procedure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Selection process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Evaluation of effectiveness of selection programmes and recruitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and Development</td>
<td>- Identification of training needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Designing and implementing training programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Transfer of training and evaluation of training programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Management</td>
<td>- Performance management system needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Job evaluation and promotion system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Performance appraisal process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adopted from Krishnaveni and Sripirabaa (2008)

2.4.2 Human Resource Management and Human Resource Practices

The terms HRM and HR practices have been used interchangeably in the management discipline both for public and private sectors. To be precise, HR practices signify stages that are undertaken in any organisation to manage their human resource. In accordance with the previous section 2.4.1, three main practices have been selected to be examined in this study. Hence, it is necessary to portray how important each HR practice is and what the expected functions of each are. They will be explained in the sequence of recruitment and selection, training and development and performance management, respectively.
2.4.2.1 Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment and selection can be compared to an entrance to any organisation. They have played vital roles as a ‘vacuum’ and ‘filter’, put figuratively. Any organisation allegedly aims to obtain competent and skilled human resources. Recruitment is akin to a vacuum since it is expected to attract resources outside of an organisation to be interested in joining the organisation. This function of recruitment allows an organisation to have the opportunity to select prospective proficient employees. Likewise, selection can be compared to a ‘filter’ since it functions as a tool which extracts and selects compatible persons for any jobs in an organisation. Therefore, to seek out and decide on the right man for the right job is very crucial for organisation, especially in the case of this study because it is one of the activities that is expected to ensure the success of decentralisation. Recruiting and selecting immoral or unqualified employees may cause terrible consequences for an organisation (McCourt and Awases, 2007). As a result, recruitment and selection are suggested to be implemented cautiously.

Regarding recruitment, the notion of recruitment procedures is very important. Methods of recruitment, target labour market, external or internal recruitment, push and pull factors, and recruitment advertisement are all included to be considered while implementing the recruitment stage (Lievens and Chapman, 2009, Torrington et al., 2009). Another decisive issue for recruitment has always been the equality or justice in recruitment procedures (Harris, 2000). The consideration for this issue can be initiated from the moment the recruitment advertisement is launched. Channels of advertisement are also significant; however, this also varies for external and internal recruitment. The accessibility and the dissemination width must be taken into account. The effectiveness of recruitment implementation can be both push and pull factors by themselves (Harris, 2000). The more fair, transparent and equal recruitment that has been completed, the greater the numbers of candidates will be attracted. It is arguable that in the aspect of target candidates; the different gambits used by fishermen for different types of fish are similar to the different methods selected by an organisation to attract their particular target candidates.

The selection process is as important as recruitment procedures. Scores of steps have been adhered to the selection stage. Main arguments related to the selection process are selection methods, selection criteria, and again, the fairness of the process. The methods of selection include short listing, examinations, interviews, and aptitude testing (Harris,
These selection methods also depend on which position is required and what criteria apply to certain positions, based on Job evaluation and Job Analysis. The selection process has been disputed along with patronage system. Moneyless corruption in HRM can frequently occur at this stage. McCourt has addressed that visible merit-based selection is important for an organisation, especially public organisations. The patronage system can undermine the possibility of selecting competent candidates. This is a very crucial issue for both recruitment and selection. These unjust HRM activities can undermine the trust and accountability of an organisation as a whole. Besides this, they can become a cause of ‘brain drain’ to the private sector, since recruitment and selection in public organisations might be awash with patronage methods (McCourt and Awases, 2007). As a result, this causes ineffective recruitment and selection processes due to the fact that the recruitment and selection processes might be completed without reaching the ultimate goal of fair recruitment and selection. McCourt has also addressed that Merit in HRM is very important for at least four reasons: (1) Merit appointment can raise bureaucratic capability (2) A Merit based process is a building block for anti-corruption strategy (3) There is a strong correlation between good quality selection methods and subsequent performance of the staff appointed; and (4) There is value in a visible merit-based system for the citizens (McCourt, 2000: 3). Therefore, this confirms how important it is for both recruitment and selection to operate with merit and effectiveness. Not only is recruitment and selection important to HR practice, but so are training and development, in any organisation. The approaching section provides the details on how important training and development activities are.

2.4.2.2 Training and Development

Some scholars have perceived training and development as a capacity building strategy (West and Durant, 2000, Bach, 2001, Healy, 2001, Klingner and Campos, 2002, Liu et al., 2006, Waisbord, 2006, Antwi et al., 2008, Verbeeten, 2008). Training and development are also processes which are supposed to enhance individual capability. There are different activities which make up the training and development processes, namely: training needs identification, design of training, transfer of training and training evaluation. According to typical training procedures, needs assessment is one of the required stages (Wright and McMahan, 1992). Organisations are required to arrange training needs assessments in order to obtain current information and facts related to their staff. To survey and collect data of what is required by staff is a very crucial stage prior to
training. Training needs assessment also provides information for an organisation and the HR department about the existing capacity of staff as well as the capacity shortfalls. Training needs identification should be completed repeatedly. It can contribute to HRM as a stage that generates some feedback for enhancing quality and capability of the staff by themselves. After the stage of assessing needs of training, the design of the training course is also very important.

Training courses are conducted in accordance to the design of training. Training courses are designed on the basis of compatibility for learners. Gender, age, position, and job tasks are all included into consideration for designing training courses. Moreover, the most important in this stage will be the clarity of the ultimate outcome from the training implementation. The expectation of what the trainees should obtain after the training course is crucial. Any specific requirements indicated by the training needs assessment stage must be transferred into a plan for implementation as some form of a training course. Hence, the design of training courses is very important as a plan of how to train the staff. However, some organisations have produced training courses as a blueprint for all staff. Therefore, some specific requirements for each position may not be included. This can be a weak point in the training stage.

Like a loop of learning, after staffs have been trained, a transfer of training is vital and is expected to emerge. Transfer of training is purposively aimed to be the productivity stemming from the training process, and enhanced capacity is an expected outcome. When an official performs better subsequent to training, it is considered as an achievement of the training course. Moreover, if that trainee later transfers the knowledge, skill or experience to other employees, that could signify the transfer of knowledge. However, since the course’s core message was generally on the rules, acts and regulations for local officials; transferring of skills, knowledge and experience has not been considered. Thus, finally, personnel officers of the four municipalities have agreed that it is not easy to discover the difference between the trained officials and the untrained ones.

Training implementation must be evaluated at its end. The degree of how well a training course has been implemented must be evaluated by both trainees and trainers. This evaluation stage can comprise feedback on how effective and efficient a training course was. Not only must the satisfaction of the trainees’ level be measured, but also the effectiveness of the course. The main criteria to measure the effectiveness of the training
course should be how much trainees have learned. Moreover, has the training course provided and prepared the trainees to reach the aims of the training courses? Hence, throughout these activities of training and development, the output of qualified trained staff is expected, as well as their outcomes delivered by applying the knowledge, skills and attitude learned from the courses.

2.4.2.3 Performance Management

Performance management focuses on how to measure and evaluate the performance carried out by employees in an organisation. The performance of people in an organisation can be appraised in terms of both quantity and quality. Its intention is to measure whether the employees in an organisation could achieve their goals as they are expected to carry out. To be accurate, Neely et al stated that a part of performance management is the process of quantification of actions which are guided to performance (Neely et al., 2000).

Moreover, Performance management also includes the term effectiveness which signifies that an organisation’s ultimate goal is to be achieved by the capability of human resources existing within it. Not only is effectiveness taken into the consideration, as efficiency is also included. Efficiency identifies the economical scale that an organisation’s resources can be operated to, and this also means the efficiency in managing people in an organisation. Hence, this process of HRM plays as an important role of ensuring the performance of the organisation’s human assets who carry out the organisation’s tasks. The elements of performance management process which have been explored in this research are the performance management system need, job evaluation and performance appraisal process, and promotion system.

The performance management system needs has played a rather a similar role to training needs assessment. It is an activity that ensures the compatibility of the measuring system and the activities performed in an organisation. It also belongs to the design process of how to measure the performance of staff in an organisation. It is an important activity because it is influential on people’s performance. It is a way forward to the agreement between employees and the organisation on what they will be evaluated on at the end of completed tasks (Gruman and Saks, 2011).
Job evaluation is an activity through which an organisation shapes and defines the significance of different jobs within the organisation. This stage of HR activities must be performed prior to the jobs being started. This activity is a practice which decides and indicates how valuable each job is. It is a supportive stage which allows an organisation to structure the compensation plans. It also facilitates equality in salary structure. The most important thing would be that job evaluation clarifies the relations and linkages among the jobs within the organisation.

The performance appraisal process and promotion system are two intertwined processes. The performance assessment will be completed in order to evaluate the performance of staff in an organisation. Through the methods used by each organisation, individual performance results will be illustrated and employees will be ranked in accordance with their performance. These results will finally be used as a part of the promotion or rotation criteria.

To conclude, this section has illustrated HR practices activities. These activities will be studied as to whether they will be supportive or compatible with the capacity building process, which will be further explained in the approaching section. However, prior to the explanation on the capacity building process, the concept of capacity and capacity building ought to be elucidated.

2.4.3 Capacity Building: the controversial concept

Capacity building is a renowned term within development studies and public administration. However, its implementation stage has been obscured since it varies from organisational level, community level and individual level of capacity building. This section hence provides a better understanding of the differences amongst capability, competency and capacity, concept of capacity building, and the specified meaning adopted in this research.

2.4.3.1 The Differences amongst Capacity, Capability And Competency

Capacity is a terminology that has been adopted and applied in many academic fields and practices. It has been employed in particular journals which range from Public Administration and Development, Climate Policy, Health Sector promotion, Organisation
Science to Administration and Society (Christensen and Gazley, 2008). Above all, it is indispensable to carefully consider and emphasise the discrepancies amongst capacity and its associate terminologies; capability and competence. The three are interrelated and overlapped. According to Cambridge dictionary, capability is literally ‘having the skill or ability or strength to do something’, whilst capacity means ‘the amount that can be held or produced by something’ (Cambridge, 2008). Finally, competence signifies ‘having the skills or knowledge to do something well enough to meet a basic standard’. In development studies and public administration, scholars have also distinguished between capacity, capability and competence.

Capacity alone refers to the general ability of the individual or group to carry out responsibilities and tasks (Hussein, 2006, Morgan, 2006). Bhatta also addressed his perception for capacity as ‘the inherent endowment possessed by individuals or organisation to achieve their fullest potential’ (Bhatta, 2003). Moreover, Christensen and Gazley have observed from other literatures and stated that capacity has very similar definition as of ‘ability’ and ‘capability’ (Christensen and Gazley, 2008). At the same time, as Ingraham et al. distinctively considered the capacity of the government (Ingraham et al., 2003). They defined it as the “ability to marshal, develop, direct and control its financial, human, physical and information resources” (Ingraham et al., 2003: 15). However, Jurie stated that capacity and capability are able to be used interchangeably (Jurie, 2000). Once again, like Bhatta, Jurie perceived capacity as “the inherent endowment possessed by individuals or organisation to achieve their fullest potential. Capability would refer to the action taken on capacity in order to realise this potential” (Jurie, 2000: 271). Besides, he also summed up that capacity and capability are interconnected concepts of processes. With capability enhancing and capacity expanding, the organisation will finally accomplish competence (Jurie, 2000).

On the other hand, competence or competency of the public sector as perceived by Morgan and Baser designates the skills held by persons within the government that structure parts of the cooperative capabilities and capacity (Morgan and Baser, 2007). As well as this, Wojtczak has defined competence in the medical field as a holistic integration of understandings, abilities and professional judgments (Wojtczak, 2002).

Jurie has explained the term competence based on organisational theory and organisational behaviour theory. He related competence with the ability and motivation of an individual. He argued that individual competence can be considered a fundamental
factor for interpersonal competence in an organisation, as well as interpersonal competence which can be supported by the readiness of individual competence, reciprocally (Jurie, 2000). Simultaneously, competence or competency is a part of capacity development, in Hope’s view. Capacity development signifies the enhancement of the competency of individuals, public sector institutions, private sector entities, civil society organizations and local communities when engaging in activities that create positive development (Hope, 2009).

In contrast, capability signifies the knowledge, skills and attitudes of individuals, on their own or as part of a group (Hussein, 2006). Furthermore, it may be defined as specific abilities that must be gathered together to reach the overall capacity. Likewise, Kaplan stated that capability would denote the action taking on capacity in order to realize the potential (Kaplan, 2000). He also concluded that capacity, capability and competence are interconnected. The three concepts would enhance any unit’s or level’s status they aim for; ‘with capability developing and expanding capacity to attain competence’ (Kaplan, 2000: 271). In another aspect, Morgan distinguished capabilities as components which establish capacity. He initiated a framework which consisted of capabilities that would create capacity. In other words, these capabilities build up capacity (Morgan and Baser, 2007, Brinkerhoff and Morgan, 2010, Morgan et al., 2010).

However, it can be argued here that the definition of the three depends on how each author prioritises each term above one another. In essence, it can be insisted that capacity, capability and competence are all related to the abilities to carry out the tasks reach the ultimate goals, whether it applies to individuals or the organisations. Moreover, the interaction between the individual capacity and organisational capacity are mutual, reciprocal and causal to the output and the outcome of the organisational performance. In this study, only the terms capacity and capacity building will be employed.

2.4.3.2 The Concept of Capacity and Capacity Building

It is strictly essential to comprehend the designation and the niche of capacity and capacity building. Each term is an argot for scholars of public and private management including Non-Governmental organisations. The jargon is so remarkable that Straussman has conducted research on ‘Meaning(s) of Capacity Building’ which eventually concludes that while the concept clarity may be important, the more vital concern is
its implementation (Straussman, 2007). Therefore, metaphorically, it is worth knowing the functions and the characteristics of the fishing equipment before any fishermen start their marine journey. For that reason, it is compulsory to learn the skeleton of capacity and capacity building since it has been defined rather diversely. Capacity can be broadly defined as the ability of a person or an organisation to do a particular thing. Therefore, capacity building can be classically regarded as the managerial or administrative enhancement which is equally perceived to be the same as ‘organisational capacity’ (Honadle, 1981). However, since they are an ‘argot’ for particular group of interest people claims and arguments are conferred next.

Much of the academic literature states clearly that an organisation is established in the environment; external and internal. The stated phrase ‘Organisations do not work in the vacuum’ was so exploited by scholars’ (Grindle and Hilderbrand, 1995), that the open system is the fundamental approach in organisations (See also Appendix I). Moreover, capacity building has been perceived as the means as well as an end in itself (Honadle, 1981, Grindle and Hilderbrand, 1995, Fiszbein, 1997, Christensen and Gazley, 2008). A similar definition of capacity building is of improving the ability of local government officials to make informed decisions, supported with logical matters and program information proficient of describing objectives and priorities. This notion of capacity building corresponds with other coherent views of capacity, such as ‘the ability to make decisions and allocate resources more “rationally” by learning to use certain techniques and models developed for application to systems’ (Honadle, 1981).

Later, Cohen perceived capacity building as a carelessly conducted concept which scholars constantly left for practitioners to interpret and implement in different ways (Cohen, 1995). To investigate capacity building, Cohen considered a five dimension framework which consisted of (1) Targeted personnel capacity, (2) Capacity building stages, (3) Training capacity, (4) External institution, and (5) Manpower and systems support. However, he finally summed up that capacity building has no agreed meaning. It is operational based and problem oriented.

Above and beyond this, capacity building is sometimes perceived as a framework for measuring production efficiency. Fiszbein perceived that building local capacity would comprise three dimensions: labour, capital (financial) and technology (Fiszbein, 1997). Meanwhile, Bhatta based his arguments on the system theory approach. He profoundly studied the organisational capability and perceived it as equal to human resource
capacity. Also, his discernment of organisational capability refers to resources, systems, structures and processes which necessitate performance to some extent to reach the indicated goals (Bhatta, 2003). Following on, Christensen and Gazley also agreed that capacity building refers to organisational capacity which arises through the staff performance. However their unit of analysis is the managerial or administrative capacity which is obviously involved with the capacity of the individual (person), organisation and then nation, causally (Christensen and Gazley, 2008). This again confirms the intertwined relations among the levels of capacity.

In a different way, Potter and Brough identified capacity building through the lens of behavioural science. He proposed systematic capacity building with a hierarchy of needs and presented capacity building into ‘Capacity Pyramid’ which identifies nine component elements of systematic capacity building (Potter and Brought, 2004: 340). They concluded that it is the least tangible component that is the most important issue that organisations should be concerned with. Recently, Morgan et al. have disseminated their conceptual approaches related to capacity development and capacity. They applied the conceptual framework from the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) which includes individual competencies and collective capabilities. The individual competencies included the hard skills – technical, financial, logistics - and the soft skills – leadership, loyalty, legitimacy, interpersonal relationships - of individuals (Morgan et al., 2010: 28). The following core capabilities in the figure 2-1 will be the criteria that the key HR practices should be encouraged to accomplish. These capabilities would be adopted by each person who will impact the organisational capacity ultimately as a whole.
According to Morgan et al, capacity is “the overall ability of an organisation to support the design and management of the reformed process. This ability includes combining and integrating the competencies and capabilities into a functioning system” (Morgan et al., 2010: 28). At the same time, “capacity development is the process of change, both intentional and emergent” (Morgan et al., 2010:28). Additionally Krishnaveni and Sripirabaa claimed that capacity building is the process that helps organisations improves their ability to achieve their mission. As well as this, capacity building could be carried out at the macro level focusing on organisational capacity and at the micro level focusing on individual capacity (Krishnaveni and Sripirabaa, 2008). Hence, it is obvious that capacity building has a wide range of definitions, so that it is important to identify and give the focus of capacity building in this piece of research. The next section portrays the specified capacity building connotation adopted within the research.

### Specified Capacity Building Connotation Adopted within the Research: the specification of selected terminologies

Critically reflecting on literatures regarding with capacity building has shown first of all that the agreed definition is scarcely tangible. Because the term is applied and adopted in many fields of study, it is a very broad term (Cohen, 1995, Grindle, 1997, Morgan, 1998, Miller et al., 2006, Straussman, 2007, Krishnaveni and Sripirabaa, 2008). To identify and specify the term depends on the context and problem-orientation. Secondly; it is obvious
that training and capacity building is hardly separate. From a narrow view, capacity equates with training and in the broader view it equates with development (Grindle and Hilderbrand, 1995, Krishnaveni and Sripirabaa, 2008). Within this study, the researcher adopts the middle path since effective HR practices - recruitment and selection, training and development, and performance management – generate efficient and effective performance of the organisation. Moreover, in this research, the prospective decentralised local governance should be the outcome. However, the research focuses on the link and gap between the capacity building process and the HR practices for local civil servants only. With this focal point, it aims to answer the question of how HR practices can be supportive or contribute as capacity building strategies for organisations.

The previous section 2.4.1 has drawn on the reasons why the selected HR practices of recruitment and selection, training and development, and performance management are important to be explored. The details of the three HR practices have been described previously in section 2.4.1; however, it is crucial to explain the justification which they have been selected. Finally, capacity building in this research is defined as the processes which adhere to the HR practices. It is expected that HR practices implemented in ways that enhance the capacity of individuals will positively impact the organisational capacity. Hence, the research attempts to extend the concept of capacity building process from the HR practices in local governance with the objective of attaining effective HR practices implementation which can, simultaneously, build capacity in local civil servants.

However, the capacity building processes which adhered to HR practices in this research only includes the five core capabilities from figure 2-1. These capacities would be the prospective ultimate output for HR practices. It would be creditable to explore whether the HR practices of recruitment and selection, training and development, and performance management could be supportive for enhancing the following capabilities: committing and engaging, performing and accomplishing tasks and objectives, building relationships and attracting resources, learning and adapting - which means responding to changes and new demands in the environment, and managing trade-offs and dilemmas.
2.5 Lessons learned from Decentralisation, HRM and CB in the Context of Developing Countries

2.5.1 Decentralisation, HRM and CB in the Context of Developing Countries: findings from the theoretical review

In accordance with the theoretical reviews from scholars above, NPM, decentralisation, HRM and CB are unquestionably interrelated. There have been push and pull factors for the emergence of each stage in public sector reforms as well as in HRM. Besides this, there are causes and effects among one another. From the literature, it is obvious that the attitudes on NPM’s implementation have been fluctuated in both developed and developing countries. However, its implementation in developing countries is more vibrant and meaningful to their development. Therefore, this is the reason which served to direct this research to probe into a developing country as a case study. Developed countries like in the UK, Australia, USA, the Netherlands and other OECD countries have illustrated mostly successful cases of public sector reformation. There exists the issue how decentralisation and local governance have been rather Europe-American originated, so it is questionable whether it would be successful in developing countries.

As well as the notions of NPM and decentralisation, HRM and capacity building have also been of interest to scholars within the realm of development studies and public administration. People are an important resource for any organisation and the crucial link between a public organisation and the citizens. Moreover, human resource capacity building is even more the focal point, as it has scarcely been investigated. The HR practices have been studied through competency approaches, not capacity building. Therefore, the conception of HR practices and Capacity building processes together and reciprocally supportive to each other, is a gap to be explored. Moreover, in the geographical aspect, among the developing countries South East Asia has been a region scarcely examined in the facet of decentralised HRM as a consequence from NPM and decentralisation. Many more comparative studies have been done in Africa or South America.

To conclude, capacity building through human resource management must be emphasised in this context. To emphasise the issue, the major theoretical argument within this research is whether human capacity building at the local level in Thailand is designed
and implemented locally with local or decentralised autonomy rather than duplicating the central administrative system to be conducted at the local level. Additionally, the research aims to locate any linkages which could reinforce the capacity building process through decentralised human resource management. Empirically, the understanding of current challenges and opportunities in the Thai context will certainly be investigated and discussed. However, the next section will clarify more profoundly the capacity building process and the issues to be grasped in order to explore, for better understanding, the Thai context as a case study.

The next section describes how the researcher finally designed the analytical framework. Candidate frameworks will be illustrated. In addition, the justification of the framework will be explained as well as the details of the framework, which will later appear as the questions for the fieldwork. Finally, the contribution of the framework will be clarified.

### 2.5.2 The Analytical Framework of the study

One of the methods employed in this research to assure that the analytical framework had been created on a theoretical basis was to explore top-ranked journals in the public administration discipline. This stage was the documentary research completed at the beginning of the research. Some scholars have studied and tried to clarify influential journals on public administration. One study on rankings of public administration journals was that of Colson in 1990. He categorised the journals based on criteria including mean citation rate, mean impact factor, and periodicals most cited by Public Administration Journals. Some journals have appeared in every table illustrated; the International Journal of Public Administration, Public Administration Review, Social Science Quarterly, Journal of Human Resource and Public Administration and Development (Colson, 1990). On top of this, Forrester and Watson have also conducted researches regarding top-ranked journals in the public administration discipline. Their results showed that within the discipline, there have been various focuses for each journal. These focuses covered theories, practices, human resources, public finance, public policy and taxation (Forrester and Watson, 1994). Therefore, the selected unit of analysis also depends on which area any other researchers would select to explore.
In case of this research, key words were used to conduct searches with the high ranking journals in order to collect rational and valid sources of data. The key words were human resource management, public sector reform, capacity building, public administration, training and development, recruitment and selection, performance management and individual capacity. Throughout this process, the area in which the research would be focused was finalised. The literature review has been specifically conducted in three areas: decentralisation, human resource management and individual capacity building.

Human resource capacity building has ultimately been chosen to be explored because there has been a shortage of the studies in this area, especially in the context where NPM and decentralisation have been adopted by a developing country, and especially in South East Asia. As a result, local governance and decentralisation would play an important role as the context of the study. Once again, according to the aims and objectives of the research, related theories have been reviewed. The figure 2-2 below illustrate where the research has fitted into the three areas of the study.

**Figure 2-2: Focus of the research**

Source: Self
Thus, the figure 2-2 has illustrated the interrelation among the three focused areas and has positioned the main focus of this research. The detailed explanation and sub-issues of each element will be described in table 2-4.

Additionally, the forthcoming figure 2-3 presents how theories related to Public Sector reform, NPM, decentralisation, HRM and capacity building have played their important role and how they are related. Based on the literatures reviewed on NPM, decentralisation has become a characteristic of NPM very prominent among the others. The NPM approach has emerged in accordance with many factors. However, the economic crisis and the expectation towards better governance, or ‘Good Governance’, have been two influential ones. HRM, a neglected issue if compared to fiscal administration, is warranted to be explored.
Figure 2-3: Theoretical Underpinning to the Research

**Decentralisation in the context of Thailand**

- Recruitment & Selection
- Training & Development
- Performance Management

- 1. Committing and engaging
- 2. Performing and accomplishing tasks and objectives
- 3. Building relationships and attracting resources
- 4. Learning and adapting
- 5. Managing trade-offs and dilemmas

Source: Self
Table 2-4: the Analytical Framework of HRCB for decentralised HRM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key HRM Practices</th>
<th>Five Core Capabilities to build up capacity</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recruitment &amp; Selection</strong></td>
<td>1. Committing and engaging – achieving the motivation, space and determination to take action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Recruitment procedure</td>
<td>2. Performing and accomplishing tasks and objectives such as service delivery and policy formulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Selection Process</td>
<td>3. Building relationships and attracting resources—managing relationships both internally and externally in ways which help those country’s actors to perform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Evaluation of effectiveness of selection programmes and Recruitment</td>
<td>4. Learning and adapting - responding to changes and new demands in the environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Training and Development</strong></td>
<td>5. Managing trade-offs and dilemmas - finding ways to balance conflicting objectives and demands such as coherence versus diversity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Identification of Training needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Designing and Implementing Training programmes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Transfer of Training and Evaluation of Training Programme.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Performance management</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Performance management system needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Job Evaluation and Promotion System</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Performance Appraisal Process and Compensation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adopted from Krishnaveni and Sripiraba (2008) and Morgan et al. (2010: 28)
The contribution of this research is exemplified in figure 2-3 and table 2-4 presented above. The study has pointed out the theoretical gap on how the HR practices and capacity building could be merged. It conjectures whether the capacity of an individual member of staff in an organisation can be enhanced, supported or capacitated through HR practices. Moreover, in practice, this research has been conducted to examine this theoretical gap in a very unique Unitarian country like Thailand. Especially significant is that this research was undertaken after the phenomenon of administrative decentralisation. The figure 2-3 has summarised and illustrated the theoretical underpinning to the research and the theoretical context of this research. The circumstances of decentralised human resource management are the background of the study. The first research question is to investigate the effects (if any) of the decentralisation implementation on human resource practices at the local level in Thailand. Afterwards, it probes the notion of whether any decentralised human resource practices conducted at the local level could contribute to enhance the individual capacity for local civil servants.

### 2.6 Summary of the chapter

In conclusion, this chapter has provided the theoretical perspectives adopted by this research. Three main areas - decentralisation, human resource management and capacity building - which this research embraced have been discussed and illustrated. The three focused theories are decentralisation, human resource management and capacity building. However, to be precise and concise, the focal issues on HR selected to be examined are recruitment and selection, training and development and performance management. They were chosen in accordance with their significant contribution to HR which had been validated by many scholars. Moreover, capacity building processes were explained and the specific model of capacity building by Peter J. Morgan was selected to be employed in this research. Eventually, the analytical framework as presented in the table 2-3 was established and it will be further applied as a specific framework for this research. Thus, chapter five and six portray and reflect the results from the field in accordance with this particular framework only. The analysis and discussion are also based on the presented framework.
CHAPTER THREE: 
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter purposely clarifies the research design and discuss the methodological elements of the research. It firstly describes the philosophical standpoint of the research. As a result, it also explains the research design, research methodology, data collection techniques and the data analysis. Furthermore, the limitations of the research are also addressed in this chapter. Lastly the reliability and validity of the research will be discussed.

3.1 Interpretive Approach: the philosophical standpoint of the research

Philosophical stance is certainly important for any researcher. It identifies the area where one stands and perceives the world of academia and knowledge. In conducting research, four elements must be compatible or relevant: the methods, methodology, theoretical perspective and epistemology (Crotty, 1998). The four elements are causal and reciprocal to one another. Crotty explained the relations amongst the four elements by starting at the methods of conducting a study. Research methods are tangible techniques or procedures that a researcher plans to use in order to collect and analyse data. However, these research methods are obtained from the underlying principles of conducting the research. The methods depend on the research design and methodology. Therefore the research methodology is ‘an account of the rationale to provide choices of methods’ that a researcher is going to use (Crotty, 1998: 7).

Moreover, beyond research methodology lies the theoretical perspective which plays an important role as the context for the research. Eventually, the epistemology allows the researcher to see the world differently. ‘Epistemology is concerned with providing a philosophical grounding for deciding what kinds of knowledge are possible and how we can ensure that they are both adequate and legitimate’ (Maynard, 1994 in Crotty, 1998: 8). As a result, conducting research requires decisions on how the research will be completed through which epistemological and methodological perspectives.
In social science research, there are three dominant approaches to studying phenomena: the positivist, interpretive, and critical approaches (Neuman, 2000). Among the three, positivist has been considered as the oldest way of learning. It was adopted to study the natural science (Neuman, 2000). Neuman explained that positivist researchers have a preference in using quantitative data and usually employ experiments, surveys and statistics to explain phenomena. They tend to measure and test hypotheses by using numbers so that the research is more objective than subjective (Neuman, 2000). Guba and Lincoln have summarised the understanding of research approaches by explaining the basic beliefs of the alternative inquiry paradigm. Positivism is ontologically realism in which people believe that reality exists and is comprehensible. Again in this case, positivism’s epistemology is objectivist, so it prefers experiments and measurements to get results (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Therefore, positivists perceive the world more in a tangible and practical way.

Within the realm of social science there is an approach of study called ‘interpretive’. Neuman claimed that the interpretive approach is ‘the systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understanding and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds’ (Neuman, 2000: 71). Schwandt explained that the interpretive approach has suggested as an activity of redefinition. And significantly, this identification or interpretation may not be confirmable or testable (Schwandt, 1994). Therefore, this implies that the context of a study is important and interpretation may vary because interpreters are different.

Another alternative for social science study as mentioned by Neuman is critical social science. It can be called by many names: dialectical materialism, class analysis, and structuralism. The third group of thinkers have established an alternative for the prior two. It argued on the weak points of positivist and interpretivist approaches. They proclaimed that positivists disregard the social context, lacks an understanding of the meaning of real people and are incapacitated to think of people as real. On the other hand, the critical social science approach also argued that the interpretivists are too ‘subjective and relativist’ (Neuman, 2000: 76). Therefore, they asserted that their approach is more of a middle path between the two. They try to understand human beings based on the context, but in tangible and empirical ways.
In this research the interpretive approach is selected to be the way to perceive and understand phenomena since local administration is contextualised and unique. Besides this, while administration can be distinguished tangibly in terms of budget for example, human resource management cannot be measured with only tangible elements, because the intangible elements like feelings, experience, skills and attitudes are also important to consider. Thus, the interpretive approach is more suitable one to be applied in this research.

3.2 Research Methodology

As discussed in the section prior, the research was conducted based on the philosophical standpoint of interpretive approach. Therefore, the methodology of the research has been designed to reflect the meaning of the research questions as the phenomenon in this case (Silverman, 1997). Therefore, the qualitative approach was selected to acquire and analyse the data.

Before moving on to state the rationale that lies beneath the selection of the qualitative approach, the comprehension of the differences between the two approaches must be clarified. As mentioned previously in the former section, an epistemology also gives a hint to its methodology. Alan Bryman declared in his paper, writers occasionally apply terms interchangeably and synonymously. Instead of using the word quantitative, the term ‘positivist’ and ‘empiricist’ are used instead. Also, ‘interpretivist’ and ‘constructivist’ are perceived as ‘qualitative’ (Bryman, 1984). For Bryman, quantitative methodology is ‘... routinely depicted as an approach to the conduct of social research which applies a natural science approach to social phenomena’ (Bryman, 1984: 77). From this point of view, it implies the degree of objectivity, causality and replicability of the methodology. Besides this, its ontological standpoint is that ‘there is only one truth, an objective reality and independence of human perception’ (Sale et al., 2002: 44).

On the contrary, qualitative methodology is one that allows the actor, participant or research actor to witness the social world from their own point of view. Ontologically, interpretivists believe that there are many truths based on how one perceives reality. ‘There is no access to reality independent of our minds, no external referent by which to compare claims of the truth’ (Smith, 1983 in Sale et al., 2002: 45). Furthermore, qualitative researchers consider that the researcher and the studied object are
intermingled so that the results are reciprocally established on the contextual basis where those circumstances or phenomena have emerged (Sale et al., 2002). As a result, these qualities of qualitative research have allocated more freedom, flexibility and subjectivity for the research and researcher than a quantitative one would have, and allow the context to be taken into account.

Therefore, after considering the fundamental characteristics of quantitative and qualitative research, it is the qualitative methodology that is positively appropriate to the phenomenon of Thai local governance. Based on the aims and objective of the research, the context of decentralised HRM in Thailand is the main reason why qualitative methodology is suitable. Context of each country is influential when considering its administrative system. Moreover, some scholars have confirmed that in the study of policy analysis and development, qualitative research has been increasingly acceptable (Kanbur, 2005). Consequently, qualitative approach has been selected to be the research methodology in this thesis. Subsequent to this firm decision on qualitative approach as a methodology, the methods or techniques of data collection will be explained in the approaching section 3.5. However, the rationale of case selection and the unit of analysis must first be elucidated.

3.3 Case Selection: case study approach

In accordance with the philosophical standpoint of the interpretive approach, case study has been chosen as the way forward to attain the answers to the research questions. Scholars have disputed and argued over the validity and applicability of seeking knowledge from the case study approach (Jick, 1979, McClintock et al., 1979, Eisenhardt, 1989, Curtis et al., 2000, Flyvbjerg, 2006, Andrade, 2009). McClintock et al. have discussed the issue and stated that the goal of a case study is to define the circumstances of an occurrence, allow examination of the organisational process, and expose the factors which may encourage more understanding to the phenomenon (McClintock et al., 1979). Flyvbjerg, a proponent of qualitative research and case study, argued that there have been five misunderstandings about case study. Unlike what is conventionally understood about case studies, he confirmed that case study can be generalised as an example of other cases. Besides this, to attain rigour in case selection, the selection strategies must be clarified systematically. Moreover, where the subjectivity and objectivity of the research is questioned; he suggested that case
study allows a nearness to reality which would offer preconditioning for advanced understanding (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

Another attribute of case study research is its capacity to examine the contexts. On the contrary, other approaches are likely to separate the observable fact from its context or try to limit the importance of the context while doing the research (Yin, 1989, Blaikie, 2000). Therefore, as Yin states a definition of case study research is an approach which is appropriate for exploration of a phenomenon, especially when the frontier between the phenomenon and the context is a blur (Yin, 1989). However, case studies can be performed quantitatively or qualitatively. In this thesis, the research has been done in such a way that the researcher has straightforwardly undertaken the procedures of data collection and analysis (Andrade, 2009). Therefore, this research is an interpretive case study by its theoretical basis and practice.

Another issue emerging in case study would be of the term ‘unit of analysis’. The unit of analysis must be clarified in order to describe a clear example of a social situation or phenomenon. The unit of analysis signifies an “…individual group, or organisation, they could be any activity, process, feature, or dimension of organisation behaviour” (McClintock et al., 1979: 3). In the case of this research, the main unit of analysis is the local administration of a unique unitary country (Thailand) and the sub-unit of analysis is the impact of decentralisation on the HRM process and the linking activities between HR practices and capacity building processes at the local level in Thailand. Thailand has been chosen as a case study because of its administrative uniqueness.

3.4 Data Collection

In accordance with the research design, data collection methods have also been designed to allow the data to speak for itself. There are both primarily collected data by the researcher, who as well collected secondary source data from related organizations or institutes. The approaching sub-sections explain how the researcher conducted the data collection and analysed the collected data.
3.4.1 Documentary Research: secondary data

First of all, previous research on NPM, decentralisation, HRM, and capacity building in developing countries were investigated. Debates, arguments and theoretical perspectives on these areas were studied and ultimately distilled until the analytical framework emerged. The top journals on public administration have been purposively sampled to attain the most critical issues on public administration to be studied; such as, Public Administration Review (PAR), Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory (JPART), Public Performance and Management Review (PP&MR), and International Research of Administrative Science (IRAS). Furthermore, the top ranking journals on HRM and capacity building were also be explored; for instance, International Journal of Human Resource Management (IJHRM), Human Resource Management Journal, Administrative Science Quarterly, and Academy of Management Review (Caligiuri, 1999). Eventually, the theoretical gaps and analytical framework have been concluded, as presented in Chapter Two. Therefore, a documentary research approach was conducted in the early stage of defining the analytical framework.

The exploration of theoretical perspectives resulted in certain approaches to learn and explore the new knowledge and respond to the questions drawn from the reviewed literature. Therefore, some documents became the first set of data explored by the researcher. Since the research’s unit of analysis is the HRM aspect of Thai local administration, there have been many acts and regulations to be investigated. The Thai constitutions of 1997 and 2007 have been the first two documents the researcher considered because they are the key laws and principles for the other rules and regulations. Moreover, the Decentralisation Act 1999 and the Local Personnel Management Act 1999 have been studied to attain the policy on local HRM and decentralisation. At the central government level, the HR annual plans on local civil servant administration since 1997 have been explored. This plan described which tasks or activities will be transferred to the local level. These plans are related to the decentralisation plan and the decentralisation Act 1999.

Certainly, aside from the plans and policies from the central level, the municipal ordinances, human resource plans and the human resource policy from each municipality have been vital evidences to be proofed on the basis of HR policy. These documents were mainly provided by the interviewees at each municipality. The key informant responsible for these documents was the municipal clerk at each municipality. Moreover,
the Personnel Officer at each municipality has been the one who explains the procedures for the human resource management plan, especially the aspects of recruitment and selection, training and development and performance management. However, the tangible documents on these specific HR practices scarcely existed at the local level.

The approaching section explains how cases have been selected. Thailand was chosen as the main case study and afterwards four of its municipalities were been selected. The selection strategies and rationale for these cases must be addressed.

### 3.4.2 Sampling Strategy Criteria

As a result, in order to conduct the research without the doubts of ambiguity; the case selection methods criteria have been set. Some case selection strategies suggested by Flyvbjerg are either based on random selection: random sample or stratified sample, or information oriented selection: extreme or deviant cases, maximum variation cases, critical cases or paradigmatic cases (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

For the design of the current research, it was rather appropriate to select the latter criterion, because the characteristic and nature of public administration are geographically varied from one place to another. Also, not forgetting that the case study is more related to the context, the samples have been selected on the basis of the information they would be able to supply.

To be more precise, the criteria of Huberman and Miles were adopted (Huberman and Miles, 2002). The criteria for what selected cases should be are stated as following:

- Relevant to the conceptual framework and the research questions
- Able to generate rich information on the type of phenomena which need to be studied
- Enhance the generalisability of the findings
- Produce believable descriptions or explanation for real practice
- Ethical
- Feasible sampling plan
Hence Thailand, the main case selected, is a good example to describe a developing country in South East Asia that adopted NPM and decentralisation into its public administration. When considering the research questions and the theoretical and analytical framework, Thailand and its municipalities were suitable to explain the phenomenon of the relation between HRM and capacity building. Moreover, reasonable generalisability is likely, because the four selected municipalities were selected based on their qualification of geography, level of performance and the HR practice implementation. As a result, these procedures would help forming a trustworthy explanation for the practical implementation of policy in the reality of Thai local governance. The sampling plan includes how each methods or techniques would be carried out, and the criteria of the participants which are also crucial. Thus, table 3-1 below concludes how the researcher had selected the cases strategically before commencing fieldwork.

The approaching table 3-1 has illustrated that Thailand and the four municipalities have been suitable to be studied since they have reached the criteria indicated as the cases study. The four municipalities in four regions of Thailand provided differences in terms of geography and size of municipal citizen populations. Moreover, the four municipalities can be divided into urbanised and ruralised areas. Songkhla and Raikhing are in more urbanised areas than Phayao and Thachangkhlong, which are in more peripheral areas. These selected municipalities will be clarified in chapter four.
Table 3-1: The Criteria for Case Selection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements of Criteria</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relevant to the conceptual framework and the research questions addressed</td>
<td>Thailand has been suitable to be explored as a case for this research since its HR system has been decentralised and it contains obvious units of analysis which can be studied through the analytical framework. Additionally, the sub-unit of analysis in Thai local governance; municipality, is quite obvious.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Able to generate rich information on the type of phenomena which need to be studied</td>
<td>A decentralised Unitarian state is a very interesting phenomenon by itself. The controversial natures of a centralised system undergoing decentralising initiatives have become a prominent point of the case to be studied.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced the generalisability of the findings</td>
<td>The geographical variation, size of population and staff diversity of the chosen municipalities is an effort by the researcher to ensure good generalisability, crosschecking and validation of this research. Thus, the findings of this research could be adaptable and applicable to other cases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Produce believable descriptions/explanation for real practice</td>
<td>All four municipality cases studied employed decentralised HR practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical</td>
<td>All participants consented to take part in the research data collection process. As well, explanation of the research was been given prior to the data collection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feasible sampling plan</td>
<td>The samples studied in this research have been selected in accordance with various criteria. Geography, size of the population, form of local unit, and the degree of urbanisation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data Analysis

Moreover, the period of time for data collection in Thailand for public sector units was also crucial for successful data collection. The suitable period of time for this kind of data collection is right after the beginning of the fiscal year which happens every October. The research data collection was conducted during November 2010 - January 2011, over a total of three months. The researcher managed to visit each municipality for approximately 25 days and in the overlapping times between travelling from one region to another, the researcher also spent time at the central government and other related organisations in Bangkok.
3.4.3 Focus Group Discussion

Focus group discussion is "... a group discussion arranged to discover a precise set of topics" (Kitzinger, 1994). Meanwhile, Morgan defines focus group discussions as a data collection technique which allows the interaction between the researchers and participants to occur. In this approach, the topic of conversation should be addressed by the researcher (Morgan, 1996). Therefore, in general, a focus group discussion is aimed to collect some particular data from a specific set of participants. During the discussion, precise topics would be raised and the researcher performs as a facilitator to put forth questions amongst the group (Folch-Lyon and Trost, 1981, Bertrand et al., 1992, Powell and Single, 1996, Kidd and Parshall, 2000, Boddy, 2005). Although there are advantages and disadvantages of this research method, it was selected in this study in order to disseminate some topics of interest and collect diverse thoughts from the particular types of informants. Ethical issues have certainly been aware of in this stage of the data collection.

There were a total of four focus group discussions (hereafter; FGD) carried out throughout the process of data collection. Each group contained eight people from each municipality. The participants were municipal officials who must have been working in the municipality system for at least three years. There were some officials who had been transferred to different municipality and may have some experience of recruitment, selection, training and rotation. Therefore, such officials needed not to have worked only at the municipality where the research is carried out. He or she could have prior-experience from previous municipality that they worked for. However, the priority of the participant selection falls into the one who has worked at the selected municipality for at least three years. The most important of all was that these participants were asked if they were willing to share their experiences and knowledge with the researcher before the FGD started.

Each FGD was carried out by the researcher with the help of a tape recorder. Since there always is an awareness of ethics, the researcher asked for permission before recording every discussion. Each FGD was initiated by an introductory session by the researcher. The aims and objectives of the fieldwork and the introduction to the institute the researcher is from were divulged before each FGD. The status of a PhD student allowed the researcher to attain more information and details in many aspects. However, some critical issues and questions had to be asked in the FGD. The researcher tried very hard to avoid the triggering of conflicts which could have occurred after the researcher parted with the
participants. For these particular issues, pieces of paper were sent around for participants to write down their thoughts instead of orally communicating among one another. It was found that this method was very useful and it kept the answer of each participant confidential. Moreover, the structured questions were open-ended which allowed the participants to answer freely based on their knowledge and experience. These questions were constructed based on the analytical framework in Chapter two.

Moreover, in the FGDs, the participants were asked to express their opinion on how to solve the HRM situation for local civil servants. Therefore, the researcher obtained responses to the research questions from the participants. FGDs not only allowed the researcher to obtain direct answers from the participants, but it also provided the researcher with some emergent and critical questions. These questions have been collected for investigation through the approaching method, the in-depth interview.

However, FGD is a challenging method to conduct in practice. Gathering the group of people who are selected to be key participants has been quite difficult. If the first stage of gathering the discussants was difficult, actually conducting the discussion was even more difficult. Conflict after the discussion has been an issue which the researcher has been very cautious of. The researcher has also taken into account the gender, age and job titles of local civil servants. Criteria to select the interviewees had been set prior to the discussion process. These participants were volunteers, who had worked for municipalities for at least three years. Thus, the ethical issues regarding participants have always been aware of throughout the FGD implementation.

3.4.4 In-Depth Interview

In-depth interviews have been an obvious method for qualitative research data collection. It allows researchers to gain better a understanding on some particular issue from the interviewee. It is a method in which interviewer and interviewee have an interaction. The interviewer might have conducted the interview in order to confirm or clarify some particular issue (Johnson, 2001).

The interviewees were chosen according to their position at each municipality. The key informants from each municipality have been interviewed; namely the mayor, the municipal clerk and the HRM manager. Therefore, there were three key informants from
each municipality which meant 12 people in total. The interview was initiated by an introduction of the researcher and her work. Aims and objectives of the fieldwork and the introduction to the institute where the researcher is from opened each interview. Not only were the informants from the local level interviewed, but also the officers who worked for the Office of Personnel Administration Standard Bureau were also included. The bureau is under the responsibility of Department of Local Administration (DOLA).

There have been many challenges for the in-depth interview method, since this research takes a qualitative position and involves many people. Therefore, approaching the key informants and gathering the interviewees has been an interesting as well as a critical issue. Especially was the local politician like the mayor, who was always rather occupied and busy with their work. Therefore, the perseverance and patience in approaching them were required by the researcher. However, it incidentally provided a chance to follow them and observe them while they were on duty in their community.

Therefore, many methods have been conducted in order to collect the data with cautiousness and awareness. Triangulations and cross-checking in terms of time differences, different sources of data and different informants have been taken into consideration to guarantee the validity and accountability of the research. Table 3-2 below summarises the data collection method and the sources of data, categorised in accordance with the municipality providing the information. The table 3-2 also illustrates the diversity of the data forms, and the alternative sources of information this research has been based on.
Table 3-2: The Summary of Data Collection Methods and Source of Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name and Size(^3) of Municipality</th>
<th>Type of Documents</th>
<th>Method of Data collection</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nakhon Songkhla (Large)</td>
<td>Three Years development plan (2011-2013)</td>
<td>Archive (Municipal Clerk Bureau)</td>
<td>The vice-director of Finance Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In-depth interview with the Vice-Mayor</td>
<td>In-depth interview</td>
<td>The Vice-Mayor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In-depth Int. with Municipal Clerk</td>
<td>In-depth interview</td>
<td>The Municipal Clerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FG interview workshop with local civil servants</td>
<td>Focus Group discussion workshop on the HRM of local civil servants</td>
<td>Eight local officials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muang Phayao (Medium)</td>
<td>Three Years development plan (2009-2011)</td>
<td>Archive (Municipal Clerk Bureau)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FG interview workshop with local civil servants</td>
<td>Focus Group discussion workshop on the HRM with local civil servants</td>
<td>Eight local officials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In-depth interview with the Mayor</td>
<td>In-depth interview</td>
<td>The Mayor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In-depth Int. with Municipal Clerk</td>
<td>In-depth interview</td>
<td>The Municipal Clerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muang Rai Khing (Medium)</td>
<td>CD about the structure of the municipality</td>
<td>Archive (Municipal Clerk Bureau)</td>
<td>The secretary of the Mayor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pamphlet from the Boat rowing ceremony at Raikhing Temple</td>
<td>Archive (Municipal Clerk Bureau)</td>
<td>The secretary of the Mayor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Three Years development plan (2011-2013)</td>
<td>Archive (Municipal Clerk Bureau)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Documents from personnel officer</td>
<td>Annual and Three years HR Plan</td>
<td>Personnel Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tha Chaang Klong (Small)</td>
<td>Three Years development plan (2011-2013)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Personnel Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategic Plan of Thachaangklong (2010-2014)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Personnel Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FG interview workshop with local civil servants</td>
<td>Focus Group discussion workshop on the HRM with local civil servants</td>
<td>Eight local officials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HRD Plan (2009-2011)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Personnel Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Report on Local citizen satisfaction at Thachaangklong TAO</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Personnel Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General Standard for temporary local civil servants</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Personnel Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positioning Code Standard</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Personnel Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HRP Report (2009-2011)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Personnel Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Budget ordinance (2008)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Personnel Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In-depth Interview with Municipal Clerk</td>
<td>In-depth interview</td>
<td>the Municipal Clerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In-depth Interview with Mayor</td>
<td>In-depth interview</td>
<td>the Mayor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Self

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\(^3\) The criterion of size for municipality includes the size of population, the autonomy in collecting local taxes and the ability to collect taxes from the populace.
3.5 Data Analysis

Data collected throughout the fieldwork was analysed by using the analytical framework which was obtained from theoretical review. The collected data obtained from different sources and different times would be cross-checked. Triangulation was the main technique to confirm the validity of the research results. Data collected from different sources were comparatively analysed. Dissimilar levels of positions of civil servants and local civil servants have been noticed, so as to balance perceptions on the research questions.

To be precise, the research has adopted template analysis. The themes which are analysed in chapter five and six have been identified as they emerged from the literature review in chapter two. The table 2-3 lists the key themes which were used to draw up questions for focus group discussion and in-depth interviews. Like the topics which will be analysed and discussed in chapter five and six, they are all based on the thematic issues in table 2-3.

3.6 Limitations of the Research

Practically, academic pieces of writing in regarding capacity building, human resource management and administrative decentralisation are diverse. A selection of some theoretical approaches and issues within the research is only a small brook branch compared to the ocean. Therefore, simply the most relevant literature to the topic would is to be concerned with.

Again, Thailand is a unitary state country with diverse ranges of population and interests. Different regions can diversify the needs of local people as well as local civil servants. Four different regions would provide perfect sample numbers with which to conduct the research; however, time limitation and the availability of the local civil servants can be variable to change. Ultimately, since the research involves human beings, ethical issues must be concerned. Participants and informant consent and compliance can differ from the expected plan.
3.7 Summary of the Chapter

To conclude, chapter three has portrayed the entire research’s methodology, its philosophical stance and the limitations of the research. The interpretive approach was adopted and it was undertaken using qualitative methods. The researcher has validated the data collection by using the triangulation technique to cross check the validity and accountability of the data collected. Different sources of data, different places and different informants have been employed. Moreover, a diverse range of methods were used including documentary research, focus group discussions, and in-depth interviews. Some challenges of using the methods have been declared and addressed in the chapter. Finally, content analysis was stated as the way in which the researcher conducted her data analysis.

The approaching chapter will describe Thailand and the four selected Municipalities as the selected cases to be studied. Context and background of the cases will certainly provide a better understanding of the Thai public administrative system.
CHAPTER FOUR: THE CONTEXT OF THAILAND AND ITS LOCAL GOVERNANCE

This chapter offers comprehension of the Thai administration and its local governance context. It explains in brief the evolution of Thai public administration which could clarify the circumstances of a Unitarian kingdom that colonisation has never penetrated. Besides this, it illustrates the structure of Thai Public administration, and especially its local units and municipalities. Eventually, in the last part of the chapter, the selected four municipalities in four different regions of Thailand will be depicted since they were the selected cases to be studied. Therefore, the subsequent chapter five to seven can be analysed and discussed based on the context of Thai local governance explained in this chapter.

4.1 Introduction: concise background on Thailand

The incomparable history of the Kingdom of Thailand as a non-colonised country in South East Asia has unavoidably encroached on its administrative system and political regime (Haque, 2010). This allowed Thailand to embrace a unique evolution of public administration. Notwithstanding its ancestral Sukhothai⁴, Ayuthaya⁵ and Thonburi⁶ periods, the Ratanakosin⁷ era alone has exemplified how centralised and autocratic Thailand had been. However, Thailand has not existed in a vacuum, so it has been influenced by thoughts, practices and experiences from other countries during the imperialism period. As a result, King Chulalongkorn (also called King Rama the Fifth), agreed to predominantly reform the administrative structure of the country during his reign as a protective strategy to shield against the intimidation from western countries, and resolved the status quo of extraterritoriality (Chayabutra, 1997, Uwanno and Burns, 1998). In accordance with the King’s direct observation from his official visits to European countries, a series of initiatives were implemented; the establishment of ministries like in western countries, the transformation of bureaucracy and

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⁴ Sukhothai Period is from 1238-1438 AD.
⁵ Ayuthaya Period is from 1350-1767 AD.
⁶ Thonburi Period is from 1767-1782 AD.
⁷ Ratanakosin Period is from 1782-present
the introduction of local government. The first Sanitary District or Sukhapiban was instigated in 1898 to primarily manage the sanitary provision. However, the officials of Sukhapiban were still appointed not elected. This Sukhapiban had no independence to make decisions or administrate. Until 1905, Tha Chalom Sanitary District was established as an experiment of the Thai local Administration. After that, Sanitary Districts spread throughout Thailand as local administration. Therefore, it was a hint of local government, but without autonomy and authority.

The climax of Thailand history; especially for Thai public administration, arrived in 1932 when the political regime was eventually transformed from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional one; a similar scheme to the United Kingdom. The king was still respected and considered to be the Head of state. However, his power had been limited. He exercised his legislative power through parliament, managerial power through the cabinet and the judicial power through the court (Chardchawarn, 2008). Therefore, Thailand has commenced its own learning process of being democratised. Consequently, the Public Administration Act (PAA 1932) was promulgated in 1932 and it segregated the Thai administration into three levels: the Central administration, the Provincial administration and the Local government. Ergo, the decisive Municipal Administration Act 1933 (MAA 1933) was subsequently promulgated. However, the vital mechanism of Thai government has consistently been the central government, especially the Ministry of Interior (MOI).

According to the process of so-called ‘democratisation’ since 1932, Thailand has confronted and moved through a diverse range of chaotic political movements, riots, and protests; for example, the bloodless coup of 1932, the student uprisings of October 1973 and October 1976, and Black May, 1992 (Uwanno and Burns, 1998). Some of these incidents were nonviolent and bloodless and others were tragedies. Moreover, the nature of Thai politics has prolonged the stagnant transformation of democratisation and also decentralisation. One main factor is the ‘vicious cycle’ in which the civilian governments have always been replaced via coups (Uwanno and Burns, 1998). As a result, Thai public administration has not yet changed significantly. Once again, in 1991 when the crucial updated Public Administration Act (PAA 1991) was promulgated, there were still three tiers of Public Administration; Central, Provincial and Local; as illustrated in figure 4-1.
4.1.1 Central Administration (Centralisation)

Central Administration includes Ministries, Bureaus and Departments for central administration. The central administration is structured under the notion of consolidation of power in a sovereign country, when governmental powers must be vested at the centre of the country’s administration. It is exercised by the cabinet of ministers - under whom various departments, bureaus, offices and divisions are established. A Ministry is politically headed by one minister with one or more deputy ministers who are assigned from elected Members of parliament (MPs). The highest position of officials within a ministry is called a ‘Permanent Secretary’. Each department under the ministry is lead by a Director-General. The most crucial ministry of all is the Ministry of Interior (MOI). Each ministry is still assigned to conduct the regional and local administration which certainly signifies centralisation. It has mainly functioned as the mechanism for policy implementation from the cabinet.
4.1.2 Provincial Administration (Deconcentration)

Provincial Administration includes Provinces (*Changwat*), Districts (*Amphoe*), Sub-districts (Tambon) and Villages (Mooban). The four tiers have taken responsibilities hierarchically in regional administration delegated by the central government. Therefore, this level of government receives its role on the basis of deconcentration. Some power and authority in decision making has been partially delegated through the representatives from various ministries and departments. Their realms of duties have been limited by the rules and regulations from the central government. As a result, it has been apparent that the legacy of a centralised Unitarian state is still influencing provincial administration, as in directing and certifying the efficacy of it. Of the four provincial units can be depicted in detail as follows.

**Figure 4-2: The Hierarchical Thai Public Administration**

![Diagram of Thai public administration hierarchy]

Source: Self

Figure 4-2 diagrammatically illustrates the hierarchy of Thai public administration which local administration is spread throughout the country in parallel with these units. As observed in figure 4-2, the *Changwat* or province is the highest tier of provincial administration. The highest administrative position of any province is called a ‘Governor’ who is appointed by the MOI. This does not include the governor of Bangkok Metropolitan who will be elected from the Bangkokians. Thus, the other
governors derive their power from the ministries and he/she carries out the administrative processes in each province.

**The Ampoe** or District is the second tier of the provincial administrative structure. Its leader is the district chief officer who is appointed by the Department of Public Administration (DOPA) under the MOI. He/she leads the top role of civil servants in the district area and is assisted by other appointed staff from other Ministries.

Any district consists of at least two Tambons. A **Tambon** or Sub-district is lead by a Sub-district headman or ‘Kamnan’, in Thai. The Kamnan is directly elected by village headmen in that tambon. The Kamnan also works under the district chief officer’s supervision.

**Mooban** or Village is the smallest unit of the Provincial administration. The head is simply called a Village headman or headwoman who is voted in by villagers in every five years. The Village headman is also considered a government officer who receives remuneration from the central government.

### 4.1.3 Local Administration (Decentralisation)

Local administration includes five\(^8\) local units and they can be categorised into two types. Firstly, the municipalities or **Tessaban** (established 1933\(^9\)), Provincial Administration Organization or **PAO** (established 1933 and updated 1997\(^{10}\)), and the Tambon Administration Organisation or **TAO** (Established in 1994) which are considered a general type, which can be spotted in every province around Thailand. The second type is a special type of local unit, which comprise the City of Pattaya (established 1978) and Bangkok Metropolitan Administration or **BMA** (established 1972).

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\(^8\) In this research, Sukhapiban or Sanitary district will not be taken into account since they have been alleviated its status to municipalities in 1999.

\(^9\) The Municipality Act has been upgraded many times, 1933, 1953 and 2000.

\(^{10}\) It must be noted here that the PAO which functions as decentralised local unit in practice has only been launched in 1997 right after the Provincial Administrative Organisation Act 1997 has been promulgated. This dramatically changed the Chair of PAO from an appointed governor to elect a representative. Besides this, the PAO is organised by two bodies; legislative and executive, similar to the parliamentary system.
To be precise, after a long spell of being a perpetually centralised Unitarian state, Thailand ultimately *de jure* started to demonstrate the jargon of Decentralisation. Therefore, the positive suspicion of *de facto* decentralisation is anticipated from the celebrated 1997 People Constitution. The Constitution was an initiative which legitimately allowed decentralisation processes in practice through Thai local governance. The 1997 Constitution, the sixteenth constitution of Thailand, has been drafted and finalised by elected and appointed representatives from all over Thailand. The constitution aimed at eradicating vote-buying and corruption, creating a mechanism for ensuring the transparency as well as to assure people’s participation. Since then, decentralisation, local government and people participation have apparently become focal points for Thai public administration. The era of decentralisation of administrative power has been initiated. The local autonomy in self-government has started to be legitimate. However, the crucial issue argued most among Thai scholars and practitioners was how to differentiate between the provincial or regional administration and local administration. From an interview with ex-executive administration board of DOLA and the ex-director general of the DOLA, they both narrated that the local administration system focuses on ‘development issues’ while the provincial administration deal with security of citizens.

Prior to deepening the analysis and discussion of HRCB in Thailand, the background of contemporary Thai local government context must be explained. The approaching section introduces the context of Thai local governance.
4.2 Contemporary Thai Local Government: understanding the context of Thai local governance

Thailand has just inaugurated its practical and more tangible decentralisation in the 1990s. Decentralisation was urged since the Public Administration Act 1991\(^\text{11}\) (Chayabutra, 1997, Nagai et al., 2008). However, the structure of Thai Local government was not abruptly amended. It was divided into five types of local government units (hereafter LGUs); Municipalities (Tessaban), Tambon Administration Organisation (TAO), Provincial Administration Organizations (PAO), the City of Pattaya and the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA). The first three local units have been categorised according to their degree of urbanisation; from the most urbanised to the least, respectively (Chayabutra, 1997, Nagai et al., 2008, Nagai and Kagoya, 2008). The latter two are exceptionally established units for the internationally attractive tourist city and capital city, correspondingly. These LGUs have not been initiated in accordance with the Public Administration Act 1991. They have been established during the 1930s and 1970s. This signified the attempt to democratise and decentralise Thailand. However, the actual decentralisation process was implemented in 1997 after the promulgation of the People’s Constitution 1997. Thus, it is only reasonable to portray the history and rationale of the Constitution 1997 and its influences.

4.2.1 The 1997 People’s Constitution and Its Influences

Prior to the formation of the 1997 People’s Constitution, there were struggles over the Thai constitutional regime and constitutions. The year 1997 marked the sixteenth constitution of Thailand. Since 1932, when the Thai constitutional regime emerged; there have been occasional military coups, riots, protests and uprisings of new generation university students. Partially, it was claimed that limited participation from civilians had been taken into account in Thai public administration (Ta’i, 2000, Mutebi, 2005, Bowornwathana, 2006). In addition, the government and politics were perceived as activities only for elites; politicians, technocrats and military officials. Moreover, there

\(^\text{11}\) Sukhapiban still existed in the Public Administration Act 1991 and it was upgraded to be municipality in 1999 while TAO has shortly originated in 1994.
were escalating political movements, collective civil society and international influences which included political, economic and social issues that have affected Thailand. Good Governance, transparency, and anti-corruption have been such argots which questioned every country’s administration. This was especially true for Thailand which was perceived as the expected new young ‘fifth tiger’ of Asia that has eventually confronted the tragic economic crisis and started the domino effect to other countries. Henceforth, currently, Thailand could only appear to be a legendary unborn fifth Tiger of Asia (Bello et al., 1999).

It has been argued that the root of that catastrophe originated from corruption, unaccountability, chronic instability of the government and an unproductive implementation body. In accordance with all forces demanding changes, a drafting process was started. People participation was eventually taken into account in the process (Uwanno and Burns, 1998). Therefore, apparently, the sixteenth constitution was an innovative and promising legislative apparatus for Thai people and international communities to bring about resolutions to its administration, democracy and decentralisation.

One of the most imperative sections in the 1997 constitution which stated the significance of decentralisation is the section 78 as the follows:

“The State shall decentralise powers to localities for the purpose of independence and self-determination of local affairs, develop local economics, public utilities and facilities systems and information infrastructure in the locality thoroughly and equally throughout the country as well as develop into a large sized local government organisation. As to make a province ready for such purpose, having regard to the will of the people in that province”….(Constitution of Kingdom of Thailand 1997)

Apparently, the section illustrated how decentralisation became the top national agenda. Moreover, the IX Chapter of the constitution (Section 282-290) comprised detailed content about decentralisation and local government. The summary of some sections related to Human Resource Management and its context preparation will be described further on. The section 283 offers localities the right to originate their own self-governing units. It also has decreed that the state control and custody imposed on local authorities should not intimidate the principles of local self-government.
Moreover, the sections 284 and 285 have supplied the main principles of local autonomy, especially the authorisations that bestow autonomous power in policy formulation, administration, finance, and personnel management. Decisively, they have also mandated the establishment of a decentralisation committee, which would in turn prepare the decentralisation plan, and reconsider, supervise, and endow policy with recommendations for the Cabinet regarding the implementation of decentralisation plans and process. The last example is the section 288, which is extremely essential for human resource management in local governments. It has mandated that a local civil servant law shall be created. The law has stipulated the establishment of local personnel committee which consist of equivalent numbers of representatives from local authorities, central government, agencies, and qualified individuals. This will shortly be explained in the section 4.5.

Therefore, on the whole, the 1997 Constitution was the consent to found many other acts and laws. It is noticeable here that even though this research was conducted in 2009-2011 when the 2007 Constitution had already been promulgated, the 1997 one was still evocative and influential since the 1997 allowed its descendants to be effectual. This could be illustrated by the emergence of the Decentralisation Act of 1999 and the Local Personnel Administration Act 1999, respectively. The LPAA 1999 will be suitably explained in detail in 4.5.1. Hence, before moving forward to the HRM issues and the selected sites rationale, the next section draws on the significance of the Decentralisation Act 1999.

### 4.2.2 The Decentralisation Act 1999

The Decentralisation Act 1999 was made active on November 18, 1999. The act was the offspring of the section 284 of the 1997 Constitution which mandates that

> ‘...For the purpose of the constant development of decentralisation to a higher level, there shall be the law determining plans and process of decentralisation, the substance of which shall at least provide the following matters. The delineation of powers and duties of public service delivered between the State and local authorities and among local authorities themselves. The allocation of taxes and duties between the state and local government's authorities which functions
and responsible for the State and local authorities must be taken into account. The committee shall consist, in an equal numbers, of representatives from relevant government agencies, representatives of local authorities, and qualified persons possessing the qualifications as provided by the law...’ (Thai Decentralisation Act 1999)

The act has been designed to function as a pillar of decentralisation. The decentralisation Act 1999 has influenced various kinds of tasks for both central and local governments. It is the origin of the decentralisation plan and the framework for devolution. In accordance with the Table 4-1 following, the Decentralisation Act 1999 has provided the systematic process of decentralisation, especially the crucial Decentralisation Plan which indicated the procedures of decentralisation and the milestones of its expected success. Moreover, the other tasks according to the decentralisation Act 1999 have also been implemented in order to achieve the ultimate collective goal of better civil services. All related departments and sections would have been notified by the MOI of its new mandates due to the Decentralisation Act 1999; especially the agenda of decentralised human resource management which has been descended from both the Constitution of 1997 and Decentralisation Act 1999. Therefore, the Local Personnel 1999 Act was enacted. Accordingly, the structure of Thai public administration and its intertwined relations amongst the three tiers of governments must be elucidated in the next section in order to comprehend the central-local relations and their functions.
### Table 4-1: The influences of the Decentralisation Act 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The influences of the Decentralisation Act 1999</th>
<th>Summary of the National Plan on Decentralisation process</th>
<th>The Framework of three dimensions devolution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Establish the National Decentralisation Committee dependable directly to the Office of the Prime Minister.</td>
<td>1) A wider margin of powers is granted to local authorities for policy decision-making and their administration, especially in terms of personnel and finance.</td>
<td>1) Responsibilities in Public Services: Responsibilities and duties shared by both Central and local governments or those that are undertaken by central government; will be re-considered and transferred to the local ones with its capacity consideration.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2) Stipulate authority and responsibilities in public service delivery, especially those which concern the jurisdiction among local government organisations and intergovernmental relations between the central government and LGUs. | 2) Local decision making on public service delivery will be done with a minimum degree of control by the central government. | 2) Financial Administration and Budgeting:  
- Improve effectiveness in revenue collection and taxation.  
- The allocation of revenue from taxation must take the size and the amount of service delivery into consideration.  
- The central government might provide subsidies but only with some conditions.  
- The central government must set up procedures and standards in financial administration for LGUs. |
| 3) Determine the ratio of revenue allocation based on the taxation between the central government and LGUs and with regards to responsibilities devolved to local government. | 3) Increase effectiveness in local administration with the emphasis on transparency, efficiency and public involvement | 3) The devolution of Personnel Administration:  
There exist government policies to transfer staff from central agencies to assist local government organisations in order to resolve the problem of insufficiency of local expertise. This is to be accompanied with standard setting and mechanism to enable local personnel administration to meet the standards as to career advancement, benefits and fairness for local personnel. |
| 4) Stipulate a plan to determine the process of decentralisation. | - | **The development of Mechanism for Scrutinizing Local Service Performance has been accomplished.** |

Source: Adopted from DOLA (2010)
4.2.3 The Structure of Thai Public Administration: intergovernmental relations

Figure 4-3: The Structure of Thai Public Administration

Pursuant to the Public Administration Act 1991 and the figure 4-3, Thai public administration system has been divided into three-tiers. This division of authority has attracted some argument. In fact, if we re-considered thoroughly the central and provincial or regional administration, it could be noticed that they belong to the same
bureaucratic system, while only the local administration has differed. Fundamentally, the provincial authorities are granted power by the central government, as subordinates to the ministers concerned. On the contrary, the local government has separated its personnel administration from the bureaucratic system. However, while the LGUs have still derived a mentoring system from the central government, they also earn their power by the people’s direct election. Therefore, this critical divergence between the provincial and the local has led to the same conclusion. It is apparent enough to argue that in practice there are only two-tiers of public administration because the provincial one is still bestowed power by the central government. Therefore, de facto, there have been two main bodies of governments under the principles of unitary state like the kingdom of Thailand, namely the central and the local governments.

The key actor who has performed in the central tier is the Ministry of Interior (centralisation), who relates to local administration - the Department of Local Administration (DOLA). The department was established in accordance with the Decentralisation Act 1999 and the National Plan on Decentralisation process in order to support the progress of decentralising administrative power. To be precise, DOLA has embraced the duties of promoting and providing support for developing the capacity of local governments so that they are able to respond effectively to people’s requirements. The department separated from its senior agency – the Department of Public Administration (DOPA) - in 2002. Therefore, the DOLA has the duty of mentoring the LGUs throughout Thailand in every single administrative issue. The DOLA has five major missions as demonstrated in the figure 4-4.

According to the figure 4-4, the DOLA has executed its duties at the central level while the Provincial Department of Local Administration (hereafter, PDOLA) has also been deconcentrated to the provincial level. Moreover, it is noticeable that the PAOs have still been monitored by the governor of each province, as well as that the municipalities and the City of Pattaya has been monitored by the PDOLA. The BMA has still been overseen by the Ministry of Interior itself. Finally, the TAOs have also been supervised by the district head or Nai Amphoe at each district around Thailand. Therefore, it is noticeable that the hierarchical mentoring system has never diminished from the Thai administration system. The MOI has still embraced the role of ‘mentor’ and ‘supervisor’ for every perspective in administration for subordinate governments in practice and legislation. As a result, this would become an interesting point to explore and discuss in the forthcoming chapters of discussion – fifth to seventh.
Figure 4-4: The DOLA’s Five Major Missions

1) Develop the DOLA to become a highly competent department
2) Support the process of deciding on a local plan which is relevant and compatible with the National and provincial strategies and concerned with the requirements from local people through civil society
3) Build up capacity of local civil servants and alleviate the Human Resource Management for local governments to achieve professional standards
4) Develop the local fiscal and budgeting system to attain efficiency and accountability
5) Establish and improve the local administrative system to standardise local civil services for local people

Source: Adopted from DOLA (2009)

The subsequent section provides profound details of each local government unit or organisation which includes the Provincial Administration Organisation (PAOs), Tambon Administration Organisation (TAOs), Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) and the Pattaya city. The municipalities system will be described in details in the section 4.3, afterwards.

4.2.4 The Local Government Units (LGUs)

In accordance with figure 4-3, there are five local government units in Thailand. This section comprehensively describes the four LGUs which are the PAOs, TAOs, the BMA and the city of Pattaya. The municipality will be illustrated in section 4.3. Amongst the four LGUs; PAOs and TAOs have been considered rural governmental units (DOLA, 2010) whereas the BMA and the city of Pattaya have been considered special administrative local units, and certainly urbanised units. Therefore, for insightful comprehension regarding LGUs in Thailand, PAOs, TAOs, BMA and the city of Pattaya will be explained here.
4.2.4.1 Provincial Administrative Organisation (PAOs)

To some extent, there are differences between the authorities of provinces as part of provincial administration, and the authority of PAOs as local administrative units. Powers is actually achieved differently in the same area. The power of PAOs is received from local people while the province and the governor are delegated power from the central government.

However, the history regarding the PAO must be declared. The PAO commenced its status as local government since the creation of a ‘Provincial Council’. The rationale beneath this establishment was that the governor might be considered as an outsider to people in each province. Therefore, he or she may require another body to support themselves in provincial affairs as insiders. Hence, the so called ‘Provincial Council’ was created in 1933. However, at that time, members of PAO council were appointed by central government. Thus the concept of self-government had not yet been actualised. Its autonomy was gained in 1955 when the Provincial Administrative Organisation Act 1955 was promulgated. From then PAOs have been in the realm of local administration. In reality, we could perceive its autonomy as a dichotomy since the governor of a province still holds a position as *ex officio* head of PAO. Eventually in 1997 when the Provincial Administrative Organisation Act 1997 was promulgated, a remarkable change arrived. *Ex officio* chief executives of PAO did not exist any longer. Only elected ones from the provincial constituents would hold that position. Forthcoming is the organisation chart of the PAO (DOLA, 2010).
The main duty of PAOs is to coordinate and support every local unit in the province; TAOs and municipalities (Please see also the table 4-1 and 4-2). In other words, PAOs are responsible for the tasks which were left behind from the TAOs and the municipalities. Some special powers have been delegated to PAOs through central government and provincial government. However, in implementing any activities, the executive body must request for the consent from the PAO council first. Besides this, a PAO must also receive the permission from those local authorities – TAOs or municipalities - concerned prior to carrying out any duties in their area. Therefore, PAO still mediates the communication between the central agencies and other local units. Apparently, PAO embraces its duty in a holistic view of each province (DOLA, 2010). Therefore, it is also suggested to look through the duties of other small entities like TAOs in the following section.
4.2.4.2 Tambon Administrative Organisation (TAOs)

The TAO is the smallest unit of local government in Thailand. The majority of them have jurisdiction over rural areas though some of them are situated in urban areas. The Tambon Administrative Organisation Act was ratified in 1994. The act primarily dictated that the Tambon Council must be created to organise the local affairs in its area. The local affairs are for example, the maintenance of roads and waterways, providing basic infrastructure and community development. Apart from this, if their revenue steadily increases by more than 1,500,000 baht (30,000 pounds) for three consecutive fiscal years, their status will be improved to a TAO with legal recognition by the MOI proclamation. Some TAOs may be established by the combination or amalgamation of two TAOs or with other LGUs (DOLA, 2010).

The TAO is chiefly mentored by the Sub district council and sub-district Administrative Organisation Act. The TAO is also comprised of an Executive Board lead by the Chief executive and local civil servants who would implement policies into action. The highest position for these local civil servants is the Chief Administrator or ‘Palad Aorbortor’.

Once again, the power and duties of TAO were explained in the table 4-2. However, the TAO power and duties are limited to the authorisation by legislative acts. However, the powers of the central administration maintain to exercise some control over the local jurisdiction. Besides, in order to perform any duties listed in the table 4-2, local ordinances must be issued. The ordinance may be launched to collect fees or fines from any target group (DOLA, 2010). However, imprisonment orders are not allowed to be issued in local ordinance in any cases. Below, the hierarchical organisation chart of the TAO in general is presented.
4.2.4.3 Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA)

The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration or BMA was established as a special unit of local administration in 1985 due to the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration Act. Bangkok was previously organised in a dual system: provincial administration (Bangkok province and Thonburi province) and local administration (Bangkok city municipality and Thonburi city Municipality). Bangkok province and Thonburi province were combined in 1971, the two city municipalities being amalgamated in the process. The new united city municipality was named ‘Nakhon Luang’ Municipality. The new municipality was lead by the ex officio governor of Bangkok Thonburi Nakhon Luang Province. However, it was an era of ambiguity due to the fact that in 1972 that combined province became ‘Bangkok Metropolitan’. Therefore, the municipality fell into a dilemma, categorised as both provincial and local administration. This was because

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12 Nakhon Luang literally means the capital city.
Bangkok Metropolitan was still considered as a province, while the governor and the council members could be elected by the citizens of Bangkok. Therefore Bangkok Metropolitan was hesitantly either a local administration in the disguise of a provincial administration or vice versa (DOLA, 2010).

This ambivalent status of Bangkok Metropolitan was terminated by the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration Act in 1975. It was categorised as a special type of local government. The executive and members of the council were to be voted in by the eligible Bangkok constituents. The act was amended in 1985 and BMA was totally organised on its autonomy. It then organised its fiscal and human resource administration by its own authority (Bangkok Metropolitan, 2012).

If considering the power and duties of the BMA, it looks like the fully authorised of an urbanised mega-municipality. It is required to perform 44 functions according to the amended BMA Act 1985. They include, for instance, maintaining the laws and orders written in the Act, Bangkokian registration, preventing and relieving public disasters, maintaining hygiene and tidiness of the city, city planning, provision and maintenance of roads, waterways and drainage systems; traffic engineering, provision of transportation services, educational provision, etc. Therefore, the BMA provides almost all facilities for Bangkokians.

The BMA council is composed of elected members who are voted in by the eligible constituents who reside in Bangkok. The number of council members changes according to the number of Bangkokians under its jurisdiction. The BMA council embraces the duty of issuing the local laws, ordinances, regulations and rules. Moreover, it functions as the scrutiniser and approver of the annual budget. Crucially, these representatives in the council also indirectly control the performance of the city administration.

Holistically, the directly elected BMA governor is the principal leader of the BMA Executive. The term of his or her office is four years from the election date. In general, his/her duties are formulating policies and supervising, ordering, allowing, approving any subjects regarding the BMA administration, and appointing or removing the vice-governor. Simultaneously, the permanent secretary of the BMA is the head of the local officials. He/she carries out the supervision on the routine of every BMA unit. However, there are three main offices of the BMA: the Office of the BMA civil service
commission, the office of the permanent secretary and the office of the budget and finance. According to the duties described, powers are exercised by two main bodies in the BMA. The recent BMA organisation chart is presented in the following figure 4-7. Another LGU crucial to be mentioned is the City of Pattaya, the main tourism city in Thailand.

Figure 4-7: The Organisation Chart of Bangkok Metropolitan Administration

Source: Adopted from Bangkok Metropolitan (2012)
4.2.4.4 The City of Pattaya

‘Naklua Sanitary District’ was the former status of the City of Pattaya. It has been promoted to be a type of special local administration due to the fact that its tourism industry has been internationally popular. The city is a part of Chonburi province located in the east of Thailand. It was authorised as a special LGU in 1978 due to the Pattaya City Act 1978. The Pattaya City Mayor is in charge of its administration. The recent amended version of the Act in 1999 allows Pattaya city to have an elected chief executive who must be voted in by the citizens of Pattaya city. Moreover, it also mandated that Pattaya City is to perform similarly to a municipality which can be observed in its eleventh issue which stated that Pattaya city must do the duties expected of a city municipality.\[13\]

The Pattaya City Council comprises 24 councillors who have been elected by the citizens of Pattaya. The councillors have the duty of choosing the president of the council and two vice presidents. After that the appointed candidates will be sent for approval by the governor of Chonburi province. The Pattaya City council also holds exactly the same duties as a city municipality council (Pattaya, 2012).

Regarding the executive position, the Pattaya Mayor will perform his/her duties for a four year term. The mayor is elected directly by the citizens of Pattaya and is authorised to appoint not more than four deputy mayors. The Pattaya mayor’s duties are as similar as of other City Municipalities. However, it is also indicated as an issue that the Pattaya mayor must undertake any duties assigned by the Thai cabinet, prime minister, ministers or governor as provided by law. Thus, it is still a local government unit where a mentor is still legitimate. At the same time, the chief administrator of Pattaya City is the head of Pattaya City Office. He/she is responsible for general routine administration. Therefore, Pattaya City is systematically organised as similar as a City Municipality while the focal points of this separation aim at its content of being a main international tourist attraction. The recent Pattaya city organisation chart is presented as following in the figure 4-8.

\[13\] Please see the Power and Duties of City Municipality in the table 4-3 in the section 4.3.
The approaching section will draw an understanding of the important administrative unit called a ‘Municipality’, which is the selected unit for this research. It would then describe how crucial and interesting it is, that it has become the selected unit of analysis for this research.
### Table 4-2: The Comparative duties and powers amongst PAOs, TAOs and Municipalities in Thai local administration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PAOs</th>
<th>Compulsory duties</th>
<th>Discretionary duties (According to specified Acts)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Issues local ordinances within the laws</td>
<td>1. Provide and maintain roads and waterways</td>
<td>1. Provide safe drinking water and water sources for agriculture;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Formulate development plan and integrate it into provincial</td>
<td>2. Maintain cleanliness of roads, water ways, sidewalks and public lands as well as reduce sewage and</td>
<td>2. Provide and maintain electricity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>development plan</td>
<td>wastes</td>
<td>3. Provide and maintain drainage systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Support sub-district councils and other local authorities</td>
<td>3. Prevent infectious diseases</td>
<td>4. Provide and maintain meeting forums, athletic activities, recreation and public parks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>regarding local development</td>
<td>4. Prevent and relieve disasters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Coordinate and cooperate with sub-district councils and other</td>
<td>5. Promote education, religion and cultures</td>
<td>5. Provide and promote cooperative agriculture;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>local authorities</td>
<td>6. Promote woman’s groups, youth, the elderly and handicapped</td>
<td>6. Promote household industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Provide grants as authorised by laws to sub-district councils and</td>
<td>7. Protect and conserve natural resources</td>
<td>7. Maintain and promote local careers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other local authorities</td>
<td>8. Preserve local arts, wisdom, and customs</td>
<td>8. Protect and maintain public assets and property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Exercise PAO powers over sub-district councils areas in pursuant</td>
<td>9. Perform other designated duties in accordance with government instruction by appropriating budget</td>
<td>9. Make benefit from public assets and property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to the PAO Act 1955</td>
<td></td>
<td>10. Provide markets, ports and piers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Preserve and maintain the environment and natural resources</td>
<td></td>
<td>11. Promote commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Preserve local arts, customs, local wisdom and local cultures</td>
<td></td>
<td>12. Promote tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Exercise powers and duties of other local authorities in PAO</td>
<td></td>
<td>13. Town planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jurisdiction, which should be collectively undertaken by other local</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>authorities or implemented by PAO itself as provided for in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ministerial regulations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Implement other duties as provided by the PAO Act or other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>related laws that specify PAO duties</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipalities</td>
<td>All three types of municipalities; Sub-district (Tambon), Town (Muang) and City (Nakhorn), may exercise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>various duties within their jurisdictions and each one may undertake different volumes as specified in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the municipality Act. In general, the duties of municipalities can be classified as either compulsory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>discretionary ones. However, the duties indicated in the act also vary according to the level of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>municipality that each municipality is categorised in.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Please see also three tables in the section 4.3 for further detailed information.]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adopted from the DOLA (2010)
4.3 Municipality: the initial pioneer form of the Thai local government unit

4.3.1 Concise Background of Municipality

Only a year after the Thai political regime changed from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional one, the Tessaban or Municipality Act was enacted in 1933. During its initiation period, the organisational structure was influenced by the Council-Mayor form, similar to the one of the United Kingdom. Primarily, the mayor was indirectly voted for. The inhabitants vote for representatives, then among the representatives one will be chosen as a mayor. Therefore, it is noticeable that with the municipality system, the Thai local government had opened the door to the participatory democracy (DOLA, 2010).

In pursuance of the 1953 Municipality Act, there are three levels of municipalities in Thailand. They are City, Town and Sub-district municipalities. The general criteria applied to classify the different classes of municipalities are the density of population, local economic growth (indicated by the self-collected revenue), and capacity for municipality development. One particular exemption for the establishment is that in any area where a provincial hall is situated, the municipality must either be a town municipality or a city municipality despite the fulfilment of any other general criteria. Apart from these conditions, all types of municipalities are established with the same criteria.

Since the establishment of the first municipality in 1933, numbers of municipalities have gradually increased. By 1999, all sanitary districts had been converted to municipalities so that the number of municipalities expanded from 149 to 1,130 countrywide (DOLA, 2010). Currently, the issue of numbers of municipalities is not as significant as the issue of promoting municipalities to reach higher levels. The status of being more developed has thus become more important. Another point worth noticing is in the amended 2000 Municipality Act, which allows the constituents to have power in deciding whether to have direct elections or council resolution.
4.3.2 Authority and Duties of Municipality

According to the Municipality Act 2000, all three types of municipalities have been designated duties and powers. Their duties and powers are varied according to their volume of work. In general, their duties can be classified into two main types, the compulsory duties and discretionary duties, as similar as the ones for TAOs. Their duties will be described in the table 4-3 to 4-5.

Table 4-3: Duties and Powers of Sub-District Municipalities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-District Municipalities (Small size)</th>
<th>Compulsory duties (Article 50)</th>
<th>Discretionary duties (Article 51)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Maintain peace and neatness</td>
<td>1. Provide safe drinking water and water sources for agriculture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Provide and maintain roads and water ways</td>
<td>2. Provide abattoir slaughterhouses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Maintain cleanliness of roads or pedestrians and public surfaces including waste management</td>
<td>3. Provide markets, ports and piers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Prevent and contain infectious diseases</td>
<td>4. Provide cemeteries and crematories</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Provide fire and extinguishers and equipments</td>
<td>5. Provide and promote careers for local people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Provide education</td>
<td>6. Provide and maintain infirmaries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Promote woman’s groups, youth, the elderly and handicapped</td>
<td>7. Provide and maintain electricity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Preserve local arts, customs, local wisdom and local cultures</td>
<td>8. Provide and maintain waterways</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Other duties subject to laws</td>
<td>9. Municipality enterprises</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adopted from Thachaangklong (2010)
Table 4-4: Duties and Powers of Town Municipalities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compulsory duties (Article 53)</th>
<th>Discretionary duties (Article 54)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Duties stated in article 50 as specified in table 4-3;</td>
<td>1. Provide markets, ports and piers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Provide safe drinking water and clean water;</td>
<td>2. Provide cemeteries and crematories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Provide an abattoir;</td>
<td>3. Provide and promote career for local people;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Provide cemeteries and crematories</td>
<td>4. Provide social welfare for children and mothers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Provide and maintain infirmaries</td>
<td>5. Provide and maintain hospitals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Provide and maintain water ways</td>
<td>6. Provide public facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Provide and maintain electricity</td>
<td>7. Undertake necessary health activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Provide pawnshops or a local loan bank.</td>
<td>8. Establish and subsidize vocational schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. Provide and maintain public places for sport activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10. Provide and maintain parks, zoos, and recreational places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11. Improve dilapidated towns and maintain cleanliness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12. Municipal commerce</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adopted from Phayao (2010)
Table 4-5: Duties and powers of City Municipalities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compulsory duties (Article 56)</th>
<th>Discretionary duties (Article 57)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Duties stated in article 53 as specified in table 4-4</td>
<td>Other duties as provided by article 54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Provide social welfare for children and mothers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Undertake necessary health activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Control sanitation and public health standards in restaurants, theatres and other entertainments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Develop housing and recondition dilapidated towns and maintain cleanliness;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Provide markets, ports, piers, and car parking lots;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Undertake urban planning and control building construction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Promote tourism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adopted from Songkhla (2010b)

The duties and power of the municipality are provided by the municipality act. Municipalities are obliged to perform the activities according to the Act as illustrated above. However, the duties which can be provided by the municipalities must be issued in ordinances beforehand. The ordinances can enforce fees or fines but they are not authorised to entail prison sentences in the local jurisdiction in any case. Additionally, the ordinances and the local civil services provided by the municipalities must meet the minimum requirements indicated by the central agencies that are responsible for that sector. Finally, another crucial power is that municipalities can undertake an activity outside their jurisdiction as long as the municipalities’ council has consented and the provincial governor endorses it.
4.3.3 The Municipality Council and its Authority

The two major organs of municipalities include the municipality council and the executive panel. The council members are elected by the citizens of the municipality. The numbers of council members vary according to the size of the municipality; 12 members for the sub-district, 18 members for a town and 24 members for a city municipality. Essentially, the powers of the council are (1) approving municipalities development plans which are formulated by the chief executive as a guideline/framework for municipality administration; (2) considering and passing the municipality ordinances which includes budget appropriation and its amendment; and (3) scrutinising the executive performance by the law, development plan and government regulations. Finally, their term in office lasts for four years started on the election date; however, the councillor can leave the position the cases that follow;

1) End of term and dissolution of the council
2) Death
3) Resignation
4) Disqualification as a candidates;
5) Absences from three consecutive council sessions
6) Illegal action
7) Council resolution to remove the person from the council
8) Being petitioned to be removed by three fourths of the local constituents.

The council is managed by the chairman and vice-chairman who are appointed by the governor under the council’s approval. The council chairman is responsible for presiding over the council meeting, and operating local council affairs in accordance with the content of the ordinances.

4.3.4 The Mayor and the Authority *(Nayok Tessamontri)*

The municipal mayor is directly elected by the constituents of the municipality. According to the municipal Act, the mayor must be at least 30 years old on the election date. Moreover, he or she must hold at least a Bachelor degree or equivalent. He or she must not have been removed from being a council member because of directly or indirectly involving in local conflict of interest. Finally, he or she must not be a councillor or local executive who has been removed in a case of corruption or illegal action.
A term in the position can last for four years. However, the frequency and continuity of being in the position has always been a controversial issue. In 2010, the law allowed the mayor to have no limits to prevent him/her continuously applying for the position as long as the constituents agree and support with their votes. In each municipality, the mayor is also allowed to have deputy mayors. This also depends on the size of the municipality; two people for sub-district one, three for the town municipality and four for the city municipality (DOLA, 2010).

The municipal mayor possesses five major powers to exercise:

1) Formulating policies subject to relevant laws and regulations
2) Authorising or approving the matters concerning municipal administration
3) Appointing and removing deputy mayors, the mayor’s consultant, and the mayor’s secretary
4) Issuing instructions for implementing municipal works
5) Performing any duties as provided by Municipality Act and other acts

Therefore, the mayor presides over all the duties for municipal administration including the budgeting and human resource management within the municipality. To emphasise, the Act of local personnel administration 1999 and its descendant on local Councillors and Executive Administrator Election 2002 have indicated evidently that a mayor of each municipality has full power on human resource management. This will also be discussed in relation to the human resource management of municipalities in practice in section 4.5.

4.3.5 The Chief Administrator or Municipal Clerk (Palad Tessaban)

Chief administrator is a government official who is appointed by the local personnel administration committee at the provincial level as the leader of all other civil servants in the municipality. He or she can either be called ‘municipal clerk’ or ‘Palad Tessaban’. The main duty of the municipal clerk is to organise the routine tasks of the municipality. However, the tasks and jobs are in accordance with the mayor’s policies, other activities provided by the concerned acts or the assigned by the mayor. Since the local personnel administration Act 1999 was promulgated, the municipal clerk also has to have approval by the mayor in the case of his/her promotion, transfer or even rotation of the position. Besides this, the thirteenth amended version of the Municipality Act
1953 which came in 2009 has visibly stated that the Municipal Clerk is the second hierarchical leader in each municipality from the mayor. In turn, the deputy municipal clerk only supports and is subordinate to the municipal clerk. Therefore, the highest position in each municipality in command of the entire powers in each municipality is held by the mayor. The office of municipality has been divided into departments and sections. The structure of a municipality will be illustrated in the figure 4-9.

**Figure 4-9: Structure of Municipality**

According to the Figure 4-9 above, the structure of municipalities vary slightly according to their size. However, in general, they still apply the same main structure as illustrated. Special section or departments can be established according to special functions indicated in each municipality which are legitimately allowed by the Decentralisation Act 1999 and Public Administration Act 2000.
4.4 The Four Selected Municipalities in four regions of Thailand: The diversity of resemblance

Four municipalities in the north, south, north-east and central Thailand have been selected as the case studies for this research. Due to their differences in region, geography, economic status and population size; there are diversities as well as similarities. The following sections describe preliminary data and background of each selected municipality.

4.4.1 Tessaban Nakhon Songkhla (South Region – City Municipality)

Tessaban Nakhon Songkhla or Songkhla City Municipality is situated in Songkhla Province, a large province in the southern part of Thailand. In old times, Songkhla itself used to be a capital city of Nakhon Srithammarat Precinct of Siam. After the bureaucratic reformation, Songkhla became one province of Thailand. Regarding the local administration, Songkhla originally was a sanitary city in 1920. It became a town municipality in 1935 and finally developed into Songkhla City Municipality in 1999.

In regard with its geography, Songkhla City Municipality has responsibility over 9.27 square kilometres and borders the Singhanakhon District in the north; the Khao Roob Chang in the south; the Thai Gulf in the east; and the Songkhla Lake in the west. Therefore, the area within Songkhla City Municipality is the coastal part of Songkhla province which is the most crucial part of its economic aspect. From the latest survey in April 2010, Songkhla City Municipality has 72,066 people composed of 34,709 men and 37,357 women. There are 25,366 houses, 19,838 households and 1,921 temporary accommodations. The average population density is 7,774.41 persons per a square kilometre. In total there are 51,911 eligible voters which are 24,415 men and 27,496 women (Songkhla, 2010a).

Songkhla City Municipality is one of the City Municipalities in Thailand. The thirteenth amended version in 2009 of the Municipality Act 1953 justified its status, its legislative power and its duties as a juridical personality. The Songkhla City Municipality is legally

14 Tessaban Nakhon is a City Municipality with a large population; large amount of revenue and a strong capacity to develop its own community.
allowed to administer its local personnel, local finance and budget and has a certain area of responsibility. However, these responsibilities and authority must not exceed that indicated by national laws and regulations, especially of the 2007 constitution.

The departmental division of Songkhla City Municipality is allocated into nine departments or sectors as followings (Songkhla, 2010b):

1. The Office of the chief administrator or municipal clerk: This department has a responsibility over general tasks which other particular departments do not take account of, or any other tasks assigned.
2. The Finance Department: This department takes care of every financial, fiscal, budgeting and accounting issue for the municipality and all other assigned tasks.
3. The Engineering Department: This department has entire responsibility for town planning, and provision of infrastructure and other public facilities. It also implements any assigned tasks.
4. The Education Department: This department has the main responsibility for educational provision within the realm of the municipality. Besides this, they also implement any tasks as they are assigned.
5. The Bureau of Planning and Policy: This sector has its main responsibilities in Policy surveying and planning. Besides, they also implement any tasks they are assigned.
6. The Bureau of Public Health care and environment: This sector has the main responsibilities of taking care of the Public health provision and maintains municipal area’s environment. They also carry out any tasks as they are assigned.
7. The Bureau of Social Welfare: These sector’s main responsibilities are community development and social welfare provision.
8. The internal auditor sector: The sector mainly provides some comments towards the working conditions and public services provision for the office of the municipal clerk, especially the financial and budgeting issues.

To perform these tasks, there are local civil servants in each department. The following table illustrates the of staff numbers in Songkhla City Municipality.
### Table 4-6: The of staff numbers in Songkhla City Municipality (March 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dept</th>
<th>Max. No. of staff</th>
<th>Levels of positions</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Vacant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office of the chief administrator</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Ks.2 8 9</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance Dept.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 - - 1 1</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineer Dept.</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 - - 1 2</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>42</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health Dept.</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 - - 1 2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Dept.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 - - 1 2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureau of Planning and Policy</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 - - 1 2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureau of Social Welfare</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 - - 1 2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal auditor sector</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 - - - - - - - - -</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>117</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adopted from Songkla (2010b)
4.4.2 Tessaban Muang\textsuperscript{15} Phayao Municipality (North Region - Town Municipality)

Phayao is one of the provinces of the Northern part of Thailand. The neighbouring provinces are (from east clockwise) Nan, Phrae, Lampang and Chiang Rai. In the north-east it borders Xaignabouli of Laos (Lao PDR). The city of Phayao is located nearby the Phayao Lake or ‘Kwan Phayao’ in the valley of the Ing River. There are three prominent mountains surrounding the valley, the Doi Luang (1,697m), Doi Khun Mae Fat (1,550m) and Doi Khun Mae Tam (1,330m). The province became the 72\textsuperscript{nd} province of Thailand, when it was separated from Chiangrai province in 1977 (Phayao, 2007).

In regards to its geographical area, the Phayao Town Municipality itself has only nine square kilometres under its duty. This area includes two combined sub-districts. Its neighbouring localities are Tom Sub-district in the north, Maeka Sub-district in the south, Thawangthong Sub-district in the east and Kwan Phayao and Mae Sai Sub-districts in the west (Phayao, 2010).

From the latest survey in March 2007, Phayao Town Municipality has 18,936 people which comprise 8,981 men and 9,982 women. There are 8,185 houses and 8,065 households. The population density is 2,107 persons per a square kilometre, averagely. The infrastructure in the area of Phayao Town Municipality is well-equipped. The main road to reach Phayao Town Municipality is the High way number one, Phaholyotin road, from Bangkok. This main road ends at Chiangrai province. Other road branches were constructed by the Phayao Town Municipality. With regards to electricity, all communities in the area of Phayao Town Municipality are well provided for. Besides this, the usage of water is under the responsibility of the Regional pipeline. The main occupations of the Phayao Town Municipality citizens are agriculture, trading, industry and tourism, respectively. The average income of the citizen is 21,781 baht (£435) per person per year in 2007.

\textsuperscript{15} Tessaban Muang is an Urban town Municipality with medium size of population and lower revenue or income than a large municipality.
The departmental division of Phayao Town Municipality is into eight departments similarly to Songkhla City Municipality; but with a smaller scale of staff and without the local internal audit section. The eight departments are as follows:

1. The Office of the chief administrator or municipal clerk: This department has a responsibility of general tasks which other particular departments do not perform or any other tasks assigned. There are 18 staffs in this department.

2. The Finance Department: This department takes care of every financial, fiscal, budgeting and accounting need of the municipality and all other assigned tasks. There are 14 staffs in this department.

3. The Engineer Department: This department has entire responsibility over the town planning, provision of infrastructure and other public facilities. Besides, they also implement any tasks as they are assigned. There are 16 staffs in this department.

4. The Education Department: This department has the main responsibility of educational provision within the municipality. Besides this, they also implement any tasks as they are assigned. There are eight staffs in this department.

5. The Bureau of Planning and Policy: This sector has the main responsibilities of Policy surveying and planning. Besides this, they also implement any tasks as they are assigned. There are six staffs in this department.

6. The Bureau of Public Health care and environment: This sector has the main responsibility of taking care of the Public health provision and keeping the municipal area a good environment. They also implement any tasks as they are assigned. There are nine staffs in this department.

7. The Bureau of Social Welfare: This sector has the main responsibilities of community development and social welfare provision. There are 4 staffs in this department.

8. The mortgage bureau: There are six staffs in this department.
4.4.3 Tessaban Muang Raikhing Municipality (Central Region - Town Municipality)

Nakhon Pathom province is one of the central provinces of Thailand. The neighbouring provinces are (from north clockwise) Suphanburi, Ayutthaya, Nonthaburi, Bangkok, Samut Sakhon, Ratchaburi and Kanchanaburi, respectively. Geographically, Nakhon Pathom is a small province 56 km from Bangkok. It is in the alluvial plain of central Thailand and is drained by the Tha Chin River, a branch of the Chao Phraya River. The nearby capital city of Bangkok has grown until it actually reached the provincial border of Nakhon Pathom. The province is renowned for an ancient stupa called the 'Phra Pathom Chedi', though the actual chedi or stupa is completely shrouded under a larger one built in the 19th century. The chedi is a reminder of the long-vanished Dvaravadi civilisation that once flourished here and according to history Nakhon Pathom is where Buddhism first came to Thailand. The province is well-known for its numerous fruit orchards (Raikhing, 2010).

Tessaban Muang Raikhing or Raikhing Town Municipality is situated in the Saam Pran District, in Nakhon Pathom Province. Raikhing Town Municipality is a Town Municipalities. It was originally established as a TAO Council in 1994. Afterwards, it was founded as a TAO with legal personality itself in 1998 when the TAO Act 1995 was enacted. Recently, in 2008, Raikhing TAO has been promoted its status to be Raikhing Town Municipality according to a MOI announcement. There are 25.4 square kilometres under its responsibility. Geographically, it is connected to Bang Kratuk Sub-district and Bangtoey Sub-district in the north, Aomyai Sub-district and Thakaam Sub-district in the south, Kratumlom Sub-district in the east and Tha talaad Sub-district and Songkanong Sub-district in the west.

Due to the fact that the entire Nakhon Pathom province is an alluvial plain area of Thailand, Raikhing Town Municipality has embraced this quality. Primarily, agriculture was the main occupation for the citizens. Recently, modernisation and industrialisation have caused more urbanised occupations for the citizens in the area. Therefore, industrial work, real estate business and trading are gradually becoming strong in the area. There has been a continual increase in migrant numbers from all over Thailand to the area. From the latest official survey in April 2010, Raikhing Town Municipality has
24,866 people which comprise 11,794 men and 25,431 women in the registration (Raikhing, 2010).

The infrastructure in the area of Raikhing Town Municipality is well-equipped. The main road to reach Raikhing Town Municipality is the Highway Bhudhamontol Fifth. This main road links Bangkok and Nakhon Pathom province, so that the traffic is rather busy. In regard to electricity, all communities in the area of Raikhing Town Municipality are of good provision. Besides this, the usage of water is under the responsibility of the regional pipeline. The main occupations of the Raikhing Town Municipality citizens are no longer agriculture, but trading, industry and tourism, respectively. Therefore, waste management and density of population become the main issue for Raikhing Town Municipality since it has been more urbanised.

The departmental division of Raikhing Town Municipality is into five departments. The five departments are as the followings;

(1) The Office of the chief administrator or municipal clerk: This department has a responsibility of general tasks which other particular departments do not perform or any other tasks assigned.

(2) The Finance Department: This department takes care of every financial, fiscal, budgeting and accounting need for the municipality and all other assigned tasks.

(3) The Engineer Department: This department has entire responsibility over the town planning, infrastructure provision and other public facilities provision. Besides this, they also implement any tasks as they are assigned.

(4) The Education Department: This department has the main responsibility in educational provision within the realm of the municipality. Besides this, they also implement any tasks that they are assigned.

(5) The Bureau of Public Health care and environment: This sector has the main responsibilities in taking care of the Public health provision and keeps the municipal area a good environment. They also implement any tasks as they are assigned.

According to the data collected from the Raikhing Town Municipality, there are 33 local civil servants and a temporary staff of 137 people in total.
Loei is one of the most sparsely populated provinces of Thailand, located in the North-East of Thailand. The neighbouring provinces are (from east clockwise) Nong Khai, Udon Thani, Nongbua Lamphu, Khon Kaen, Phetchabun, and Phitsanulok. In the north it borders Xaignabouli and Vientiane Province of Laos. Loei is a city surrounded by rising and falling mountain ranges whose summits are covered by lines of low cloud and abound with various kinds of flora. The well-known ones are Phu Kradueng, Phu Luang and Phu Raea (Tha-Chang.Klong, 2010b).

Thachangklong Sub-district Municipality is situated in a newly formed district called ‘Pha Khao’. Its responsibility covers 87 square kilometres. Its neighbours are Non Pordeng Sub-district to the north and west, Nongkungkaew Sub-district to the east, Nonsa-aad Sub-district to the south. Geographically, the area of Thachangklong Sub-district Municipality is mainly a plain, a plateau and a hilly land (Tha-Chang.Klong, 2010a). In total, there are 14 villages within the area of the Thachangklong Sub-district Municipality. According to the last official survey, there are 10,675 people that comprise 5,402 men and 5,273 women. There is an average density of 122 people per square kilometres. Besides this, there are 2,383 households belonging to the Thachangklong Sub-district Municipality. The main occupation citizens are agriculture, particularly rice farming and producing cash-crops of sugarcane and cassava. The infrastructures of Thachangklong Sub-district Municipality have reached the minimum requirements set by the DOLA. There are four branches of asphalt roads within the area. All villages are provided with electricity and water. Besides this, there are several natural sources of water for the citizens. The departmental division of Thachangklong Sub-district Municipality forms three main departments. The details are presented in the table 4-7.

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16 Tessaban Tambon is a Sub-district Municipality with small population.
### Table 4-7: Thachangklong Sub-district Municipality Departmentation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dept/Position</th>
<th>No. of staff</th>
<th>The level of education</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt;Bachelor degree</td>
<td>Bachelor degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Office of the chief administrator</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Permanent Officials</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Temporary Officials</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. General hired staffs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Finance Department</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Permanent Officials</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Temporary Officials</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. General hired staffs</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Engineer Department</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Permanent Officials</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Temporary Officials</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. General hired staffs</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>51</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adopted from Tha-Changklong (2010 a)

### 4.5 Human Resource Management for Municipal officials

#### 4.5.1 The Local Personnel Administration Act 1999

It has been slightly over a decade since the Local Personnel Administration Act 1999 (B.E.2542) was promulgated in Thailand. It was enacted in accordance with the 1997 Constitution and the Decentralisation Act 1999. Its main purpose was to allow local government units to be more flexible in their autonomy for human resource management. However, it is noticeable to observe that Article four stated that the Minister of the Interior shall have control of the execution of the Act. There are many issues raised and pronounced in the Act, so that it is exceedingly vital to illustrate those issues.
Initially, it is decisive to refer to the definition of Local Administration organisation. According to the Article three of Local Personnel Administration Act 1999, the Local Administration Organisation signifies PAO, Municipality, BMA, Pattaya City Administration and TAO or other Local Administration Organisation established by Law. Besides, the Local Personnel Administration Act 1999 also identified the Local officials or local civil servants. The Act identifies them as

‘...an official of a PAO, an employee of Municipality, an official BMA, an employee of Pattaya City Administration and an employee of TAO or other Local Administration Organisation established by Law, who is recruited and appointed to perform service and receive salary from the budget of a local administration Organisation under the salary category, or from the government budget under the subsidy category for a Local Administration Organisation where such a Local Administration Organisation has allocated such money as salary for its official or employee.”...
- Local Personnel Administration Act 1999

Noticeably, it can be scrutinised here that the terminology referring to local civil servants actually differs from one another. This has led to some discussion in regard with their equality as being local civil servants. To be precise, the Articles 23 to 24 in Chapter two of the Local Personnel Administration Act 1999 focuses on the HRM of Municipal employees. Article 23 explains that there is a committee on Municipal Personnel functioning as an administrator of personnel for all municipalities in any particular province; whereas Article 24 is related to the Central Committee on Municipal personnel at the Ministry level.

The forthcoming section presents the systematic hierarchy of Local Personnel Management. It has been designed into triple levels of committees; the Commission on Local Government Personnel Standards (under the control of Ministry of Interior), the Central Committee on Municipal personnel at the Ministry level (under the control of Department of Local Administration), and the Provincial Central Committee on Municipal personnel at each province.
4.5.2 The Three tiers of Local Personnel Committee: the Triple Entente

Figure 4-10: Three tiers of Local Personnel Committee and LGUs

According to the Local Personnel Administration Act 1999, the triple tier of Local Personnel Committees has been authorised to take charge of Local Personnel Administration in Thailand. They are the key committees who are supposed to be in charge of forming all policies for local personnel administration. Besides this, they are hierarchically controlled and the lowest provincial and district levels perform as an auditor and mentor for all municipalities.

The Diagram 4-10 illustrates the levels of local personnel committees. The three levels of committee perform their roles and functions differently. The Commission on Local Government Personnel Standards is the top management for the entire local
government’s local personnel committee. It is under the responsibility of the Office of the Permanent Secretary for Interior in the Ministry of Interior. This commission holds a very crucial responsibility as the policy former and the auditor for its lower level committee. In accordance with its role and duties, it is apparent that the policy in relating to local personnel administration is still quite centralised.

The second level of the committee is the ministerial level which is called ‘the Central Committee on Municipal personnel at the Ministry level’. It functions as the second filter before reaching the highest level. Therefore, the personnel administration of each province also has to have consent from the Central Committee on Municipal Personnel which consists of:

(1) The Minister of the Interior or his assigned deputy as the president of the committee
(2) The Permanent Secretary for Interior, Secretary–General of Civil Service Commission, Director of the Bureau of the Budget, The Director General of the Comptroller-General’s Department, and the Director General of the Department of Local Administration
(3) Six municipal representatives, three of whom are elected from mayors and the other three from municipal clerks
(4) Six qualified members selected from those who have expertise in local administration, personnel administration, administration and management or other areas beneficial to the municipal personnel administration

In the selection the qualified members under (4), those members under (1) and (2) nominate nine candidates, and committee members under (3) nominate another 9 candidates. The 18 candidates must choose six from among themselves. The selection methods for the municipal representatives and the experts are to comply with the criteria and conditions designed by the Commission on Local Government Personnel Standards. The Permanent Secretary for Interior is responsible for organising selection of municipal representatives from among either Mayors or City Clerks depending on circumstances.
The third level of the committee is called ‘the Provincial Central Committee on Municipal personnel’ (DOLA-Office, 2003). It functions as the first committee who would confront problems, requests, or any missions demanded by municipalities in its province. The Provincial Central Committee on Municipal personnel at each province is comprised of:

1. The Provincial Governor as the Chairperson
2. Five heads of various government offices in that province which are specified as related offices by the governor; if needed in the best interest of personnel administration, the Governor can amend the list of related offices any time;
3. Six Municipalities representatives:
   a. Speaker of the municipality councils select two representatives from among themselves in the Province area.
   b. Two mayors voted by all the mayors in that province.
   c. Two representatives of municipal officers elected from municipal officers of that province.
4. Six qualified members selected from those who have expertise in local administration, especially in personnel administration, bureaucracy, administration and management or other areas beneficial to the municipal personnel administration.

The governor of the province is responsible for organising the selection of the Speakers of municipal council, mayor and representative of municipal officers. The selection is to be conducted in accordance with guidelines and conditions stipulated by the Central Committee on Municipal Personnel.

In the selection the qualified member under (4), those members under (1) and (2) nominate nine candidates, and committee members under (3) nominate other 9 candidates. The 18 candidates must and choose six among themselves according to guidelines and conditions stipulated by the Central Committee on Municipal Personnel. The Governor assigns one government official or municipal officer to be the secretary for Committee on Municipal Personnel.
Therefore, the three tiers of Local Personnel Administration are the main pillars for the entire country’s local personnel administration. Going against the decentralisation current, hierarchy still plays as an important role in managing Thai local Personnel Administration.

4.6 The Chapter Summary

Figure 4-11: The Map of Thailand and the Selected Four Researched Provinces

Source: Adopted from Wikipedia (2012)
Chapter four has portrayed some background regarding Thai local government and administration. Decentralisation has gradually been adopted into Thai public administration; however, it has been more obvious after the enactment of Decentralisation Act 1999. The Municipality has been a form of local government since 1933 and has been developed and adapted continuously. Since it has been selected as the unit of analysis for this research, four municipalities of different size and geographical settlement have been illustrated. The figure 4-11 above maps out the four provinces in Thailand within which the four municipalities have been established (Wikipedia, 2012). The four municipalities have been selected based on the researcher’s efforts to ensure comparative differences in terms of geography and size of the municipality.

In accordance to these similarities and differences, the research can well represent in the case of human resource capacity building in local administrative units. Therefore, in the approaching chapters five and six, the analysis and discussion will be based on the theoretical framework from chapter two and the data collected from the four municipalities presented in chapter four.
CHAPTER FIVE:  
EXAMINING CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR  
DECENTRALISED HRM IN THAILAND

This chapter depicts the challenges and opportunities that emerged after the decentralisation policy was implemented, especially on human resource management (HRM) in Thailand. In other words, the chapter is founded on the basis of research findings regarding decentralised HRM. The chapter identifies current influences from an administrative decentralisation to HR practices of recruitment and selection, training and development and performance management. Therefore, the chapter replies to the first research question in this thesis which is how far have the decentralised HR practices initiatives affected local personnel administration in Thai municipalities? The results are presented in accordance with the analytical framework in chapter two. To emphasise, the results are derived from the fieldwork completed by the researchers in four municipalities of Thailand. First of all, the general influential issues emerging after the implementations of decentralisation are addressed. Afterwards, the challenges and opportunities caused by decentralisation on the processes of recruitment and selection, training and development, and performance management are presented, respectively.

5.1 An Overview of the Chapter

According to the evolution of Thai public administration which was presented in chapter four, decentralisation has certainly been an essential scheme of recent Thai public administration. The decentralisation was remarkably conducted since 1997 in terms of institutional and structural reforms. It has also augmented more rights for public participation, strengthened public scrutiny at both national and local level, and transformed state power to local units. This action of decentralisation has also been confirmed by the promulgation of the Decentralisation Act 1999 which determines and describes the processes for local government organisations including decentralisation procedures for municipalities. Moreover, the National Plan on Decentralisation 2001 has also been announced to ensure that decentralisation must be implemented thoroughly. Both the Decentralisation Act 1999 and the National Plan on
Decentralisation 2001 have been designed and formulated on the basis of the Thai Constitution 1997. As a result, the devolution of the management of local civil servants or personnel has definitely been one of the tasks devolved to the local governments. The acts, laws and new procedures for local personnel administration have been clarified in the preceding chapter four. However, particular issues from empirical perspectives on recruitment and selection, training and development and performance management for local civil servants will be elucidated in this chapter.

It is important to accentuate here that this research’s data were all collected by the researcher in Thailand. The results presented in this chapter derived from the fieldwork study conducted at the central government unit for local personnel administration and the four municipalities around Thailand.

5.2 Decentralised Recruitment and Selection for Municipalities

It would be an immature conclusion to make as to what the most crucial HRM process for any organisation is. However, recruitment and selection do play the necessary roles as a ‘vacuum’ and ‘filter’, respectively. Organisations are expected to obtain talented, conversant and skilled human assets (McCourt 2006). Recruitment and selection are continual procedures which proceed one after another (Newell, 2005, Lievens and Chapman, 2009). Recruitment is vital in the sense that it should attract appropriate, competent or suitable people as identified in accordance with an organisation’s Job Analysis (JA) (Peterson, 1964, Martineau et al., 2003). The advertisement or notice should ideally be disseminated to target groups of people that the organisation requires (McCourt, 2007). Simultaneously, selection plays an important role as a filter to pick the ‘right man for the right job’ in an organisation. Thus, it is recommended that organisations profoundly consider the human resource planning (HRP\textsuperscript{17}) aspects before conducting recruitment and selection processes (Lavigna and Hays, 2004).

\textsuperscript{17} The Human Resource Planning is not the focus of the research; however, it is mentioned and pronounced since HRM processes are intertwined.
Moreover, to seek and select the right man for a right job at the local government level is very crucial for decentralised human resource management and, more broadly, for ensuring the success of decentralisation itself. Recruiting and selecting the wrong or unskilled employees may result in an increasingly incoherent organisation (McCourt, 2007). The contexts of decentralisation in different countries also cause different outcomes. This will be illustrated in the case study of municipalities in Thailand where the history of being a de jure and de facto centralised bureaucratic polity may affect the inheritance of forms, cultures or behaviours into the decentralised local administration (Haque, 2010). In other words, even within the rhetoric of decentralisation of government, hidden agendas to maintain centralisation may still be present.

Before the Decentralisation Act 1999 and the Local Personnel Administration 1999 were enacted, the local personnel administration had been administrated in the form of ‘Commissions’. The structure and hierarchy of personnel administration was enforced by the laws and acts related to the Provincial Administration Organisation (PAO), Tambon Administration Organisation (TAO), Municipality, Pattaya City and Bangkok Metropolitan. The related laws and Acts indicated and formulated the hierarchical personnel administrative bodies into three tiers: the National Commission level, the Provincial Sub-Committee, and the Local Governments Sub-Committee. In the case of the municipality, its structure is presented as in figure 5-1.
According to figure 5-1, the diagram on the left hand side presents the previous system of local personnel administration in the form of three-tiers of committee. This commission has been responsible for the issuance of regulations on the management of municipal personnel throughout the country. The rationale for this form of municipal personnel management is the expectation of stability and security for the administration of the country at the national level. However, this particular type of commission was terminated in 1999. A previous research study on the prior local personnel administration conducted by Thammasat University in Thailand illustrated that in the whole country of Thailand, there were approximately 7,770 sub-committees and committees which administrated local personnel management. The decisions on local personnel management have always been finalised by the higher or highest level commission. This caused reluctance, red-tape and overlapping in many tasks and procedures (DOLA-Office, 2003).
Conversely, considering the diagram on the right hand side, it seems like the decision and local personnel management is administrated on the basis of a bottom-up approach. From in-depth interviews, the four key informants who worked at the central level; DOLA, had a consensus that the provincial committees are being strengthened to perform all decision making on HRM. The roles and functions of the triple entente have been described in chapter four. Therefore in the approaching section, details on challenges and opportunities of recruitment and selection after the promulgation decentralisation Act 1999 and LPA Act 1999 will be portrayed.

5.2.1 What happened to the decentralised recruitment procedures?

Recruitment has been the initial process of HRM in which there is interaction between new applicants and the organisation. In accordance with the in-depth interviews with four municipal clerks, none of them felt satisfied with decentralised recruitment. A municipal clerk who has been working for municipality for 18 years classified the evolution of local personnel administration into three periods; 1995-2002, 2002-2006, and 2007 to present. Even though the LPA was launched in 1999, the process of decentralisation was only gradually implemented. In 1995 the TAO was officially inaugurated for sub-district levels. As well as other forms of local government, they were finally legitimated to be perceived as a juridical personality.

During 1995-2002, recruitment processes were still relatively centralised. All advertisement and recruiting channels were designed and conducted at the central government level, meaning that they were all arranged by the DOPA\(^{18}\) (Department of Public Administration). In all cases, the local government seemed be looked on as a minor power, with inferior value for the Thai population as a whole. It was because civil servant careers had been considered fitting for the higher levels Thai society for a long time. Therefore, becoming a local civil servant was not popular or attractive for Thai people during this period of time. Another fact was that less of the budget had been transferred to the local governments. As a result, the recruitment process was not successful at its initial stage. Prospective candidates paid less attention to local government than central government. Meanwhile, central officials were encouraged and motivated to be transferred to work for their hometowns or other local governments.

\(^{18}\) DOLA or Department of Local Administration was separated from the DOPA in 2002 in accordance to the Thai Public Administration Reformation Act 2002.
in their home vicinity. These strategies were for example, awarding those who transferred to local government higher salaries and gain a rank two placer higher for their new jobs in local governments. The incentives were remarkably successful. More civil servants applied to be transferred to work in local governments. Thus, this means the recruitment process had been implemented both internally and externally.

Later on, the period between 2002-2006, was called the era of ‘disaster’. Recruitment as well as selection had been legitimately devolved to local government level. Decentralisation had been implemented since 1999 in accordance with the LPA 1999. As a result, recruitment process was implemented at each municipality. TAO, municipalities and PAO became notorious as new work places for Thai people. They were renowned as ‘a work place in home vicinity, no serious or difficult tasks, receiving the same compensation that central civil servants are provided, and more people are needed’. This slogan encouraged new generations to be recruited and encouraged previous central officials to come back to work near their families. However, the disastrous era started by recruitment process which quite obviously favoured particular groups of people to be informed of job vacancies. The focus group discussion result showed that local civil servants recruited and appointed during 2002-2006 were informed about the job vacancy by mayors or municipal clerks who were their relatives, or at least their friends. The recruitment channels were limited to such a narrow circle – advertisement on municipal notice boards, internal official letters and announcements to other municipalities in the same province and unofficial advertisement by recent municipal officers. Therefore, prospective candidacy was quite limited. Moreover, there were fewer incentives for people who had no friends working in the municipalities to apply. Injustice in recruitment could have been an issue for candidates. This would affect the selection stage where only limited choices were made by municipalities.

Eventually, because there was an issue of restricted candidates, in 2007 some rules and regulations for recruitment were reconsidered. A mayor narrated that the solution had been made too late. It was impossible to restart the recruitment process. Most of municipalities around Thailand have been appointed with people and placements were completed. Therefore, the solution on the rules and regulations revision was a way to temper the problems, not protecting against or solving them. From 2007, structured recruitment was launched. Only planned recruitment in accordance with each municipal HR plan was accepted to be implemented. The HR plan and recruitment plan had to
have been improved or certified by the higher level of each municipality which meant that a municipality was under the monitoring system the Provincial HR Committee of its province attended to. Central government by the DOLA had once again held the responsibility to advertise the vacancy and disseminate the unoccupied posts to public. However, the municipality could also implement the advertisement in relevant to the DOLA.

Thus, the decentralised recruitment has created such advantages in terms of locality of the local civil servants. Municipalities have been able to recruit local people. Jobs are scattered between both urban and rural areas. This decentralisation also created opportunities for job availability. But at the same time, the limited choice of suitably qualified candidates for organisations to choose from has been rather severe. Less channels of recruitment announcement meant significantly diminished possibilities to reach and obtain competent people to work for the municipalities. Besides this, negative rumours existed among the population regarding injustice of recruitment and selection in municipalities, resulting in fewer people to wanting to work in these organisations. The approaching section describes the challenges and opportunities of decentralised selection. As selection is the next stage immediately after recruitment, it certainly receives influence from the recruitment stage.

5.2.2 What happened to the decentralised selection process?

As similar the recruitment stage, decentralised selection has been criticised from local to national levels. As previously mentioned, selection functions as a ‘filter’ for an organisation; this filter must be valid and effective. However, decentralised selection was found to be the most disastrous of all of the decentralised administration changes. Amongst focus group discussions in three regions, similar responses towards selection were gained; that the decentralised selection has unleashed discrimination among the officials by both local politician and by the officials themselves. In considering the documents and the revision of rules and regulations, there have been roughly three periods of change. In relevance to secondary data, the municipal clerk also perceived recruitment and selection as inseparable stages. Therefore, the stages of change of selection could also be divided into three time periods of in the same way as recruitment; 1995-2002, 2002-2006, and 2007 to present.
During 1995-2002, the initial stage of local government began in 1995, since the TAO Act had been launched. Selection processes would be completed by the DOPA after the recruitment process had been implemented. There were at least three steps of examination as a procedure to select the new officials: the general examination (Exam A), specific skill test (Exam B), and the final interview (Exam C). The first general examination would certainly be arranged by the DOPA. Examinations would take place by dividing candidates by region; North, South, Central or North-East. Alternatively, clusters of provinces would be organised to carry out examinations together. Moneyless corruption or the patronage system in the selection stage is a most distinguishable and interesting issue. During both in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, it was said that cooperation between local politicians or mayors and local officials was used in order to complete the corruption process. In other words, this was a stage of reciprocity from administrative actors and local civil servants who are in charge of recruiting and selecting the people they want. However, during this first period, this kind of moneyless corruption or even ‘buying position’ was said to be difficult to execute. Since the power of decision making was limited to only a small group of elites in the DOPA, bribery was hard to commit or access.

It was reported that the examinations were standardised. All exam quizzes and questions were designed by the DOPA or its partner like the Civil Service Commission. The same exam questions were applied to every region or provincial cluster. However, the obvious evidence to represent how centralised this system exists was that the exams were mostly imitated from the Office of the Civil Service Commission (OCSC). Moreover, the staff who arranged and conducted the examination process had still been from the DOPA. As a result, the first period of selection for local civil servants was quite centralised and relatively transparent in the way that a standardised procedure of selection had been implemented to every candidate. However, these processes took a long time to be completed so that municipalities had to wait for the HR allocation. Newly allocated staff might not be from the same region as their hometown. It was quite difficult for newly allocated local officials to move to new work places and live a distance from their families. The selection and placement were done in accordance with the exam rankings. The better that candidate did, the more options for place of work that candidate could choose. In the case that a candidate’s exam result was not quite outstanding, he or she could be expected to fill any vacant position from anywhere in the country.
During 2002-2006, selection procedures have been changed tremendously according to the decentralisation Act 1999 and the LPA 1999. Municipalities have been legitimated to conduct all of the selection processes on their own. Decentralised selection has progressively been carried out by municipalities. Each municipality could arrange their own selection examination. Most municipalities would imitate the previous exams designed by the DOPA and the DOLA. Moreover, the candidates who passed this exam would have their names listed at each municipality. The special and outstanding result from this decentralisation was that this list could be borrowed from any municipality in Thailand. This meant, for instance, that a candidate could have an exam in Phayao Municipality and the candidate could ask to be allocated to the Songkhla Municipality in the case that Songkhla has an available position. As a result, there has doubtless been opportunities’ stemming from decentralisation.

The decentralisation process brought more convenience in terms of geography and supported local people in both rural and urban areas to work within the vicinity their hometowns. On the other hand, decentralisation allowed local elites, especially within each municipality, to be influential in selecting newcomers. It was very much a consensus from the key informants from the central and local levels that nepotism and patronage system did exist. This patronage system was carried out secretly. Apart from a secretive patronage system, other facts were also revealed.

There were various forms of moneyless corruption and money-based bribes during this selection process. After the recruitment stage was completed, the municipality mayor, municipal clerk and Personnel Officer noted how many candidates there were for each position. These groups of officials might have started by selecting their friends, relatives, neighbours or acquaintances. In the case of mayor, it was quite the act of gratefulness to pay back the voters and local elites (Chao Por) who supported him or her to be selected as mayor. Therefore, the mayor’s preference would be for these people first. In this matter, the local officials who held permanent jobs in the municipality could not deny following the mayor’s example. Therefore, biased or prejudiced selection could easily happen. Another form of bribe finally arrived. Any position could be bought at each municipality. The amount of money required, would depend on the importance of that position. There was a question of how this would benefit the candidate. The answer was rather apparent; that to be recruited and placed as a local civil servant was so valuable to the candidate that it was worth them selling their parents’ farm land in order to bribe a mayor or a municipal clerk. To be a local civil servant was to be considered a ‘Chao Khon Naai Khon’; or an important
person in society; to be superior to a normal lay person. Besides, once appointed as a local civil servant there was scarcely a chance to be dismissed from the organisation. Long-life tenure as government officials remained an attractive option motivating some to conduct bribery.

The cheating process of selection was able to be performed because of the HRP procedure. Extra positions were always added to the municipal HR plan and budget plan. After that, the announcement of required qualifications at the recruitment stage could be written or designed to match that of the expected candidate. The committee for the selection could also be assigned by the mayor and the municipal clerk. This kind of agreement might be conducted by the mayor and the municipal clerk. Another possibility would be an agreement from a higher level politician; provincial, regional or national. In some cases, the mayor did not want to conduct any bribes or an unfair selection. However, a powerful politician in the province may ask for support by insisting that the mayor allocate the politician's friends, family members or relatives to any position in the municipality. Therefore, it seemed like there were few choices for local elites or the mayor. Alternatively, another variety of corruption in decentralised selection was related to the examination. Some candidates even hired another person to do the exam for him or her. In other cases, the exam was sold before the exam even took place. Moreover, after the exam, the candidate might have possibly made an agreement with the municipality in which he or she had done the examination that he or she would like to be allocated to other places, not the municipality where the exam was completed. Therefore in practice, during this period of decentralisation many methods of patronage system and corruption emerged at the local level.

Hence, the period from 2007 onwards was considered a 'Swing back moment' or in other words, recentralisation. Several experienced municipal clerks informed the researcher that this was a trick of the central government who realised the incapacity of local government. They claimed that after any problems happened, there were chances to regenerate the power back to central government with legitimacy. Some of the rules and regulations have been re-corrected. The exam A on general knowledge was transferred back to being conducted by the DOLA. The exam B would be conducted at the municipal level. However, any position up for allocation must be verified by the district in the case of small size municipalities and the allocation must be approved by the province in these cases of medium and large size municipalities. Therefore, the freedom of select and recruit people has been limited and it had swung back towards
more equilibrium between the local and central levels. Therefore, the notion of just how effective the recruitment and selection could be was of great interest to be explored.

5.2.3 Is there any evaluation of effectiveness of recruitment and selection processes?

Effectiveness signifies the completion or attainment of the goal that has been set. In this case, if recruitment and selection’s expected functions are to attract and choose the right persons for an organisation, its completed achievement could indicate the effectiveness. However, considering the secondary documents from the DOPA, DOLA and municipalities, none of these stated the evaluation on recruitment and selection. However, in practice, with observations from the categorised three periods described in the previous sections, both recruitment and selection have been adapted and adjusted in accordance with the spontaneous problem solving regime. When cross checking with municipal officials, none of them in all four municipalities have had a chance to respond to any questionnaires or evaluation forms regarding the recruitment and selection processes that they passed.

However, the civil officials at DOLA in the department of HRM evaluation and mentoring have stated that since 1999, the DOLA have tried to evaluate and monitor the performance of each municipality. Using the performance of a municipality as an indicator to represent the standard or quality of people in that organisation has been a vague indicator in this case. It has been rather difficult to assume that recruitment and selection processes are effective by considering only the municipal performance. Moreover, during the focus group discussion in four municipalities, there have been some quite relevant responses. It was said that the evaluation of these two stages of HRM have been ignored since they would give the evidence of politics in organisations, and would certainly omit the real situation of recruitment and selection of each municipality; especially the case of temporary staffs that are effortlessly recruited and hired for short contracts. Therefore, it is definitely clear that there is no evaluation of effectiveness of recruitment and selection processes for municipalities in Thailand. Below is a table illustrating the major findings on opportunities and challenges of decentralised recruitment and selection for local personnel administration in the case of municipalities in Thailand.
Table 5-1: Major Opportunities and Challenges of Decentralised Recruitment and Selection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recruitment and Selection</th>
<th>Major Challenges</th>
<th>Major Opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Recruitment procedures    | 1. Mistrust in recruitment procedures  
                            2. Less equilibrium between transferred tasks and transferred authority  
                            3. Reluctance of recruitment channels  
                            4. Prospective candidates are quite restricted | 1. Newly attractive jobs for local people  
                            2. Building up new value for Thai society  
                            3. Open for external and internal recruitment  
                            4. Create opportunities for job availability both in rural and urban area |
| Selection processes       | 1. Decentralised selection has allowed discrimination among the officials.  
                            2. Moneyless corruption or patronage system in the selection stage is the most distinguishable. Sustains ‘elite capture’. | 1. Supporting the local people in both rural and urban areas to work within their hometown vicinity.  
                            2. Swing back moment or re-centralisation could standardise the selection process. |
| Evaluation of effectiveness of recruitment and selection | 1. No documents affirming evaluation on recruitment and selection processes. | 1. Initiation of auditing scheme for recruitment and selection issued by DOLA. |

Source: Data Analysis
5.3 Decentralised Training and Development for Municipalities

Training has always supposed to have been a way forward to mutually build up capacity for individuals and organisations. Training needs assessment, training design, training implementation, transfer of training and post-training performance evaluation for it to be efficient and effective (Lengnick-Hall and Lengnick-Hall, 1988, Wright and McMahan, 1992, Healy, 2001). Therefore, strategies in conducting training processes are crucial. Training processes in this research include training needs identification, training design and implementation, and transferring and evaluation of training. It has been questioned if these processes have been conducted since the training and development have been decentralised. The following sections describe the empirical findings related to decentralised training and development for municipal officials in Thailand.

5.3.1 How has the identification of training needs been conducted?

For civil servants, whenever any officers get promoted, rotated or assigned a new job, that person is obliged to do a training course. Individual capacity is understood to be constructed or improved after such training. Therefore, considering the status quo of the recent capacity is compulsory.

Municipal officials in Thailand, as well as other officials in other forms of local government, have been found to have fewer opportunities to carry out the needs assessment for their training. Decentralisation has not influenced a change in related to training needs assessment. Directly from both in-depth interview and the focus group discussions in four municipalities around Thailand, there was a consensus response that they did not recognise the issue of training needs survey both prior and subsequent to decentralisation. They execute their scheduled jobs and tasks while scarcely ever considering training or training needs assessment. During a focus group discussion with municipal officials, five out of eight officials had never heard about needs assessment or were unsure on what it was. However, a key informant who performs as an HRM manager confirmed that there had been bi-annual inquiry forms on training needs which had been distributed and collected back. Not only that municipality, but the other three focus groups also gave similar responses that
municipal officials rarely consider their knowledge, skills and experience while working in municipalities. They hardly ever demand to have any training leave from the municipality they work for.

Needs assessment inquiries were noticeable in form of a questionnaire, for some interviewees. They only concerned on whether they will have an opportunity to be trained or have some weeks off from the municipality. Furthermore, officials never regard training opportunities as significant actions in advancing their career paths. They often misconstrue what needs assessment is and why they have to fill in the form or attend an inquiry session. On the contrary, one mayor out of the four was very vigorous and energetic in encouraging his officials for any types of training. The HRM manager in charge was very active since his policy towards his officials’ capacity was to enhance their ability and the contentment while working. In the words of the mayor, ‘If the officials comprehend their needs, their tasks and their duties thoroughly as a local government official, that person will complete their jobs very well. His or her courage as good local civil servants will surely give confidence him or her to work very effectively and efficiently for the citizen and the organisation’. He also emphasised that needs assessment was exceedingly vital for his HRM decision making because it consents him to arrange and specify on which tasks are misplaced or omitted from his organisation. Therefore, needs assessment must be further elucidated and explicated to the officials in terms of their recompenses for both individuals and organisations.

Training opportunities frequently occur by the way of officials taking turns to participate in a training course. Some training courses are mandatory for municipal officials to take in order to get promoted, rotated or transferred. Particularly, when an official is nearing promotion into a higher or administrative position, the preconditions are numerous training courses; leadership, budget management, HR management and policy analysis, etc. However, training opportunities can also be relatively uncertain in practice. A training course can be approved or arranged as a recompense for any official who has completed their tasks very well. The ‘very well’ here can either be considered as its factual meaning, or by some other action in disguise. Training allowance can fall into being a political decision for mayors, municipal clerk and Personnel Officer. There can be other reasons lying beneath the decision on who is going to be trained. Amid the in-depth interviews, there were several people who confirmed that they get pleasure from being asked to attend training courses because
they feel like they have a vacation, away from the office. Nevertheless, some civil servants stated that training courses afford them with new ideas, new skills and expanded their view for better performance. However, some interviewee have addressed that their colleagues have been granted attendance to training courses that were not related to his or her job at all. Hence, training may also play predominantly the role of a ‘reward’ for some officials who could satisfy the mayor or municipal clerk. If that is the case, its primary essence as capacity building of training has been mislaid and misplaced. Training will not be effective as a capacity building process if needs assessment is never productively carried out and if the officials to be trained are instead purposively selected.

Therefore, it has been quite obvious that training needs assessment has been ignored and decentralisation did not affect or enhance this activity at all. There was not a hint of difference after the decentralisation was executed. As a result, unfortunately, it is apparent that there exist challenges for training needs assessment process but without any emerging opportunities because this process is quite rare for Thai local personnel administration.

5.3.2 How have the training programmes for municipal officials been designed and implemented?

Conventionally, after light has been shed on training needs, the next procedure is the designing stage of training courses. Skills, knowledge and experience which are identified to be shortages in an organisation from the training needs assessment must be firstly taken into account. Nonetheless, not only have training needs surveys been a rare activity for local officials in Thailand, but training course designing is also an infrequent task. All training courses have been designed by the Institute for Local Civil Servant Training and Development since the decentralisation was first implemented. The institute is a part of the Ministry of Interior (MOI) in the Department of Local Administration (DOLA). The institute functions as a segment in the central government.

The training courses are designed, planned and implemented by the institute. None of the local civil servants representatives from them take part in the designing stage. Furthermore, the courses are set and prepared regularly like a routine job. The courses are to be reconsidered and updated every five years since local units’ procedures can
slightly change due to the changes to the local administration Act. The institute holds
the responsibility to invent and organise the training programmes for all kinds of local
units, including the municipality. The courses are categorised by position of the
trainees. It ranges from mayor, municipal clerk, HRM manager, Fiscal and Budget
manager, Public Sanitary manager, Education manager, Social and Public Welfare
manager to normal officers. The content of the training courses are mainly the duties
of that position as indicated by the Municipal Act, The Local Personnel Administration
Act, the Local Fiscal Management Act and the municipal ordinances which are in
keeping with the highest law of Thailand, the constitution. Moreover, these training
courses mainly reproduce from the previous schedules designed by the DOPA and
DOLA. As a result, the content for each course is similar to the course syllabus for the
chief executive of the sub-district and district in Thailand. This fact has been confirmed
by the participants of the focus groups discussions in four municipalities. Some of them
narrated that the manuals they received were slightly different by the year of
publication only.

Most trainees are obliged and requested to attend the training courses as a part of their
conditions to be promoted to a senior position. It depends on each person whether
training is of his or her interest and ‘awareness’. In contrast, thanks to the focus group
discussion with municipal officials, the core message of each training programme is
practical for their daily task. They have learned more on how to perform in their
everyday work but no originality appears in this kind of training. The municipal officials
hardly ever have an occasion to suggest a project or activities beyond their routine
tasks. Therefore, the content and methods on how training courses were implemented
also depicted a lack of creativeness. The courses principally attempt to transfer the
knowledge of how to achieve daily task with no severe rules-breaking. Therefore, this
kind of training will enhance capacity of local officers, but only for their daily tasks.
Moreover, the designing process was non-participatory. The contexts of geographical
location of each municipal officer are not taken into account. Only basic or general
tasks would be included into the training course. Therefore, this allows a gap for each
municipality to provide more specific training courses to their officers.

The Trainers of each training course are mostly from the central government, from both
MOI and DOLA. Some key informants and the focus group discussion participants
addressed that some trainers behave like they are superior since the trainer has been
working for the central government, not the local ones like the trainees. These trainers
were retired civil servants who had previously worked in higher positions in departments belonging to the central government. Moreover, the courses provided from the institute are mostly imitated from the Training and Development Institute for civil servants. Therefore, the local officials who attend the training course may not feel any originality or a sense of belonging as a local civil servant. Another important issue was raised by the former Chief executive of DOLA in regard with the training courses designed by the institute. The chief addressed that during his period of time in his important position, he tried to manage this training course by setting some teaching, mentoring and training standards. In some occupational career paths of local officials, there have been no standards of working. As an example, the managers of engineering department of municipalities have overseen some surprisingly reluctant and awkward road constructions. Some of them do not know how to construct proper road or dams for local people. This problem implies ineffective and inefficient recruitment, selection and training processes.

Therefore, once again, it has been quite noticeable that designing of training has been mistreated and decentralisation did not involve or augment this particular stage of training at all. Any differences after the decentralisation have been hardly noticed.

5.3.3 Does transfer of training and training evaluation exist?

Transfer of training has been quite extraordinary in any cases ranging from large to small municipalities. It was clearly stated by four personnel officers in four municipalities that only few staff return to a municipality with a report on what they have learned. This report is actually a requirement after their training leave. Besides, none of the activities of their daily working life would allow them to share their new knowledge to the colleagues or even to their subordinators or bosses. During the four group discussions, the staff mostly stated that having training leave for some months was similar to having a vacation. In the words of one interviewee:

‘….I went to stay in a hotel provided by the Institute for Local Civil Servant Training and Development. It was a rather convenient place and not very far from a huge shopping centre. I even took some days off to meet old friends and relatives near Bangkok. I have no idea why do I have to be trained except that I may be promoted next month…’

- FGD (1) from a municipality 2010
From the speech transcribed, it directly illustrated how misleadingly some local civil servants perceive training. The activity was not seriously concerning to some trainees. In addition, transfer of training was a forgotten issue for the trainees.

‘…what is transfer of training or transfer of knowledge? I just know that I have been told to attend a training class. The mayor just informed me one day that I should attend this training for community participation because I am responsible for community development. I went to another province in the same region and met many people who work as the same position as I do. However, I think it was a waste of time and budget. When I came back, nobody asked me what have I learned or what have I been trained…’
– Municipal Officer (2) from a municipality 2010

Another issue regarding transfer of training would fall into the question of support from the administrative team. Some mayors consider the quality and competency of their staff as the major mechanism to drive the municipality. Two out of four municipalities’ mayors stated this clearly in their policies about the human resource development schemes. After cross checking with the officials, alike responses appeared. The staff in those two municipalities have realised how important the training and development for them were. By contrast, from the observation, the other two mayors for the other two municipalities did not emphasise their policies on internal management and their staffs’ qualifications. The local civil servants at the latter two municipalities focused mostly on the day to day aspects of their jobs. However, the local civil servants at all four municipalities realised that their attendance to the compulsory training courses would allow them to get higher salaries and higher positioned jobs.

It is not only the system that may inhibit the transfer of knowledge, but personal attitudes to transferring and sharing knowledge to other officials, which has been even more problematic. It is a paradox that municipalities allowed their officials to be trained but the HR system and the daily procedures do not allow these officials to cooperate. Reports on what the trainees have learned were very scarce at HRM departments. The personnel officers at four municipalities confirmed the same situation – only a few people would write a report on what they have learned from the training course, what they will plan to do after the training course and what are their suggestions are for their municipality after learning some innovations at the training place. Thus, the transfer of
training and performance evaluation is still issues that would do well to receive more attention from local officials and the administrator.

There is another issue on the evaluation of training that goes past simple ignorance of what transfer of training is. Training evaluation existed and was carried out only some time after the training course ended. It was mostly completed by focusing on questions of satisfaction by the attendants. No test or exams were launched after each training course. There was no monitoring scheme after the training was completed. It could be observed that the one-page questionnaires disseminated after each training course would ask if the length of training class provision was appropriate, was the venue convenient, was the training issue useful for the work, and was the trainer being clear in what he or she tried to explain. Therefore, it was rather obvious that there have been a short, shallow and ineffective evaluation of training.

Hence, it has been quite conspicuous that transfers of training and training evaluation are scarce in the case of decentralised training and development. They have been neglected, and decentralisation did not engage or supplement this particular stage of training at all. Discrepancies after the decentralisation have hardly ever been detected.
### Table 5-2: Major Opportunities and Challenges of Decentralised Training and Development

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Training and Development</th>
<th>Major Challenges</th>
<th>Major Opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training Needs Assessment</td>
<td>1. Few opportunities to carry out the needs assessment for the training.</td>
<td>NONE</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Decentralisation has not influenced the change in related to training needs assessment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design of Training and Training Implementation</td>
<td>1. None of the local civil servants or a representative from them takes part in the designing stage.</td>
<td>1. The result shows the requirement for training design because the training courses were claimed to be obsolete.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Designing of training has been mistreated and decentralisation did not involve or augment this particular stage of training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer of Training and Training Evaluation</td>
<td>1. Transfer of training could be perceived as sharing one’s knowledge and not every person is willing to share their expertise or new knowledge.</td>
<td>1. Some mayors take the quality and competency of their staff as the major mechanism to drive the municipality. This encourages the training evaluation.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Evaluation of training has been an ignored routine task. Output of many participants has been a more important outcome than more knowledgeable local civil servants.</td>
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Source: Data Analysis
5.4 Decentralised Performance Management for Municipalities

5.4.1 Does the Performance Management System Needs Procedures Exist After the Decentralisation?

In the case of municipalities in Thailand, this process has likely been omitted for local civil servants. All jobs in municipalities have been designed and indicated by a manual written by DOPA and later DOLA. All municipalities around Thailand have been assigned to hire their employees in accordance with this manual and the so called ‘Job Description’. Performance management system needs for municipalities and other forms of local government have been more a trickle-down implementation from policy level than an activity that could be originated from the local level. Whenever an innovation on management surged into Thailand, local governments were the last level who had to adapt and change their management. A personnel officer at a municipality narrated the following:

‘… I have no idea what performance management system needs are. The only thing I know is among the Personnel Officers, we will have been summoned to the DOLA to have a meeting and training or they would disseminate around new rules for evaluation. We are local civil servants; our tasks are not very complicated. They do not focus much on employees’ capacity but the performance of a municipality as a whole…’.

- Municipal Personnel Officer (1) 2010

A thoughtful comprehension on how crucial the performance of local officials is for local people has never been transferred to local officials’ awareness. The local officials have realised how important the evaluation of their work can be since the result will indicate their promotion, higher salary or another rotation. Performance management system needs, as a result, has never been the first task of performance management at the local level and still remains the same after decentralisation.

In the LPA Act 1999, none of the rules or phrases describe the performance management system needs stage for decentralised HRM. Further exploring of the municipal ordinances of each municipality showed that none of the rules mentioned the
performance management system needs. A previous Chief of DOLA explained clearly that local governments; including with municipalities, are local governments.

‘They supposed to implement their tasks in accordance with the national level as well as administrative policies in the national level. Performance indicators for civil servants would have been set and announced by the Bureau of Civil Service Committee and then all governmental sectors must apply these indicators into their organisation’
- The Chief (1) 2010

Thanks to the excerpt, it is quite obvious that this task is still appointed to the central level not the local. Therefore, the trickledown effect may hardly be occurring since the point of the policy’s origin was very distant from the local level. The awareness of local civil servants is hardly realised. Hence, in this case decentralisation has no effect on the performance management system needs.

5.4.2 How has job evaluation been affected by decentralisation?

In case of municipalities in Thailand, the job evaluation has been implemented and managed since the municipality was established. Job evaluation has been conducted since the personnel management for local officials was a part of DOPA’s responsibility. In Thai bureaucracy, the job evaluation process has been very rare. Since decentralisation was implemented, the main jobs and structure of jobs in municipality have remained the same. Numbers of staff required in each municipality has been calculated on the basis of the number of jobs. Therefore, the larger the population, the more municipal officials there will be for that municipality. However, an obvious rule which was clearly written in the LPA Act 1999 is that each municipality cannot exceed their budget on HRM, which is 40 percent of their budget. Therefore, this is one factor which each municipality must take into account when they start to have job evaluations. Decentralised job evaluation is also quite interesting in the case of municipality. There have been many examples of how it was implemented.
Decentralisation is good in the way that we can decide on how many staffs we can have and manage by ourselves. However, we are still observed by the district chief. As I am a personnel officer, it is quite hard for me. Sometimes, local politician is very influential. They may ask us, ordinary local officials to commit such a crime. I have to expand numbers of positions in the municipality for him. Sometimes he also was ordered to do so from the provincial politician. It is so complicated,

- Municipal Personnel Officer (2) 2010

In this case, it has been quite obvious that the power of a mayor is quite influential in the municipality after decentralisation. Even though most HRM decisions must be verified and monitored by a higher level of government, a mayor still embraces the most power. Moreover, the sub-district and district levels now try to respect and understand the decisions of each mayor. The worse case would turn out to be that between the mayor and sub-district or district chief, a conspiracy transpiring. Therefore, decentralised job evaluation could also allow a gap for nepotism and patronage system to occupy.

‘Why do we need to do any job evaluation? It is a waste of time. I mostly copy what the DOLA has indicated and try to recruit and select the optimised person to our municipality. The DOLA states things quite clearly and give us a standard for what we should have. I have tried to manage a job evaluation and HR plan for the mayor once, but he ignored it. It was such a waste of time for me’, narrated a

- Municipal Personnel Officer (3) 2011

The importance of job evaluation must be clarified for both executives and the ones who implement it. The controversy and misunderstanding can happen when the administrative people of the municipality do not think in the same strategic way as the staff or the vice versa.
5.4.3 Performance appraisal process and promotion system after the decentralisation

The performance appraisal process and promotion system are very interesting issues for municipal officials. The two processes are intertwined. The performance appraisal result will indicate how a person will be promoted or carry on doing what he or she had been doing. This also relates to how the local civil servants have been evaluated. Their performances have always been appraised by the person in charge only. Soon after, the result will be proposed to the municipal committee and then finalised by the mayor.

By exploring the documents on performance appraisal from the four municipalities, it was found that there are quite strict procedures as following:

1. The sector of local civil servant affairs at each municipality nominates the committee for performance evaluation based on efficiency and effectiveness principles.
2. Designing and inaugurating the evaluation form which aims to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of municipal officials in every level.
3. Disseminating the forms to each sector and department, delivering them to the person in charge or an official’s supervisor. The evaluation will take place twice a year; 1st October-31st March and 1st April-30th September.
4. Collecting of all the evaluation forms back to the local civil servant affair and then propose the preliminary result to the committee to consider. After that, specified ranks or promotion of municipal officials will be proposed to another committee of promotion and fringe benefit management as the next step.

Therefore, it was criticised as a subjective approach. This also created the problem of moneyless corruption; kinship and nepotism are well known to emerge at this stage. Excessive performance appraisal has been claimed by a number of interviewees who took part in the in-depth interviews, and was a critical issue amongst the focus group discussions. There was a key informant who had been in charge of HR who declared that promotion and rotation might be easier for an official who knows the mayor or the municipal clerk very well. Two accounts are presented follow:
‘An official has just started her job last fiscal year as a policy analyst, she did not perform well in my opinion but she has been promoted to the higher level with higher salary already. Her father is a very good friend of the mayor here. It is hard to imagine that she is promoted because of that. I am just her boss but if my boss said so, I cannot deny promoting her’
- Municipal Personnel Officer (2) 2010

‘The head of fiscal and budgetary department has never done things wrong. This municipality has been managed by her because the municipal clerk likes her. There have been rumours that they have been dating for a long time. She was promoted well by the previous mayor but not the recent one. She has done so many wrong and illegal tasks but nobody could prove it. This is not fair to the others’.
- Municipal Personnel Officer (4) 2011

The two excerpts have illustrated how the evaluation and promotion system could be carried out. Not only is performance appraisal very vital, but the promotion system is another consequential step for HR practices. The promotion system could also be an attractive or distractive factor for people to join or leave an organisation.

Due to the fact that it has clearly been written in the LPA Act 1999, the mayor is the only person who legitimately has the responsibility and power to make HRM decisions. Thus, it still does not exceed his or her discretion and decision to promote anybody in the municipality. Moreover, performance appraisal has been perceived as an annual report of each official. Some of them do not take it as a serious procedure in their career path. Hence, this effect of perception and attitude on capacity building purposes would diminish or reduce the possibility of enhancing it. As well as this, transfer of knowledge or know-how in the training stage they have learned may hardly be performed, since some municipalities have never allowed the chance for creativity.
Table 5-3: Major Opportunities and Challenges of Decentralised Performance Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Management</th>
<th>Major Challenges</th>
<th>Major Opportunities</th>
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</table>
| Performance Management System Needs | 1. Absence of rules or phrases describing the performance management system needs stage  
2. The trickledown effect may hardly occur, so that this stage of HR practice is scarcely being taken into account.  
3. This task is still appointed to the central level not the local | NONE |
| Job evaluation and Promotion system | 1. Decentralised job evaluation could also allow a gap for nepotism and patronage system to flourish.  
2. Destructive to the trust of officials. | 1. Decision making for promotion is at the mayor, it is an opportunity in the case that a mayor is an ethical and moral person. |
| Performance Appraisal Process | 1. Performance appraisal is subjective | NONE |

Source: Data Analysis

5.5 Concluding Remarks: the chapter summary

To sum up, this chapter describes how decentralisation has shaped, established and influenced HRM for municipalities in Thailand. It portrays the effects of decentralisation which include the HRM aspect for local government in Thailand. Municipality, the local unit which embraced the hierarchical form of administration from the central government has been influenced by decentralised HRM.

Recruitment and selection has been the renowned HR practice tremendously affected by the decentralisation policy. Considering the process of recruitment and selection, the two stages remain managed by the mayor under the monitoring responsibility of the central government. However, because recruitment and selection have been the early
stages for HRM, they first caused some dilemmas for decentralised HRM. Some of the power in arranging selection processes have been pulled back to DOLA; the central government. Therefore, this stage of HRM has stirred the confidence of officials and new candidates for municipalities. As a result, recentralisation is likely to be the solution for decentralised recruitment and selection.

Training and development have only slightly been affected by decentralisation. The training and development courses are still designed, carried out and organised by the central government. The only thing which has become clearer is that training opportunities can be a reward for a municipal official who satisfy the mayor or higher rank official in the municipality. Therefore, decentralisation has not significantly changed training and development activities for municipal officials.

Amongst the three HR practices which are selected to be studied, the performance management process is the least affected one. Promotion was the only outstanding concern regarding the performance management process. Compared to the training opportunities awarded, promotion scheme is in a more serious degree of illustrating itself as part of a spoil system. The findings are quite obvious that decentralisation initiatives have affected local personnel management in Thailand, but perhaps not in the ways initially expected.
CHAPTER SIX: BUILDING UP CAPACITY; BUILDING UP OPPORTUNITIES OR CREATING OBSTACLES THROUGH HR PRACTICES?

This chapter intends to present the current challenges and opportunities of HR practices process as a way forward to build up capacity of Thai local civil servants. The findings are analysed and presented in accordance with the analytical framework in chapter two. The HR practices procedures have been considered through the lens of the capacity building process. In addition, these findings were derived from the field research study conducted by the researcher in Thailand. At first the recruitment and selection process and the five core capabilities are portrayed. By the same token, the training and development and the performance management will be discussed through the analytical framework with five core capabilities. To be precise, the findings from the research question on how the HR practices can contribute to enhancing individual human resource capacity HRCB in Thai municipalities will be presented.

6.1 An Overview of the Chapter

Through the lens of capacity building processes, HR practices at the local governance level in Thailand have been explored. There have been both challenges and opportunities for enhancing the capacity of local civil servants in municipalities. Empirical evidence from four municipalities in four regions of Thailand pointed out how well the possibilities of capacity building activities can be conducted during the HR practices. The five core capabilities to build up capacity have been examined through each of the three HR practice activities; recruitment and selection, training and development and performance management. These five core capabilities are as follow: committing and engaging, performing and accomplishing tasks and objectives, building relationships and attracting resources, learning and adapting and managing trade-offs and dilemmas

According to the previous findings on how decentralisation has influenced HRM at the local government in Thailand, it is fairly understandable that HRCB strategies or activities have been scarce. The implementation of decentralised HRM allows both
flexibility and obstacles for local public administration. However, a way forward to enhance individual capacity for municipal officials could be conducted through better support of HR practices. Therefore, the notion of how HR practices can contribute to the HRCB in Thai local governance will be illustrated.

It is significant to draw attention here that this research’s data were all collected by the researcher in Thailand. Hence, the results existing in this chapter derived from the fieldwork study conducted at the central government unit for local personnel administration and the four municipalities around Thailand.

6.2 Capacity Building through Decentralised Recruitment and Selection for Municipalities

Recruitment and selection are the dual stage that allocates some opportunities for prospective candidates to first learn about an organisation and vice versa. Hence, it is quite worthy undertaking to explore how and by what activities recruitment and selection could supportively contribute to HRCB. The recruitment activities, namely; recruitment procedure, selection processes and evaluation of effectiveness of recruitment and selection programmes, have been explored.

6.2.1 Committing and Engaging through Recruitment and Selection

6.2.1.1 Recruitment Procedure

According to the researcher’s direct observation, most advertisement from recruitment section (HR section) was attached to notice boards in front of each municipality office. All of them were in form of A4 sheets containing a message describing the qualifications required for each vacancy post. Not only was the salary addressed, but the starting date of the post was also announced. Moreover, brief job descriptions had been adhered to the back of the advertisement. Another channel of recruitment advertisement is through internet access. Based on the researcher’s direct observation, after being a subscriber of the OCSC website since November 2010, an e-mail of vacancies has been regularly delivered. However, a similar form of advertisement does
not exist for local civil servant prospective candidates. On the other hand, normal advertisement which was posted on the webpage of each municipality also gave details which is related to required qualifications, salary and job description of each post.

'It was quite promising seeing how much salary you will receive each month. At least I can tell my parents how much I can give them. Working as a local civil servant is surely better than working in a farm with my parents. I know what I can get after receive this money, so I think I will try to get the job after I saw the notice board stating about the post announced'.
- Municipal Officer (3) 2010

In regard with the focus group discussion with recent municipal officials in four municipalities, the interviewees told of their experiences before being appointed as municipal officials. In case of the interviewees from Rhaiking and Songkhla municipality, some of them had realised the recruitment announcement via internal memorandum because they had previously worked for TAO office. Some of them had been informed by their friends who were working for the municipalities. Moreover, Rhaiking is relatively small and not in a big distant from Bangkok while Songkhla is a large municipality where information and news would have arrived more regularly than other smaller municipalities. Hence, some interviewees have been informed about the vacant post through the internal official letters from the DOLA, which would arrive sooner to more centrally located municipalities than the ones further away. DOLA has still been a centre of information for all local governments, so therefore the dispatcher of information and news about recruitment and selection. In the cases of Thachaangklong and Phayao, they are established in more ruralised environments where the notice board was situated in front of the municipality office. However, most of the participants in the focus group narrated that they themselves had been informed by their friends or relatives who already worked for the municipalities.

'My cousin had been working in the municipality for a year and a half before I joined her. She told me that a post had been announced. I had to prepare many documents to apply for the job. At that time it was easy, I could apply directly to the municipality because the recruitment and selection were carried out at the municipality. I applied for the position of Policy Analyst because I have a degree in political science’
- Municipal Officer (1) 2010
Moreover, the job description has encouraged some of the municipal officials to think carefully if they really want to join the municipality and work in that position. However, not all of them considered the job description.

- Municipal Personnel Officer (3) 2011

“I saw the details of job description at the notice board behind the advertisement of the post. It was not very clear of what I had to do but at least I knew roughly about it. I imagined if I want to join the organisation or am I eligible to work in that position. My friend, however, said that he had no idea about the job description before he was appointed for the job. He said that he did not care much. He just wanted to get the job. Thachangklong is so very small a municipality, I can ask my personnel officer anytime I want to know about the job but mostly we do what we are told by the municipal clerk”,

- Municipal Officer (2) 2010

As a result, recruitment process could attract the attention of prospective candidates to join the organisation. Besides, describing job description adhered with the advertisement would certainly give some indication on what skills, knowledge and experience this job required. This stage allowed awareness for the prospective candidates on which tasks and of what capacity they must obtain before joining the organisation. However, the overlapping in information dissemination and the reluctance in how the recruitment advertising has been done can be a critical issue for prospective candidate.

6.2.1.2 Selection Process

According to the selection procedure written in the internal manual of selection procedures at four municipalities, only if a candidate has passed the exam A and exam B, will they have a chance to interact with the recent municipal officials. However, Exam B is the specific examination for a specific job. Therefore, the exam B would have provoked some thoughts on how a person should be able to perform in case he or she is selected. Exam C is the interview which is a process of dual interaction. To emphasise, an informant from Songkhla municipality narrated based on his experienced that the recent official who is an interviewer would state some inquiries to the candidate. Simultaneously, apart from
answering the questions asked by the interviewer, the candidate will also have a chance to learn how he or she will be positioned in the organisation.

“I went into the interview room which was isolated from the normal offices of other municipal officers. There were three interviewers in that room. They mainly asked me why did I apply for the job, how did I know about the post and what would I want to do if I got this job. They even asked what I think I have to carry out with this job as a policy analyst. At the end, they asked me if I have any questions to ask them, so that I had no question to say. I was afraid to ask about my salary because they might think I worried too much about money’;

-Municipal Officer (1) from 2010

From this above excerpt, it is quite obvious that the interviewee, in the role of candidate, was asked many questions about his future job. This process allowed him to imagine as being engaged with the municipality as the policy analyst already. In this case, the interviewers also wanted to know if the candidate was really interested in the organisation and the position he was going to be appointed. It illustrated the interaction and the mutual learning process which could start as a beginning of the relationship as future colleagues.

Moreover, the job appointed as municipal officials will be a lifetime job until the age of retirement has been reached. However, was clarified at the recruitment stage in regard with salary that to be a municipal official meant that they may not gain a big amount of salary but a long tenure of job security. This sort of information was confirmed during the selection process in order to assure the candidates’ understanding towards this advantage and disadvantages he or she may receive as a municipal official.

“I was asked why do I want to be a municipal officer and I replied that I wanted a permanent job which could sustain my living. The two interviewers asked me if I realised how much money will I receive each month. I said I knew it. They conferred that it will not be a big amount of money. I told them that it will surely be more consistent than I work in my small farm on my parents’ land. I am quite certain to commit myself to the municipality and it is near my house’;

-Municipal Officer (1) from 2010
From the quotation above there was a confirmation and the understanding of how secure the candidate can be if he or she will be offered the post. Simultaneously, the candidate seemed to assert her intention to be a municipal official to the interviewers as well. Therefore, the selection procedure can also enhance the awareness of committing and engaging to the organisation for an employee.

6.2.1.3 Evaluation of Effectiveness of Recruitment and Selection Programmes

Based on the theories and purposes of HR the activities in the category of recruitment and selection belong to the internal staff to carry out. In the case of the Thai municipality, Personnel Officer, municipal clerk and the mayor should be the main group of people in charge. As a result, from the previous finding in the section 5.2.3, there has been scant evaluation of effectiveness of selection and recruitment occurring in municipalities. Therefore, the notion of how to build up the capacity of individual local civil servants as if this stage and activity existed has emerged. To broaden insight on how this HR activity can be supportive to HRCB, questions were still being asked within focus groups discussion and in-depth interviews.

'I think I can imagine how evaluation of effectiveness of selection and recruitment is meant to be conducted but we did not do it. It was because the recruitment and selection processes have also been designed by the DOLA. Even though we are allowed to launch the implementation of both recruitment and selection, but in reality the process and the style of carrying out the stages were written in the manual. I could have a chance to learn how to improve the recruitment and selection processes at my own municipality',
Municipal Personnel Officer (4) 2010

'I see no point why we have to conduct such an evaluation. Municipal officials were recruited and selected with some bias. Some of them have even had a fake interview. In my opinion, you cannot find a pure transparent selection after the decentralisation. Twenty years of working as Personnel Officer and I have worked in this municipality for more than 20 years, after the decentralisation is the worst period of all time'
Municipal Personnel Officer (1) 2010
From the quotations, the large and small municipality settings gave different points of view on having evaluation of recruitment and selection effectiveness. The capacity of the officials who arrange the recruitment and selection processes should have been enhanced in the cases where the activity of evaluation of effectiveness of selection and recruitment does exist.

6.2.2 Performing and Accomplishing Tasks and Objectives through Recruitment and Selection

6.2.2.1 Recruitment Procedure

This capability of performing and accomplishing tasks and objectives through the recruitment procedure is related to the capability of committing and engaging. Recruiting is to attract and convince prospective candidate to join the organisation. According to the researcher’s direct observation, since most advertisements from the recruitment section (HR section) was attached to notice boards in front of each municipality office as mentioned previously, this activity may not directly establish the capability of performing and accomplishing tasks and objectives. The description of qualifications required for each vacancy post and the amount of salary would neither create such capability. However, the attached job description played as an important role to this capability enhancing.

‘Seeing the amount of salary that I will get each month may not attract me to apply for the job, but seeing what I need to do as an assistant engineer staff is challenging for me. The advertisement with job description allowed me to imagine on what I have to do and what my actual jobs are. Some required tasks were written there and I thought that it will be nice to work for the municipality’.
- Municipal Officer (1) from 2010

The quotation above shows the possibility of how recruitment processes may contribute to the creation of capability in performing and accomplishing tasks and objectives. However, it cannot be assured that it will always happen in the positive way.
‘I don’t think it would be that encouraging for prospective candidates to positively think of the future work and objectives of his or her new job. He or she must have been experienced enough in order to imagine the tasks and objectives of the future work he or she may be assigned.’
- DOLA Officer (1) 2010

‘It is certainly possible that the advertisement of recruitment is convincing and clearly stated about the tasks and objectives of each job. I also expect myself to know the objectives and tasks of that job before I apply for it, so that I can do some self assessment whether I would want to join the organisation and apply for the post’
- FGD (2) from a municipality 2010

There have been both agreement and disagreement on the possibility to build up the capacity of an individual at the first stage of recruitment. It is noticeable that central and local officials have different perspectives on the opposite group of people. This is another issue lying beneath the relationship between the central and local governments.

6.2.2.2 Selection Process

As described previously, there are three levels of examination; A, B and C. Exam A does not play any role in implying what the tasks and jobs would be. Exam B is a specific examination for each job, so that it concentrates on the questions of how would a person perform or conduct any tasks to reach the objectives of that particular job. These exams A and B were recollected and they were published as an example examination book for local civil servant candidates. By considering the example exams, it is quite obvious that exam B is very detailed in terms of knowledge and skills for each professional job; engineer, accountant, personnel administration or nurse. However, one argument which can be made here is that there are no open-end questions which could have asked the candidate how to solve any problems relating to their position. In the end however, during the selection process, if cheating is conducted, none of the above capability processes could be accomplished. Four in-depth interviews with four key informants gave different ideas towards this issue.
‘Any mayors can be rich from ecentralized HRM. It is a real disaster. I have been working for municipality for more than 20 years but I have seen no other such period in which local government could be this inferior even in my opinion. Each position as municipal officials can be bought. No real knowledge, skills or experience required but you need to have money’.
-Mayor (3) 2011

‘I have realized what should I be performed and what are the objectives of my job even before I was summoned for an interview. I have the example of exam B in a book. Besides, I have a friend who has been working for a municipality in different district told me what the main things are that I have to take into account. My preparation was quite successful’;
- A municipal official from accounting department 2010

‘I can confirm that they are more eligible in term of knowledge and skills. I have seen the examination myself. Many more and more local studious new generations have applied for the jobs in municipality and other form of local government. Their selection processes are more standardized’;
- DOLA Officer (2) 2010

‘As a person who has been responsible for policy level for local personnel management, the municipal officials could be considered as the most potential ones amongst those forms of local government. Their selection processes are improved. I have to admit that cheating, nepotism, and local elite influence cannot be avoided. However, after they are recruited, they have attained more attention to their jobs’ objectives’;
- The Chief (1) 2010

According to the quotations from four key informants who held different levels of position, they differently perceived the selection process in terms of how they aid accomplishment of the tasks and job objectives. Aside from Exam B, also exam C is also a stage of interviewing and this allowed the interaction between interviewers and interviewees. During the focus group discussions, participants proposed that it is the stage of interviewing when candidates could possibly create the capability of performing and accomplishing tasks and objectives because the interviewers could test
or assess the attitude and opinions of candidates. Besides, at the stage of interviewing, it is a dual process of learning by the interviewer and the interviewee. Simple questions of what tasks and objectives the job entails, and what one is required to commit in order to perform or accomplish them can be solicited during the interview. Thus, this activities selection process can at least raise the awareness of their jobs to prospective employees of municipality.

6.2.2.3 Evaluation of Effectiveness of selection programmes and Recruitment

Once again, from the previous finding in section 5.2.3, there have been abstractedly of the evaluation of effectiveness of selection and recruitment occurred in municipalities. Therefore, the notion of how to build up the capacity of individual local civil servants as if this stage and its activities subsist has emerged. To expand on how this HR activity can be accommodated in HRCB, questions were asked within focus groups discussion and in-depth interviews.

'It should be a very influential activity in case it is implemented. It will be useful for us as staff to build up our own capability of performing and accomplishing tasks and objectives as Personnel Officer and HR staffs. But, I am not sure that my mayor and the municipal clerk will agree. This stage seems to require time'
- FGD (4) from a municipality 2011

'It does not mean that this activity is not important but we may have something else to do. I consider performance assessment as a more important activity than this one. I may have to choose. I am quite sure that our performance processes have regularly been assessed. Moreover, the central always change the policy, it is hard to catch up with them all the time', narrated a mayor.
-Mayor (2) 2010

Therefore, since evaluations of effectiveness of selection and recruitment have scarcely occurred in municipalities, it can be stated that it is possible to create such capacity. However, the activities must be taken into account as in the policy and implementation. Besides, it has been such a discretionary activity since the mayors are varied and each of them may consider its importance in a different way.
6.2.3 Building Relationships and Attracting Resources through Recruitment and Selection

6.2.3.1 Recruitment Procedure

Recruitment procedures seem to be the main activity to start creating the relationships and attracting resources that an organisation needs. Based on the policy launched by the DOLA since 1997, local governments including the municipality have focused to recruit local people as their priority. This is the way the municipalities first build up good relationships, trust and new perceptions from local people.

‘Civil servants are still being civil servants. No matter which levels they belong to. They seem like a superior group of people. My parents wanted me to be a government officer. It is very good that local people can now work for their own home organisation like municipality’
- Municipal Clerk (4) 2010

Being a government officer can create some pride for his or her family. The welfare, consistent salary and long-tenure career are attractive enough to be promoted during the recruitment process. Besides, the policy of local people having first priority has been significantly encouraging for new generations in sub-districts and districts level to apply for the jobs. However, it cannot be denied that the labour market for local officials is still limited.

‘Although we have advertised and announced about the job vacancy through more channels, there are some groups of people would willingly to apply for the local jobs. People who aim more for bigger money would certainly commute or migrate to bigger city. This includes the younger generation who had already had an opportunity to study in bigger city, they hardly ever returned to work at the hometown. Only another group of people who have graduated from local college or university would still look for a job near home’
- Municipal Personnel Officer (1) 2010
It is not only the municipality entity which can show its potential to be an acceptable organisation, because recent local civil servants also represent its image. This issue is directly related to building up the capability in making good relationships and attracting new human resources for the municipality. To broaden this understanding, some interviewees have addressed this issue clearly as followings:

‘I applied for the job here because I saw some previous municipal officers were comfortably working. They just came for work from 8 am to 4 pm daily. They have fixed consistent salary and seem like they can go to the hospital free of charge. During the time I was being recruited, I saw these people dress in quite a smart uniform; this is very impressive for me’,
- FGD (4) from a municipality 2011

Therefore, recent municipal officials are also an organisation image. The behaviour and the appearance of municipal officials are important especially during the period when recruitment at their municipality was taking place.

6.2.3.2 Selection Process

The selection process once again is the activity in which recent employees can interact with the prospective municipal officials. Between the activities of recruitment and selection, selection is the closest chance that creating relationships and attracting resources to an organisation can be conducted. Especially after decentralisation, HR activities and practices are being conducted at the local level so the Personnel Officer and the team are responsible for selection process. As employees of the municipality, the selection team can establish a relationship with the new comers. Moreover, this activity can be a catalyst for attracting more eligible candidates to join an organisation in case that the current candidates are impressed by the interviewer team. Thanks to the fact that none of the cases studied experienced the capacity building through selection process, some valuable discussions emerged within the focus groups.
‘For me selection is the very crucial activity for any organisation. I still recall how I was interviewed and asked such questions by the interviewers. I don’t like the way they tried to put pressure on me. I knew that one of them was an observer who jotted down how I was behaving but I was patient enough not to be rude to them’;

- FGD (4) from a municipality 2011

‘Now the interviewer is my supervisor. I was quite impressed by her talent in working. She was very calm in the interview but very determined. I learned from her. From that moment on, I knew that she is serious in work but very kind as a person. Her character during the interview made me want to work with her and improve myself to be as good as her’;

- FGD (1) from a municipality 2011

The selection is very clearly an activity to build up capability on creating relationships and attracting resources. It is the first interaction between an organisation, represented by the interviewers, and the interviewee. Therefore, the current staff of an organisation may have to prepare themselves as an image of the organisation while the new comers can also learn and observe the ongoing process of selection, as an example of interface within the organisation.

### 6.2.3.3 Evaluation of Effectiveness of selection programmes and Recruitment

According to the observation, interview and focus group discussion, this issue of capability of creating the relationships and attracting resources to an organisation were scarce to be found. However, the researcher did manage to discuss it with an officer who has responsible for local personnel management improvement sector at DOLA:

‘I don’t think the creating the relationships could emerge through the activities of evaluation of the recruitment and selection. It is too far to assume its impact. However attracting resources is possible and quite straight to its purpose. Recruitment and selection aim to obtain or attract eligible human resource for the organisation, therefore, evaluation of their effectiveness is the right thing to be done’

- DOLA Officer (3) 2010
It can be summarised from the four focus groups discussions at four municipalities that the understanding of building up the capability in creating the relationships and attracting resources is rather difficult not only in terms of understanding but also implementation.

6.2.4 Learning and Adapting through Recruitment and Selection

6.2.4.1 Recruitment Procedure

Capability in learning and adapting can be exercised for both recent officials (municipal officers) and the prospective candidate. Definition getting through the focus group interview with municipal officials at Phayao, some participants addressed that they have learned the organisational culture as hierarchical one since they first saw the advertisement about the job. They saw signatures of the officials from the line manager to the top of the administrative position that permitting the announcement to be valid. Simultaneously, a few participants from Thachangkhlong municipality addressed that they saw the last line of the job description which mentioned that each position will be responsible for many tasks. The last point stated that tasks depend on what the higher rank or mayor orders. That allowed one aspiring official to think of how to adapt her characteristic as a quite strong and confident person to obey and listen to superiors.

However, some interviewees at the focus group discussion recounted in regard with their experience that they did not understand much about the advertisement. They had to make another enquiry to the HR section of the municipality. This reflection can actually be a lesson learned for the municipality to ensure that every channel of their advertisement is effective.

6.2.4.2 Selection Process

While prospective candidates can learn and adapt themselves at the early stage of entering their organisation, they also retain this capability as recent employees. As an interviewer, one of personnel officer explained that she could learn how to adapt the question while asking the interviewee. Moreover, this is one such learning process that can help both interviewees and interviewers cope with the selection process.
'I have had the experience of an interviewee being quite rude. He had some previous experience which was not nice from another municipality. I tried to be very calm but the situation was worse since another interviewer was quite angry. However, since we are the interviewer, we tried to speak to him quite politely and tried to compromise. Finally he was not selected and tried to shout at us many times before he left'.

- FGD (3) from a municipality 2010

As well as the interview process, the stages of how to prepare the exams, and contact with a third party such as a local college or university, is also very important for the municipal officials who are responsible for selection arrangement to learn and adapt. Choosing the way to assess the new candidates, arrange the interview venue and invite particular people to be part of the selection committee is also a process of learning for the HR team.

6.2.4.3 Evaluation of Effectiveness of selection programmes and Recruitment

Evaluation of effectiveness of selection programmes and recruitment can certainly enhance the capability of learning and adapting for individual staff in an organisation. As well as in studied cases of municipality in Thailand, evaluation of the effectiveness of the two stages of HR can potentially create awareness for HR staffs at each municipality. However, based on the data collected, only a fraction of these activities have been done in municipalities. None of the municipalities have conducted the evaluation of recruitment and selection process because the procedures have been still the same for a long time because DOPA and DOLA conducted these activities. From an in-depth interview with the local personnel enhancement manager at DOLA, she stated that evaluations of recruitment and selection process are hardly ever occurring. This statement shows that the central government might not want to accept that the evaluation of recruitment has seldom happened.
6.2.5 Managing Trade-offs and Dilemmas through Recruitment and Selection

6.2.5.1 Recruitment Procedure

The recruitment process creates an opportunity to relieve and balance some local conflicts, objectives and demands. The equality and equity in recruitment could create such capability to manage trade-offs and dilemmas at each municipality. This includes the relations between national, provincial and local governments in Thailand. Decentralised recruitment could provide better understanding of what officials are doing for citizens. By recruiting locals to work for locals has been even better. Moreover, one purpose of recruiting locals is to disseminate jobs for people around the country.

‘I think it is a rather fair and very good policy to transfer works for people through local governments. Now, the issue of equality to access the job as civil servants is much resolved. But, the problem is that would these tasks will be completed in the way it should be or not. This is very challenging for Thai public administration’
- DOLA Officer (3) 2010

‘When I became a local civil servant, I now understand more what officials do for other people. Recruitment at the local level allows me to access the new opportunity. However, it is a bit uncomfortable to work with some of my neighbours who I do not really get along well with. Working together because we were recruited and selected at the same time, this has been so very challenging for me’
- FGD (4) from a municipality 2011

Therefore, there has been a trade off for decentralised recruitment at the local level. It certainly benefits people in the way that local people have more job opportunity, while some problems can arise because of internal conflict which could result from external and personal conflicts. These examples could allow the local civil servants to learn to balance the dilemma and try to focus on their main tasks.
6.2.5.2 Selection Process

Role play and some techniques of interviewing candidates really create an awareness of how a person can deal with trade-offs and dilemmas. However, these techniques are not very popular among the HR staffs in municipality. Simple methods like interviews could slightly contribute to this capability. However, according to both focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with key informants, this capability is very scarcely taken into account and hardly occurs in the real scenario.

'I don’t think our methods of selecting an official have enhanced to the level that it could show how a person can solve this kind of trade-off or conflicts in the organisation. For some administrator positions, they will be asked to write a report, his/her vision and mission and how would he or she see the municipality in the near and distant future, thus, that could be the method which improves the capability of managing the trade-off and conflict',

- DOLA Officer (3) 2010

6.2.5.3 Evaluation of Effectiveness of Recruitment and Selection Programmes

Since the evaluation of recruitment and selection programmes are very scarce for Thai local civil servants, this capability which is quite difficult to be transformed into practice is also rare. However, from an in-depth interview with a key informant from DOLA, he has confirmed that this capability can be established if some methods of recruitment and selection are introduced and replace the conventional ways.

'We have held the conventional ways of recruitment and selection for a long time. It does not mean that DOLA and related organisation are not concerned about this but we are in this big bureaucracy system, rules and laws may not certify or support our plan or implementation. The way of asking-answering questions in the interview or set of questions must be deepen to uncover what and how candidates really are. We know well the theories but it is so hard to do it in practice',

- DOLA Officer (2) 2010
The quotation above has, at least, shed lighted on the possibility for future policy that the methods of recruitment and selection might be modified. This includes the evaluation of recruitment and selection which would prospectively contribute to enhance the quality of recruitment and selection, especially in the way that is appropriate for local civil servants.

6.2.5.2 Concluding Annotations on HRCB through Recruitment and Selection

Table 6-1: Results summary for recruitment and selection and HRCB activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HRCB activities</th>
<th>Recruitment and Selection</th>
<th>Evaluation of Effectiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Committing and engaging</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓/✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing and accomplishing tasks and objectives</td>
<td>✓/✗</td>
<td>✓/✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building relationships and attracting resources</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning and adapting</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓/✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing trade-offs and dilemmas</td>
<td>✓/✗</td>
<td>✓/✗</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data Analysis

According to table 6-1 and the results presented in this section, HRCB activities can contribute to recruitment and selection only if they are implemented. The sign ✓ shows that the activity has obviously been supportive while the ✓/✗ denotes the possibility to support recruitment or selection if the activity would be implemented. It has been quite obvious that the activities which were hardly ever implemented and were not influenced by the decentralisation have scarcely been supportive to recruitment and selection. However, most of the interviewees and participants in the focus groups discussions have had their opinions in the same direction that the five core capabilities are possible to be conducted but it needs clearer policy and implementation plan to support its possibility.
6.3 Capacity Building through Decentralised Training and Development

Training and development include the HR activities which are most expected to enhance the capacity of individual staff in an organisation. This is because training is the direct activities which aim to improve or develop the knowledge, skill and experience for current staff in an organisation. Hence, it is vital to investigate how and by what activities training and development could contribute to HRCB.

6.3.1 Committing and Engaging through Training and Development

6.3.1.1 Identification of Training Needs

Training needs identifying is a very crucial HR activity, especially for training initiatives. As the previous finding in the section 5.3.1 had portrayed, the deliberate progress of training needs identification for municipalities has been rather rare. In spite of this, all four municipalities have conducted some preliminary surveys for training requirement.

From direct observation, all four municipalities have created survey of training needs forms. Most of the forms are similar. However, only two municipalities out of four have regularly updated the form. They mainly create the forms based on courses provided by the Institute for local personnel training and development, of the DOLA. Each municipality conducted this survey only once or twice a year. A personnel officer at Thachangklong Municipality narrated that she did not regularly conduct the survey because there are not many municipal officials in the municipality. However, she managed to develop an HRD plan but she never had a chance to present it to the mayor. She recounted that nobody understood why she arranged the plan for everybody. However, she noticed that whenever she distributes the survey, other municipal officials would look forward to the chance to attend training and development programmes.

‘More like a vacation plan for them, training needs assessment is a good catalyst, actually. The survey made them want to join a training programme but I am not so sure how could we encourage them to have more commitment and be more engaged with the tasks they have to be responsible for’,

- Municipal Personnel Officer (4) 2010
During the focus group discussions with municipal officials at Phayao and Raikhing, they gave similar responses towards the commitment and engagement with their tasks through training needs assessment. There were quite congruent answers between the two groups that training needs assessment activity allowed them to think of their condition of their working ability. It encouraged them to reconsider their knowledge, skills and experience which they may lack. Some of them said that the training needs assessment is very supportive because it made them think of their career path and think of which course that they are required to attend as the compulsory ones for promotion. However, some of them said that it was such a waste of time to conduct such survey. They said that the choices of training courses are very limited so that having training needs or not made no difference.

‘I think of what I want to move on to. After the training assessment needs form was filled in, I could plan what I want to learn more. It is a shame that this kind of survey is randomly disseminated. Although it sounds weird but I can imagine what should I be trained to make me be able to get promoted. It gave me some sense of encouragement that I should be determined and engaged with my tasks’
- FGD (2) from a municipality 2010

‘It’s just a paper. We cannot take it seriously that the municipality would provide us such a nice training course as we want. Some people are going to training classes for fun. Doing such training needs assessment was a waste of time and municipal budget. There have been fixed styles and fixed courses that we are required to do in the Institute. It will surely be nice if the training courses have been designed and really served our capacity building aims’;
- FGD (3) from a municipality 2010

‘I have to admit that the idea of convincing and encouraging municipal staff by assessing their requirements is interesting. However, in terms of effectiveness would be very pleasant but I am not very sure of its efficiency. Some expenditure may have to be spent on doing this survey and it cannot be guaranteed that these municipal officials would be more commitment or engaging with the municipal tasks’
- DOLA Officer (2) 2010
Therefore, in accordance with the quotations, the opinions are diverse. The civil servants at implementation and policy levels perceived this issue differently. However, it is likely to be that a compromise between commitment and engaging with the tasks as municipal officials is possible through needs assessment identification.

6.3.1.2 Designing and Implementing Training Programme

‘The sense of belonging to local civil servants can be the origin of commitment and engaging with their job’, said the ex-chief of Central committee of HRM standard for local civil servants. The quotation was an answer from the person who had worked at the policy level for local civil servants in Thailand. It is hard to deny the centralised nature of training programme design. There is no chance for municipal officials to design their own training course. Moreover, the training programmes are mostly conducted by staff from the Institute of Training and Development for local civil servants. Therefore, there is no chance for municipalities to originally create the training initiatives on their own.

‘I have realised that the training courses are fixed after I have worked here for five years. I was promoted to be a senior official in my department, so that I was required to have a training class. There is no way I could choose alternatives of training’

- FGD (3) from a municipality 2010

Although participation in the design process has been uncommon for municipal officials or their some representatives, the implementation of training programmes could create the awareness of ‘commitment and engaging’ for the municipal officials. From the researcher’s direct observation, some training programme courses tried to create a ‘sense of belonging’ for the municipal officials. The value of being a local civil servant has been instilled to the trainees. However, some notes and observations must be addressed here. While attending the focus group discussion, 25 participants from 32 (eight participants from each municipality) stated in their answer cards\(^\text{19}\) that they did not feel the unity as being local civil servants. The trainers who were facilitators or

\(^{19}\) These answer cards were spread to participants during focus group discussion process. The participants could answer the fragile or controversial issues secretly in that piece of paper, so that the FGD would not cause problems for them afterwards.
lecturers in the training courses were mostly civil servants. The participants made notes that these trainers didn’t know the tasks better than they do.

‘They are not one of us. Although they are people who may design the training course for us but they have never ever worn the same shoes as we do. They used to work in a higher position in DOLA or DOPA. They do not know the local needs. They could provide us with knowledge and skills of using rules and law for municipality but not the heart of being municipal officials’,
- FGD (2) from a municipality 2010

‘The course on leadership allows me to realise what the ultimate goal of municipality is. I have more intention to develop my community as well as the municipality. It would be the training course which generates some commitment and engagement awareness for me’;
- Municipal Clerk (1) 2010

In accordance with the training course syllabus from the institute for local personnel training and development and an individual study (Rohitarachoon 2003), the training courses for municipal officials contain as their main content the rules, regulations, and law for the municipal official’s routine jobs. There were no objectives of creating any commitment and engagement to the municipality, especially the training courses for implementation-level municipal officials. In the case of the administrative level, the course ‘Leadership and municipality Management’ would contain an objective of establishing the awareness and importance of the municipality for the community.

Therefore, it is quite obvious that the commitment and engaging capability could be established through designing and implementing the training course only if there have been some participatory processes for municipal officials. Not only they should administrate level officials participate in this activity, but also the operation level staff must be taken into account.
6.3.1.3 Transfer of Training and Evaluation of Training Programme

The purpose of building up the capability of engaging and committing to one's tasks and responsibilities is for achieving the motivation, space and determination to take action. The activity of transferring the training and evaluating the training programme are decisive in establishing the commitment for an organisation. According to the municipal ordinances, there has been a rule stating that any municipal officials who have been newly trained should submit a report on the training implementation. The report must contain the purpose of training and the main contents of the training. Besides this, the new knowledge provided by the training course must be stated in the report. This report should be submitted to the HR department within three months after the training takes place. However, in practice, the report submission has been quite rare. All four Personnel Officers have met a consensus on this issue.

‘Since I have been a personnel officer here, I have received only 2-3 reports per year. Neither did the municipal clerk, nor the normal officials produce such reports to me. Nobody tells what they have learned, what they have done and what they should come back to do to develop our municipality. The fiscal and budgetary department would only have had received the forms to claim back their money’
- Municipal Personnel Officer (1) 2010

‘Nobody would feel like this is the duty of transferring or telling others what he or she has newly learned. Some of them might be afraid that the others could do a better job if they start to tell the innovations from the training. No evaluation on the training courses would be conducted at the municipal level, anyway. Trainees would have been asked to do the checklists and the satisfactory survey forms at the institute. The returns of trainees hardly ever establish some commitment for them to bring back some knowledge to the municipality’,
- Municipal Personnel Officer (4) 2010
Transfer of training could create some commitment to the municipal officials in the case that those previous trainees came back and performed as good examples for others to follow. Some circulation of new knowledge in management, new rules or new ways of conducting any tasks in the municipality would certainly make others in the same municipality realise what kinds of tasks that person may have to conduct. This will also create some understanding for that person and the department which he or she belongs to.

‘Preparation for new systems of budget must be arranged and get readied. The training course on new budgetary system would be a frequent one. If the people newly trained on new budget system come back to the municipality and disseminate the new rules and regulations for the others, everybody would be willing to follow him or her. This would also save time for us all. In reality, they hardly ever tell other departments what to do, what to prepare or what we have to change. Therefore, nobody cares for them and let them re-correct the bills, the receipts and other forms by themselves’.
- FGD (2) from a municipality 2010

‘When my supervisor comes back from training, she always tells me what the training was about. It is very inspiring for me. Even though the topic is not new, it broadens up my views on what should I be reaching for to be the next step as she did. This is very encouraging and drives me to be more diligent about my tasks. I hope that I would get to do the training and then go on to the higher position and certainly higher salary like she does. Nobody tells me this, but I could feel from my supervisor that she is very determined and very engaging with our job as municipal officers’
- Municipal Personnel Officer (3) 2011

This quotation illustrated how transferring of knowledge to other colleagues is very important. Moreover, this would allow some commitment to the other departments to facilitate or generate the tasks with new systems. A shortage of propagating new knowledge is not only less supportive to other departments, but also obstructs the progress of one’s work. The effects do not occur to a particular person only but could impact the municipality as a whole and allow retardation of the work. Therefore, the transfer of knowledge could provide some capability in achieving the motivation, space and determination to take action in some ways.
6.3.2 Performing and Accomplishing Tasks and Objectives through Training and Development

6.3.2.1 Identification of Training Needs

Actually, the capability in performing and accomplishing tasks and objectives should emerge after a person has commitment to his or her job. The identification of training needs is an activity which could enhance the capability in performing and accomplishing tasks and objectives in the case that a person has realised what knowledge, skill or experience he or she lacks. The notion on how the training needs assessment and identification can contribute to the capability in performing and accomplishing tasks and objectives was explored from observation, in-depth interviewing and focus group discussion.

Since the fact was that training needs assessment has been quite randomly arranged by municipalities, some opinion over the limited activity has been conversed.

‘Knowing what your own potential, good points, and weak points is such an advantage. If anybody has realised these kinds of things, it means that they know what they should do and should not do. Training needs assessment could allow each municipal official to express what skill or knowledge they think they lack. Therefore, I think this can be a way to build up the capability in performing and accomplishing tasks and objectives. Each position will require different knowledge and skill. With training needs assessment, the municipal officials will have a chance to confirm themselves on what they want to reach’.

- DOLA Officer (1) 2010

The above quotation was from an officer at the local personnel management improvement department at DOLA. Her opinion gave some sense of possibility towards the point that the capability in performing and accomplishing tasks and objectives could be reached by identification of training needs. However, during the focus group discussion with municipal officials in four municipalities, the responses diverged.
‘I don’t think each municipality will seriously take our needs into account. Moreover, I will not think of skills and knowledge I have or I don’t have. I will think of what I will get for this promotion more than thinking for the municipality. This is real life, not in a textbook. No one cares for the organisation more than oneself’. (2010)

‘I think it is possible, but it is quite hard to happen. Imagine that the training needs are hardly ever conducted for the municipal officials, how a person could have a chance to think of their potential or capacity? This must be re-corrected at the policy level.’ (2010)

‘For me it is theoretically nice and it is such a good link but it is very hard to do it in reality. The personnel officer and the administrative actors must take it into account. This must be a two way communication in the municipality. The chief executive people like the mayor and municipal clerk must start it as policy and encourage the staff to be aware and think carefully of their capability. At the same time, the municipal staff must think and then do the self assessment on what are the things I really lack? If each municipality can reach this equilibrium, the training needs identification will definitely allow the capability in performing and accomplishing tasks and objectives to be emerged. It can happen like this because each person knows what tasks and objectives they should reach and then improve themselves to do so’. (2010)

Hence, in accordance with the quotations, it seems rather complicated to reach the point where the aforementioned equilibrium is satisfied. However, there certainly is a possibility to establish the capability and capacity building in performing and accomplishing tasks and objectives through training needs identification.

6.3.2.2 Designing and Implementing Training Programmes

Designing and implementing the training programme is supposed to be the two stages which could contribute most to establish the capability in performing and accomplishing tasks and objectives. Their main purpose is to literally build up people’s capacity and capability. In regard with designing the training courses, it is a fact that this stage of training could happen at the municipality level. However, from both central and municipal levels, there have been some opinions over its possibility.
The Institute for local personnel training and development have re-assessed their training courses. However, the courses were designed particularly for local civil servants by experienced staffs. The staffs in these teams would have been holding some position as local civil servants or civil servants in the districts or sub-districts level. They are retired civil servants. Normally, no participation from local civil servants is required at this stage. The courses designers are experts. I don’t think that their participation would allow them to have more concern about their own performance.

- DOLA Officer (3) 2010

It would be very nice if we have a chance to design our own training course. It’s not that to design professionally but it will be nice if we are asked what we need. It would be very nice idea if representatives of local civil servants from Municipality, TAO and PAO have some chances to express their idea. We would feel more of the sense of belonging.

- Municipal Personnel Officer (4) 2010

Apart from the designing stage requiring more participation, the implementation of training programmes may need some improvements. As told from both in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, the trainers are mostly former central civil servants. This was not encouraging since the trainees had no opportunity to meet ideal or successful staffs that were originally from local government. Therefore, this program is evidently not believed to be very supportive to enhance performance, task accomplishment and objective when they are hastily implemented.

6.3.2.3 Transfer of Training and Evaluation of Training Programme

Transfer of training and evaluation of training programmes scarcely take place. Therefore, establishing capability in performing and accomplishing tasks and objectives via these activities are relatively rare. Prospectively, transfer of training and the evaluation of training program certainly have the potential to boost the capability in performing and accomplishing tasks and objectives. When a person is able to distribute his or her knowledge to others, there can be at least two results. Firstly, and optimistically, that person could be proud of him or herself and will try to perform or carry out their work with pride and with a commitment to achieve the tasks
successfully. It would be because one should feel like he or she is the pioneer of that innovation in an office or an organisation. Secondly, a person might not want to share the new knowledge because he or she is afraid of losing their relative expertise or that others might end up doing it better. In the four municipalities, both extreme cases had occurred.

‘Our mayor asked us to join a project called “OD”; I did not know what it was. However, most of the staff had to join it. With that activity, I knew later that OD stands for Organisational Development. At least I have learned that OD could encourage staff in the same department to talk and discuss together. I came back and told the other colleagues that we should start to discuss our problems together because when anybody confronts a problem, it could lead to other problem and then affect us all. As a Personnel Officer, I also wrote a report on “OD” to show other municipal officials in the municipality’
- Municipal Personnel Officer (4) 2010

‘The Financial and Budgetary Department is the most secretive and mysterious department of all. We know only little on how they manage their work. They never explained why their documents must be done in a different way. No memorandum from their department was sent around. We only sometimes knew that we had to change some phrases in our official letter otherwise we may not be able to claim back our money for a project. They would tell us that they were told to change into new ways of doing it but no explanation for us. They are just afraid of losing their expertise in doing those kinds of documents’
- FGD (1) from a municipality 2010

‘It’s hard to explain to them my new system of budgeting. The other department does their part, I do my part and finally the mayor may change everything in accordance to his needs. There are no advantages of disseminating the knowledge. For me, I never want to know what kind of training those engineering people had. Knowing that would not encourage me to work more’
- FGD (3) from a municipality 2010
According to the researcher’s direct observation, the Financial and Budgetary department at all four municipalities was very unique. Other staff at the municipalities always described them as powerful people because they hold the position as financial resources decision makers. This is also another reason why members of this department hardly ever shared their expertise to other municipal officials.

Regarding the evaluation of the training programme, this activity is more useful for the training course organiser. If it were the case that they launched an evaluation form to municipal officials, they would certainly learn to build up the capability in performing and accomplishing tasks and objectives as training course organiser. In the section 5.3.3 it illustrates how limited the evaluation of training programme was. As a result of this, the possibilities for enhancing the capability of performing and accomplishing tasks and objectives are also scarce but there is surely some possibility.

### 6.3.3 Building Relationships and Attracting Resources through Training and Development

#### 6.3.3.1 Identification of Training Needs

Identification of training needs can also build relationships and attract resources to an organisation. The definition of this relationship building and attracting resources, when taking into account managing relationships both internally and externally in ways which help those country actors to perform; is rather broad. Therefore, according to the qualitative data collection philosophy in allowing the data speak for itself, the researcher explored how and what the activities are that could be carried out to build up this capability from the key informants and interviewees.

> 'With training needs identification, the HR staff could learn more and build up rapport with other municipal officials in other departments. This could be one way which the HR officials learn, by observing the characteristics of each staff. Once again, training needs assessment will surely attract people to be in an organisation. At least, staff may look forward to be rewarded a training opportunity and this may encourage them to stay and work longer in an organisation. However, again it depends on how interesting the training programme can be and attract them most'.

- DOLA Officer (2) 2010
'It is possible to create such activities. In my opinion, there must be written in the policy level first that this kind of training needs identification may create this relationship and maintain or attract human resources for a municipality. But it is hard to link, if they do not understand well the purpose of this activity'.
- The Chief (2) 2010

These quotations illustrate the importance of the hierarchy of policy which still exists after decentralisation because Thailand is still a Unitarian state. Exploring the reaction and responses of the staff at the central level, it still illustrates the sense of centralisation. At the same time, the municipal officials have diverse notes on this issue.

‘If we really have a chance to conduct our own training needs assessment, I am sure it will turn out very supportive. I would never have thought of how useful the activity could be, especially for my HR department. However, this must not take into account those “Dek Sen”20. They would never be willing to give correct or supportive information. They may be afraid that they will not get better chance than the others’
- Municipal Personnel Officer (1) 2010

‘If I have the chance like this, I will try my best to maintain a low turnover rate. The municipal staffs can rotate to other municipality but if we have this superior system of training needs assessment and they realise its advantage, it will surely attract people to stay and work here rather than relocate to other municipality. And this will make all municipalities be competitive in its HR or local personnel administration’,
- Municipal Personnel Officer (1) 2010

In regard with the quotations, the municipal officials also perceive this initiative in a positive way. Therefore, it can be a way forward to reach some new opportunities to build up this capability for municipal officials.

20 Dek Sen means a person who is helped by higher position staff, mayor or politician in any level to get the job, and get a chance for training. In other words, it is a name for a people who are supported by nepotism or patronage system.
**6.3.3.2 Designing and Implementing Training Programme**

Designing and implementing a training programme can also build up some capability in establishing relationships and attractive resources to an organisation. The designing stage could contribute more for internally establishing relationships and attract resources whereas the implementing stage could support this both internally and externally.

According to the in-depth interviews and the focus group discussions, designing activities require some participation from municipal officials. Some representatives of municipal officials should have a chance to participate in the design stage of training courses. Internally, a representative of municipalities would be able to create a relationship with municipalities in the same cluster that he or she belongs to: not only with other municipalities but also the municipal officers for the municipality. They will have a chance to learn one another’s character and obtain information on what they would require for training and from training. Therefore, it is likely that a greater opportunity to create relationships during the designing process could be attained. The internal relationship possibly includes the local-central relations through the designing stage. There have been responses to this possibility.

*‘In my career life as a municipal official, I have never thought that I would have a chance to design any training courses for ourselves. It will certainly be an opportunity for us to speak up for what we want. It surely is very nice in the way that HR department will learn how to improve the training stage as well as building up better relations with other departments. But I think this will be a big challenge for the central government, they will not think of our relationship but they may lose some power’*
- Municipal Clerk (4) 2010

*‘It would rather be complicated to launch such a way forward to design only a training course. Finding representatives from the local government, especially from the municipality, would be very hard to complete. I think it is such a nice idea to build up our relationship, but it is so very hard to complete in practice. Training courses are quite fixed, so that it might not require such participation to design the courses’*
- DOLA Officer (1) 2010
In regard with implementing the training courses, it is more obvious that it could support the relationships and attract more resources, especially human resources. Some training courses have been narrated as courses that establish unity and create mutual understanding, especially amongst municipal officials who carry out the same position or job in different municipalities.

‘One thing I found from joining a training course was that I gained friends who worked in the same position as me from all around Thailand. We shared experiences and after the training course, some of us are still in touch. This informal group which was founded after the seminar or training was very nice. I have heard much news through these groups of friends’.
- Municipal Personnel Officer (1) 2010

‘Some good training courses could attract people to apply for the job. In the municipality case this is very rare because the training course is quite bland or in other words, it is not that interesting. The courses are arranged to inform us new rules, not innovation, no new tactics, no new know-how for local government. I don’t think the municipality job can be attractive by its reputation of its training courses. I would apply for a job at the municipality because if its tenure in career path’.
- Municipal Clerk (1) 2010

Therefore, due to the verity from the quotations, it is possible that designing and implementing training courses can enhance the capability in establishing relationships and attractive resources for municipal officials.

6.3.3.3 Transfer of Training and Evaluation of Training Programme

Since transfer of training and evaluation of training programmes are quite rare occurrences for municipal officers, the possibility to establish capability in establishing relationships and attractive resources to municipality would be decisive. However, both focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with the key informants showed some possibility to agree on the action.
‘It would surely be great if I can learn from the upper or more senior staffs on what I want to be trained. I have seen and heard from one of my friends in other municipalities that they have a chance to be trained outside of the municipality. They are more encouraged when they have heard that there is a chance to be trained and to learn more from other colleagues’ Municipal officials (Written in a piece of paper in a focus group discussion 2010).

‘Telling my colleagues some experiences from the training course was very nice. However, it depends on each person. Some were interested in what I have shared but some felt jealous that I had a chance to go to training. It is so hard to tell whether the informal transfer of training would provide advantages or disadvantages’,

- FGD (3) from a municipality 2010

Transfer of training could lead to some transfer of knowledge and building up of rapport among employees. This would surely be an opportunity for building up relationships among colleagues. However, the challenges would be the output and the outcomes from the transfer of training. There has been no systematic of transfer of training for municipal officials and therefore this activity could only be possible in the case that an individual is encouraged to share their knowledge. This transfer of training may be performed in the form of mentoring as well as the on-the-job training.

The evaluation of training programmes has been quite seldom as previously addressed. However, the capability in establishing relationships and attracting resources is potentially emerged. The key informant at the central government has confirmed and commented on this issue that it would be possible if policy allowed them to implement such activities.

‘We also tried our best to obtain some information and some feedback from the municipal officers who had participated in our training courses. I have to admit that we did not do much of the training course evaluation. The courses were designed by our expert team. Most of the contents were put into lectures, especially new rules, regulations and law. The municipal ordinances are only allowed to follow these principal rules only. None of the rules forces the training evaluation to be conducted”

- DOLA Officer (3) 2010
Therefore, it is not implementation alone that could provide the transfer of training and training evaluation, but the policy at the higher level which must be provided. It is, as a result, quite certain that the transfer of training and training evaluation can enhance and be supportive to capability in establishing relationships and attractive resources.

6.3.4 Learning and Adapting through Training and Development

6.3.4.1 Identification of Training Needs

Identification of training needs should directly allow the learning and adaptation of ability through training and development. Identifying by oneself what one lacks is a good indicator for self assessment. Recognising and addressing the training needs allows both the municipal personnel officer and the municipal officials to learn from one another. It is a mutual learning process. However, there are diverse opinions and comments on this possibility.

'I see no point why we should do the training needs. The rules and regulations on training and promotion are very clear that we just implement the training because we want to pass the criteria of getting to higher position. None of the municipal staff would realise how important the training need identification is. Besides, they would not learn to crystallise themselves on what they have lacked. I am not convinced'.
- DOLA Officer (2) 2010

'As a personnel officer, I know what the training needs assessment is for. I am quite certain that if it is implemented properly, we will all have more advantages than disadvantages. I know what I want to learn and I know what would be nice if I can be trained. I am ready to adapt myself to any initiatives. Municipal tasks are diverse; we should prepare our municipal officers to be ready for that, am I right?'
- Municipal Personnel Officer (3) 2011
A controversial issue has emerged as a local-central controversy. Central government officers always have opinions that are very much central-biased. They positively think that they have produced very compatible policy and implementation for the local civil servants; whereas the local officers are far more confident in their own abilities. There has been some possibility that identification of training needs would allocate the learning and adapting ability through training and development.

6.3.4.2 Designing and Implementing Training Programme

Designing and implementing training programmes are also compatible with the learning and adapting capability provision for the local civil servants. The two activities can certainly provide learning and adapting capabilities for a person. The designing stage is a good opportunity for the planner or the training course designer to learn and adapt the new factors which may affect trainees. Participation from the local civil servants would prospectively establish the sense of belonging for municipal officers. In regard with the training programme implementation, this activity could straightforwardly and naturally focus on educating or giving an opportunity for municipal officers to learn. Moreover, the training courses can provide and prepare the municipal officers with new strategic innovations to cope with the challenging environment in their daily work life. Theoretically, these activities have a propensity to build up and prepare municipal officers to learn and adapt their knowledge, skills or experiences to carry out their work. In reality, discretion and some uncertainty would affect the possibility of these activities. The notion of central-local controversy is still influential to this issue.

‘The designing process for training has been very well organised. In the team, retired government officers have been invited to join. They know best on what had happened and what would happen for the local civil servants and this includes the case of municipal officers. New rules and regulations for municipality are the main contents of the training courses. Each position in a municipality must know the rules and regulations that they must use in their department. Each training course was designed by different team. Experts in each position would be invited to join’,
- DOLA Officer (1) 2010
6.3.4.3 Transfer of Training and Evaluation of Training Programme

Transfer of training and the evaluation of training programmes can certainly provide the learning and adapting capabilities. Transfer of training could directly allow the person who tries to share the knowledge or skills to be assured of his or her ability. The fact that he or she can do that would imply the success of the training. Likewise, the person who has been informed by their colleague about the new knowledge, know-how and skills would certainly learn something new. Besides this, the capability to adapt this new knowledge should automatically emerge since the transferred innovation would be an adaptation for the current environment. Theoretically, this sounds like a win-win situation. In practice though, there have been some notorious arguments over it.

'I have no chance to share what I have learned from the training courses for my colleagues. It's not that I don't want to do but I have no chance to do so. Besides, I hardly ever meet a colleague who wants to listen to what I have learned. In my case, I have asked my supervisor about what has he been trained but he did not want to share it with me. It's bad because the performance management also made us more competitive. Some people may try to protect their know-how'.
- FGD (4) from a municipality 2011

'I have tried to encourage them to talk, discuss and work in a team. After a training course, there should be a chance for a person to give a talk to his or her department. If the new system or knowledge he or she has learned would affect everybody in the municipality, he or she should inform everybody. This will make the job easier for him or her because anybody can then be cooperated with. Moreover, this will provide some caution and awareness to all colleagues to be adaptive'
- Mayor (4) 2010

Not all the responses depicted the practices of transfer of training and the evaluation of training programmes in a positive way. Theories were proposed on how effective the work flow could be if the understanding amongst colleagues is reached. It is obvious in practice that the results vary from a person to another. There have been ample opportunities to enhance the capability of learning and adapting through transfer of training activity but the challenges stemmed from people themselves.
The evaluation of training programme has been perceived as a seldom-seen activity for local personnel administration. However, from an in-depth interview and the focus groups discussions, it is agreed to be an ignited activity. It is an activity which would allow the training course designer to learn from the feedback and allow them to adapt or adjust their training programmes.

‘If the training courses are evaluated, some feedback would give the planners such a good opportunity to adapt and adjust the training programmes. They may arrange some more interesting training course which is more suitable and compatible with municipal officials. It will be so very nice if they would listen to us who have confronted the real situation in the local level. However, I don’t think the DOLA would allow us or would launch this policy’.
- Municipal Clerk (1) 2010

‘I think the DOLA and the Institute should reconsider their training courses. They are nice courses but not effective at all. They mainly provide us the rules and regulations, not the innovation to manage or to work in the new dynamic environment. If they are arranging such training, better just give us a manual to read’
- Municipal Personnel Officer (3) 2011

‘I gave them some feedback after the training session. However, it was just a two page questionnaire. I don’t think that can be called a training course evaluation’
- FGD (2) from a municipality 2010

Therefore, this activity is more perceived to be positive if it is implemented. However, it is rather obvious that there have been no policies stated in regard to this activity. However, the economy of scale might be another issue which both central and local government must take into account in case that the evaluation of training can take place.
6.3.5 Managing Trade-offs and Dilemmas through Training and Development

6.3.5.1 Identification of Training Needs

The main aims of the capability of managing trade-off and dilemma is to find the ways to balance conflicting objectives and demands such as coherence versus diversity. Training needs identification can be one way forward to manage the conflict. People in an organisation have different interests. Thus, asking them for their interests on what sort of training courses would meet their requirements can assure their security in training opportunities. On the contrary, if the training needs identification has left undone, some essential problems might not be heard about and solved. Some dilemmas might happen when identification of training needs do not meet the satisfaction of employees. Collecting data about and therefore knowing what the staff demands in term training courses would be an advantage for an organisation.

It has rather been quite infrequently that training needs identification occurs for local civil servants in municipalities. However, the responses towards its implementation are both positive and negative. The negative aspects would fall into the category of uncertainty and non-confidence in the possibility of implementing training needs identification.

‘The idea of training needs identification is very useful; however, it is very hard to be done in reality. I am quite certain that if I know staff’s demands on training and development, I would be better in providing them training courses. Moreover, I would be sure on who will have the priority on which course. Moreover, I would then know what issue they think they are having problems with and this will give me the chance to fix the problem before it happens. It can help the municipal clerk in people administration’
- Municipal Personnel Officer (3) 2011

‘Each person should know what they want to be and what they want to learn. Training needs identification is very rare. However, I know that it is important. I would be happier if the Personnel Officer can plan the training courses for other municipal staffs. She will know the situation of our municipality as a whole and then we can avoid the conflicts from the reluctant opportunity of training’
- Municipal Clerk (1) 2010
‘They just work on day to day basis tasks. Not much creative thinking emerged. From this situation, how would they know what they want from training courses? I only hope that they perform well in their tasks. I have to think twice on who will join which training courses. I know from some gossip that some of them just want to go to travel. The only conflict that can happen is if they do not have the same chance to join some nice training course in other province, especially a chance to see Bangkok’

- Municipal Clerk (2) 2010

From the quotations, both pros and cons on training needs and the issue of trade-offs and dilemmas were conversed. There is an issue of uncertainty on the possibility of its implementation. However, there has been some hint of positive thinking that training needs may ease and prevent some conflict in advance.

6.3.5.2 Designing and Implementing Training Programmes

Once again, although the designing stage of training hardly ever happens, but it was agreed to be a part that can provide a precautious stage of preventing dilemmas and conflicts. In considering the design of training, the content of the courses are very crucial. The compatibility and the understanding between the central and local levels can be strengthened through these training courses. Training courses can be designed to provide better understanding on tasks and responsibilities done by both central officers and local officers. There must be some clarification on the significance of the two levels of government. None of the misunderstanding or feelings of superiority or inequality will occur if the training courses are well-designed. The courses can be designed to contain the content that explains well the ultimate goal of municipality and states how important the municipality is.
‘I know that the training courses are here to allow us to be well-equipped with the knowledge on rules, laws, municipal ordinances and the constitution; but we need some challenging experience, too. I only learn from the training course what will I have to do but they never provided me on why do I have to do it. I agree that training design is very important. The content which they want to transfer by the training implementation must be valid, relevant and lead us to complete the better ultimate goal of municipality’;
- Municipal Personnel Officer (3) 2011

‘I think the municipal officials are more capable than in the past. They understand more of what they have to do for the local people. However, the design stage of training does not occur at the local level. Only in the case that a mayor arranges some extra training courses for the municipal officers, will there be some chance where they would design it by themselves. In that case, the design stage will have more effect in solving the internal problems because they know what had happened in their municipality better than us in the central government’
- DOLA Officer (3) 2010

Not only is the training design stage very important, but the training implementation is also crucial. The training implementation is the activity which transfers the message, knowledge, and attitudes to trainees. Therefore, some activities during the training processes could lead to some unification and better understanding for municipal officers. Conflicts and dilemmas could be resolved through training implementation. The better understanding about each position and how each position functions in a municipality must be clarified. However, most training courses are arranged in accordance with the position and tasks which the trainees are doing. Therefore, there has hardly ever been a chance where municipal clerks from each municipality can gather and have a chance to learn from one another.
‘I only met other people who work in the same position as I do. I have learned some experiences throughout the training courses because we discussed about it. However, I don’t know how to manage the problem. It really depends on each municipality. Like my case, I have some problems with the section of budgetary. They are people who are hard to deal with. The other whom I had met had some problems with the engineering department. They said that those engineers spent most of the municipal budget. I know where the conflicts are but I do not know how to solve it’.
- Municipal Personnel Officer (4) 2010

‘I arranged an OD training course for my staff in the municipality. I have learned from my experience that each of them know only their main tasks. They do not know what the others would do. I have to spare some of the municipality’s budget to make them understand one another better. The conflicts among them lead to worse output of the organisation’
-Mayor (4) 2010

It has been quite obvious that training implementation is the heart of building up the capability of trade-off and managing the conflicts. However, the difficulties of this capability building might be that it is rather hard to bring such activities into action. Moreover, once again, the leadership of mayor, municipal clerk and personnel officer is crucial for the training implementation.

6.3.5.3 Transfer of Training and Evaluation of Training Programme

In one sense, transfer of training can create some conflicts. Transfer of training can be one way of acting out the patronage system in the municipality. The choice of who the innovation is transferred to can create some controversial issues in a municipality. Discrimination in transfer of training can happen. There has been no systematic way of transferring the training in municipalities. There is some evidence of conflicts that have emerged.
‘I have realised that my supervisor has a bias. She always tells about new things to the new staff in my department. I have tried my best to catch up with what she has told me to do but I never make it to satisfy her. I forgot that the new staff is the mayor’s relative’

- FGD (4) from a municipality 2011

‘We had no official learning session in our municipality. On the job training or knowledge sharing would happen unofficially in informal groups. Nobody cares for other people. Transfer of training would be an alternative to make them talk to one another more but it may not guarantee how well they will gather and share their experience or knowledge.’

- FGD (2) from a municipality 2010

Not only has the transfer of training activity been rare in supporting the capability of lessening the dilemma and conflicts in an organisation, but the evaluation of training programmes would be even more unusual. The fact that this activity hardly ever occurred makes municipal officers imagines it to be fraught with difficulties. A consensus on this issue is that the capability of managing the trade-off and conflicts may not be possible by the evaluation of the training programme.
6.3.6 Concluding Annotations on HRCB through Recruitment and Selection

Table 6-2: Results summary for training and development and HRCB activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HRCB activities</th>
<th>Training and Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identification of Training Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committing and engaging</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing and accomplishing tasks and objectives</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building relationships and attracting resources</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning and adapting</td>
<td>✓/✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing trade-offs and dilemmas</td>
<td>✓/✗</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data Analysis

According to table 6-2 and the results presented in this section, HRCB activities can contribute to training and development only if they are well-planned and effectively implemented. The sign ✓ shows that the activity is perceptibly accommodated while the ✓/✗ defines a likelihood to sustain training and development if the activity is put into action. It has been quite evident that the activities which were hardly ever implemented, and not influenced by the decentralisation, have scarcely been supportive to training and development. However, most of the interviewees and participants in the focus groups discussions had their attitudes in the similar trend that the five core capabilities can be potentially carried out but the training courses must be designed and implemented based more on basic local needs rather than one blueprint of change for the whole country.
6.4 Capacity Building through Decentralised Performance Management

6.4.1 Committing and Engaging through Performance Management

6.4.1.1 Performance Management System Needs

Performance management can be perceived like a monitoring and evaluation system. It examines the progress of individual staff and the organisation as a whole. There have been developed some indicators of what the success is and what it is not. Therefore, performance management system needs is an activity which observes and surveys what criteria performance management will be based on and what should be the ways to measure its progress.

Mainly, municipality personnel management has been decentralised to the municipality level. However, none of the documents such as the Constitution 1997 and 2007, LPA Act 1999, and municipal ordinances have stated any phrase relating to performance management system needs. This is due to the fact that performance management is justified and designed by DOLA, still. Moreover, the DOLA has produced a manual on performance management for municipalities. The municipalities around Thailand have to implement and adopt the policy which has been issued by DOLA. This was said to standardise the performance indicators around the local governments in Thailand. Therefore, the performance management system needs does not exist at the municipal level in Thailand. However, there have been some opinions in regarding the performance management system needs from both central and local officials.

‘Our country is a Unitarian state. It will be reluctant if you separate and decentralize everything to the local government. This would lead to my question on why did we unify previously? This is Thailand, not a western country. Our history allowed us to unify and share some common rules and regulations. As well as the performance management system, how could each municipality have their own blueprint? I don’t think it is the way forward to encourage municipal officers to commit or engage more to their jobs. There should be something else but not this system’

- The Chief (1) 2010
‘I think I will be more encouraged to design, plan and indicate on what I want to be assessed. I am a personnel officer; I think I have seen more cases which municipal civil servants have no idea about their performance management. They do not understand what a career path is. I think if there is an activity which introduces them and asks them to participate for their own future, they will be more committed to municipal jobs and be more engaged with other staff’
- Municipal Personnel Officer (4) 2010

‘I think it is nice to have the performance management system needs at municipal level. I could indicate and plan which kind of municipal officers I would want to work with. I will make sure that all municipal officials understand their roles before they state what they need to be measured or assessed. I would prepare to have a participatory approach of collecting the information on the municipal officers. However, I know that this activity is hardly ever allowed by the DOLA’s requirement for their performance management system needs’
-Mayor (1) 2010

According to the quotations, it is obvious that theoretically, the performance management system needs may allow the capability of committing and engaging to be built up. However, it is rather hard to implement in practice. Municipal ordinances and rules for municipality are limited and justify only some activities for municipalities. Therefore, participation from the municipalities and municipal officers in the performance management system needs may need to be reconsidered.

6.4.1.2 Job Evaluation and Promotion System

As was discussed previously in the section 5.4.2, job evaluation and promotion systems were designed and implemented in accordance to rules, regulations and indicators designated by the DOPA and later on DOLA. In case of job evaluation, it has been quite apparent that the job value has been evaluated and specified by the central government. It is intertwined with the traditional system of bureaucracy in Thailand. There are no possibilities which would allow this activity to be completed at the local level. In addition the promotion system is rather complicated. Patronage system, nepotism and kinship have evidently emerged in this case. There is not even a single
area of Thailand where this patronage system does not exist. It is a part of their culture that determines how effective the patronage system could be applied.

‘We have never designed or enquired about job evaluation from the central government or DOLA. The HR system at the local level does not have to take into account the job evaluation process. The jobs for municipal officers have been evaluated and given indication on how much salary each position will get. There has been a report and a manual on the salary for each position in each rank’
- Municipal Personnel Officer (4) 2010

‘Mostly, the job evaluation has been conducted at DOLA. There is a department which administrates this kind of thing. There must be a standard for all local governments including municipalities around Thailand. No confusion would emerge if the municipalities followed the standard
- DOLA Officer (1) 2010

‘I do not want to know how I will have to participate in job evaluation. I just want to know the amount of money which will be my salary. It’s too technical a thing to participate in job evaluation. However, the team who does this should understand each position well. I would feel more confident and committed to my job if I know the process and how they calculate my salary’.
- FGD (2) from a municipality 2010

‘For me, commitment and engaging capability can be built or encouraged by the job evaluation. If the DOLA care about us, they should spare some time to ask how well, how hard or how difficult each position would have to perform. From what I understand, they just think by themselves and compare to what those civil servants at the DOLA or other central governments would do. Local Government works are totally different. We have to encounter many kinds of situation which they will never understand’
- Municipal Clerk (3) 2011
According to the quotations, there have been some diverse opinions especially between the central and local civil servants. This is still obvious that between the central and local perspectives, better understanding is required. Moreover, the feeling of superiority by the central government still exists. This condition does not only create conflict, but it can also obstruct the commitment and engagement from the local civil servants.

In regard with the promotion system, this activity is an attractive and very crucial activity for all municipal officers. It is a part of an incentive system. The promotion system for municipal officers has been found to imitate the system from the central government. Seniority and long time tenure in a position are taken into consideration every time promotion is occurring. Not only must the candidate have seniority in a position but also training courses which are compulsory be shown. However, the issue is like a domino effect. If a person is favoured by any higher positioned person in a municipality that one is likely to be awarded a training opportunity as well as the promotion. It is because training course attendance is the prerequisite of the promotion to any position. However, the promotion system was created and established by the DOLA. There have been some rules and criteria to follow. Moreover, after the decentralisation in HRM, there are performance evaluations twice in a year. The procedures of performance management and assessment have been addressed in section 5.4.2 and 5.4.3. The bi-annual performance management also affected the expectations of each municipal officer in being promoted.

'I have never got two ranks awarded in my career life. I have waited and waited for two years. There were 4 times of promotion already but I still get only one rank each time. I am very optimistic, because at least I was promoted. Some colleagues who were clearly the opponents of the mayor got nothing. How could we be committed or engaged with our work? it seems like we are not very secure'
Wrote by a municipal officer during focus group discussion 2010
- FGD (4) from a municipality 2011

'I truly believe that the merit system should bring the capability in building up the commitment and engagement for municipal officers. You know? It will give you the true, pure and real award if you do well. However, I think it is hard for the Thai system. If you are awarded or promoted, you surely think positive and will try to perform better and
better and involve more in your job. I think patronage system is in our blood. But, this does not mean that it's all bad. If you support good people through patronage system, it is acceptable for me’.
- Municipal Clerk (1) 2010

’I do not have hope if this mayor is still in his position. He promoted only his friends and relatives. I have asked myself many times why I have to work so hard. There is no point for me. I did not involve myself in or participate in any social events of the municipality for a long time’
- FGD (2) from a municipality 2010

According to the quotations above, a systematic promotion system would allow a better chance for building up the capability of engaging and commitment to an organisation for an individual. Incentives for being promoted are still classically effective for an individual. Not only must a system of promotion allow the commitment and engagement for individual, but the organisation must commit itself to provide a better system for their staffs.

6.4.1.3 Performance Appraisal Process

The performance appraisal process is the activity which assesses the performance of an individual staff member in an organisation. This activity certainly will influence the promotion system. Theoretically, the promotion system in Thai local government is also a performance-based system. There is a manual for each municipal officer to study. Moreover, each official must prepare a folder of their own individual performance every six months. This folder is a part of their promotion consideration. However, seniority and tenure of time in that position are taken more into account. There have been cases though which positively stated the possibility of building up capability of committing and engaging through the performance appraisal process. Simultaneously, some opponents have addressed the challenges regarding it.

’I just feel that after the decentralisation, it has been an era of disaster for municipalities in Thailand. It has become very competitive. Networking with local politicians, especially the mayor is very important for each officer. If you know nobody or you are supported by nobody then you will be nobody in the municipality. You will not be able to be rotated or promoted if you know no one. This system is
a disaster and how could it have made me be committed or engaged with what I have to do or perform?'
- Municipal Clerk (3) 2011

‘The transparent performance appraisal system will surely encourage municipal staffs to work well. I am quite certain that my mayor has been quite transparent and very straightforward. He asked the HR department to count even how many times each staff have attended the social event arranged by the municipality. He asked the HR department to show each person’s performance before they are awarded a promotion rank or new salary. I try to attend more of the social events or any other public events organised by our municipality so that I may get promoted. I like this performance appraisal system’
- FGD (3) from a municipality 2010

‘It depends on each municipality how they would manage their appraisal system. We have only given them a manual with some guidelines for them. The system is a standard but how they implement it depends on each mayor and the municipal clerk’
- DOLA Officer (3) 2010

According to the quotations, diverse views have been addressed in regard with the appraisal assessment system. However, it has been rather obvious that the system is still influenced by patronage system and the bureaucratic management by the central government. Therefore, it is rather difficult to conduct the capability enhancement through the performance appraisal process. Injustice or the patronage system has likely created some discouragement for municipal officers who have no support. Therefore, the appraisal system must be so transparent that it could secure the confidence of the municipal officers. Besides, local elites and ‘elite capture’ seemed to be true in Thai municipal cases. There has been no chance to deny that elite capture exists but the notion of how effective this system could provide for municipal administration is more interesting. Some municipal officers perceived this phenomenon in a positive way. They addressed that mayors or municipal clerks who have moral fibre would use the patronage system by supporting the ‘Khon dee’ or literally good person to the better position. However, this intangible idea could not guarantee the more effective and efficient performance of municipal officers.
6.4.2 Performing and Accomplishing Tasks and Objectives through Performance Management

6.4.2.1 Performance Management System Needs

Performing and accomplishing tasks and objectives is the capability which is purportedly established through performance management. An individual is expected to realise and commit him or herself to perform and accomplish his or her tasks in accordance with the job description. Performance management system needs should function as a catalyst to allow an individual to be aware of what they may be assessed or measured on. This activity can accelerate or encourage any people in an organisation to be energetic and responsive to what he or she will be gauged on at the end of the evaluation term. However, this activity has been centralised at DOPA and DOLA. Beyond DOPA and DOLA’s capacity in issuing the policy, it was the MOI who has held the authority in performance management systems throughout the public administration in Thailand. Therefore, there is no doubt that performance management system needs have never been implemented by municipalities or any other form of local governments. However, during the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, there have been some perspectives from the municipal officers over this issue.

‘I have been thinking for 20 years since I became a municipal officer that we should have freedom in our administration. The central government should act as a mentor and then allow us to perform by ourselves. Performance management system needs could be just a dream for us. It is their trick. It is impossible that the DOLA will let such powerful and strategic activity to be implemented at the local level. If they do, they will lose their power and authority’
- Municipal Clerk (1) 2010

‘A performance management system need is beyond the municipal capacity to manage. If we have to conduct this kind of activity, we may have to skip some tasks for our citizens. For me, having the manual and the criteria to manage this HRM thing is good enough. Just follow what they said, it’s not a big matter for us’
- Municipal Personnel Officer (1) 2010
‘I have no idea what performance management system needs is. I only know that I will be assessed twice a year since the LPA Act 1999 was been promulgated and validated. I know only how many tasks I have to do in a day. The mayor will not remember what have I done, he might be interested in what source of budget he will be able to reach or which project will make him popular amongst the constituents. I don’t think it’s useful for me to do some survey on performance management system needs’.  
- FGD (1) from a municipality 2010

‘If I learn more on what I will be assessed, I am sure I will try my best to complete my tasks and jobs within six months time. If performance management system needs would provide me with some preparation on what I should perform, I would like to do it. I know that the results may not satisfy me alone but at least I can feel that somehow I have participated in my own organisation management system’.  
- FGD (2) from a municipality 2010

Thanks to the quotations from both in-depth interviews and the focus group discussions, performance management system needs seems to be controversial as to whether it could support the capability building for accomplishing tasks and objectives of an organisation. There are some positive and negative perspectives on this activity. However, the main argument would be that if a policy related to performance management is still limited and restricted to be launched by the central government alone, the possibility is certainly rare. Moreover, the sense of belonging to an organisation will be established if there is participation from the municipal officers. However, the notion of economy of scale in conducting the activity is decisive. Not only in terms of budget but also the time limitation. Thus, performance management system needs can support the capability in accomplishing tasks and objectives with the conditional issues of policy and economy of scale.

6.4.2.2 Job Evaluation and Promotion System

There is no doubt that a promotion system will certainly influence and be supportive to establish the capability in accomplishing tasks and objectives. However, the job evaluation may have indirectly affected the capability building. It seemed like the process of job evaluation is impossible to be considered and implemented by
municipalities. Therefore, it is perceived as an impossible activity for local civil servants and for municipalities. However, three municipal clerks who have worked at each municipality have agreed that job evaluation results have positively affected capability in accomplishing tasks and objectives. They have agreed that even though there are so few opportunities to directly participate in that process; some representatives from municipal officers would be a good compromise. Besides, it will certainly be more transparent how and why each job has been allocated that particular amount of salary.

In regard with the promotion system, its criteria and design and has been specified by the DOLA and the central government. Although the ‘Triple Entente’ has been established to directly administrate the HRM, DOLA has still been involved in many cases. The promotion system is dramatically chaotic, thus it might be a double edged sword for decentralised HRM. As a result, it can either support or obstruct the capability of accomplishing the tasks and objectives.

‘Not only is it the mayor in my municipality whom I have to take into account, but also the committee at the provincial level who would verify the decision of promotion. I have to follow my destiny only. I don’t know whether I will be promoted or not if I know nobody, neither the mayor nor the committee member would have helped me. I have to pray, no hope if I do not try to know them personally. This is why I lack of ‘Kamlangjai’ already’
Written during the focus group discussion by a FGD participant 2010
- FGD (1) from a municipality 2010

‘I have tried to compromise between the municipal clerk group and the mayor group. This job is so very hard for me. They are opponents. However, you have to admit that the mayor is now so very powerful. If you oppose him, do not imagine to get promoted. The worse case is that you cannot transfer to other municipality because the mayor will tell the prospective new mayor that you perform ineffectively at the old one. This is such a bad system’
- Municipal Personnel Officer (1) 2010

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21 ‘Kamlangjai’ in Thai means encouraging commitment.
‘I know what my staffs are and how much capacity they have. I will only promote the staff who really work and are not selfish to their colleagues. I really check the punctuality of their presence and the absences during working days. Promotion system is performance-based here. Seniority is taken into account but that is not all. Municipal works are challenging if you really intend to do good for other people. Promotion system can surely support the encouragement to complete the job but the environment in a municipality is also very important. I have to create the environment for work, not for envy and jealousness amongst my staffs’

-Mayor (3) 2011

Due to the quotations, promotion system does not rely on its structured process alone. Politics in HRM still plays as an important role in promotion system. Therefore, it is likely to be a discouragement and an obstacle for capacity building if the promotion system is not implemented with transparency or relies more on nepotism, patronage system and kinship than performance considerations.

6.4.2.3 Performance Appraisal Process

The performance appraisal process is another critical issue similarly to the promotion system. The two activities are interrelated. The performance appraisal processes have been designed and specified by the DOLA and the ‘Triple Entente’. However, in practice, implementation has been done at municipalities while the final results or decisions would be done by the provincial committee. The performance processes supposedly bring the support to build up capability of accomplishing the objectives and tasks for individual.

‘I know that the appraisal process is not that complex for the municipality but they have politics inside their organisation. DOLA and our department have tried hard to prevent the patronage system but it is difficult to do that. From the point of view of a central government, they are much more capacitated but they do not use their capacity, skills and knowledge in the right way’

- DOLA Officer (2) 2010
'I have been assessed by my supervisor who does not like me at all. How could I be successful in the performance appraisal process? I know that there are criteria which I have passed easily, but not for me because the assessor is her. I don’t think the process will encourage or support me to accomplish my tasks and objectives because I see no point of doing so'.
Written during a focus group discussion at a Municipality 2010
- FGD (4) from a municipality 2011

Once again, performance appraisal process can either enhance or deteriorate the capability of performing and accomplishing tasks and objectives. Politics and patronage system at local level could do harm to the commitment and certainly the performance of an individual. Besides this, the process and the criteria of appraisal were not designed at the municipal or local level. Therefore, it is rather difficult for this capability to be developed and implemented effectively.

### 6.4.3 Building Relationships and Attracting Resources through Performance Management

#### 6.4.3.1 Performance Management System Needs

Since performance management system needs has been quite uncommon for municipalities, once again it has been quite difficult to build up the capability of building relationships and attracting resources through it. There has been almost no possibility. However, in the case that it would be possible to be conducted at the municipal level, there are some perspectives narrated by the municipal officers.

‘I am sure that performance management system needs would attract internal candidates to apply for municipal jobs. If the policy allows us to create our own way of managing the performance, many staff would be more convinced. However, it depends on the mayor and the municipal clerk. If a municipality has good mayor and good municipal clerk who have justice and are moral, then the performance management system needs would encourage people to participate and then they will be happy to be assessed’
- Municipal Personnel Officer (4) 2010
‘I do not think that this activity can function as a capacity builder especially to attract resources. Human resources for municipality will be interested in their salary more than the issue on how will they be assessed. I will not argue that it sounds like an effective way but it is so hard to do in practice’
- DOLA Officer (3) 2010

‘Brainstorming or participation to find criteria for our appraisal would be nice to know. But I am not so sure that we will have that much time to participate. Only the daily tasks that I have to do is far more than the word “busy” for me’
- FGD (2) from a municipality 2010

Therefore, performance management system needs seems to be far away from being reached in practice and in terms of policy. The system of management has been designed through the central government to all local governments so the chance to implement this activity at the local level like a municipality is dim.

6.4.3.2 Job Evaluation and Promotion System

Job evaluation can support in building up the capability in building relationship and attracting resources by its transparency during their processes and the clarity of their output. In case of job evaluation, criteria setting should be comprehensible as well as specified in the form of a committee with some participation of the municipal officers. However, in the case of Thai municipalities, job evaluation has been done at the central level and no participation has been considered. In other words, the rank and the salary indication have been conferred from the central government. Not only the salary, but the compensation, fringe benefits and other benefits for local civil servants are very similar to what other civil servants in other levels would get. Therefore, it has been quite clear that job evaluation could be beneficial and supportive to attract the resources only in theory.
'Job evaluation may be able to attract qualified candidate to work for municipality in the case that the job evaluation is transparent and fair. They should feel that the job is worth and suitable with the salary that they will receive. However, the activity is very technique-based, so that people who worked for other fields may not understand. HR people may have to disseminate this knowledge and allow them to know why this activity is important'
- Municipal Clerk (4) 2010

'We weight the work load and consider how hard each job would be. However, fortunately, the DOPA, DOLA and OCSC have conducted such systematic way and indicate the job evaluation already. When it comes to the municipality case, the similar judgement was adopted'
- DOLA Officer (1) 2010

'I am happy that the job evaluation has been done and completed at the central level. I even don’t know how to do it. It is very technical thing'
- FGD (3) from a municipality 2010

These quotations have significantly demonstrated how centralised this job evaluation is. Besides this, the municipal officer may not have the knowledge and skill to conduct the job evaluation. Therefore, the consideration how job evaluation may attract more resource or make better relationships amongst the municipal officers or improve central-local relationships is relatively rare.

In regard with the promotion system, this activity seems to be able to attract more resources, especially human resources. Simultaneously, it can also be an obstacle and divert prospective candidates from municipalities. Different municipalities can give different stories on this.

'I don’t think my municipality will be famous for a transparent promotion system. I even want to move but my year of service is ending soon. Since this mayor is appointed, I have been so unsecured and never get promoted. I even have worse relationship with my boss because she does not understand me and she has to please another staff because that staff is the relative of the mayor. This is unacceptable for me. No more attractive issue can be emerged from this municipality’s promotion system'
- FGD (1) from a municipality 2010
‘You cannot imagine relationship in a municipality should not be build up sometimes. It is too much. The worse case is some of these people have become lovers and they exploit this gap. The promotion system has been exploited by this favour. This is such under-developed system. I can say that I have no incentive to work harder or to accomplish my task’. Certainly, if the promotion system could be implemented transparently without any patronage system, it will facilitate our understanding, sympathy and encouragement among us all in the municipality. But this cannot occur in this municipality’
- FGD (4) from a municipality 2011

‘I have so much confidence in our mayor. He has the authority. Besides, he is like a ruler. No favouritism from him to any particular staff. I saw him order his officer to give a fine to his own relative who did not pay for the residential tax. He is very strict and sticks to the rules and regulations of promotion system. He even makes it clearer from the manual. We really have a decentralised system. It depends on how each municipality would adopt and perform it. Many people want to move to work in my municipality’
- Municipal Personnel Officer (3) 2011

The quotations have addressed different aspects by looking at how the promotion system could support the ability in building up relationship and attract more resources. Leadership seems to play a leading role once again in promotion system and in assuring the confidence of municipal officers. It is doubtless that different municipalities could have different capacity in attracting people and retain their human resources. Considering the excerpts, there have been extreme cases from three municipalities. Therefore, the promotion system can certainly support the capability in establishing relationships and attract more resources as long as it has been implemented with transparency and fairness.

6.4.3.3 Performance Appraisal Process

Like the promotion system, the performance appraisal process emphasises equality amongst the staff. Therefore, if the appraisal process is implemented without fairness and equality, it would be rather difficult to build up any ability in forge relationships or attract resources. These resources mainly signify human resources. Performance appraisal process for municipal officers has been designed and indicated by the DOPA and DOLA but the
implementation has been conducted at each municipality differently. This could also affect to
the reputation for its performance appraisal system. This reputation may be inaccessible to
external candidates but certainly accessible for internal candidates. Therefore, the rumours
on the performance appraisal process can be obstacles, or in fact opportunities to attracting
human resources for the organisation.

6.4.4 Learning and Adapting through Performance Management

6.4.4.1 Performance Management System Needs

Performance management system needs is an activity which allows the performance
assessor to recognise what people in an organisation are expected to be appraised. This
process consents the designer(s) of performance appraisal to be able to adapt and learn the
way to assess or measure the performance of staff in an improved or more effective method.
After the activity has been conducted, the employee who has been requested to inform their
needs is supposed to learn more about their own performance requirement. As a result, this
will provide them with a better understanding on how and what they will be assessed.
The expected outcome from this activity is to create the awareness for them of how to
perform well since they are aware of what they would be appraised. Since the activity may
not occur at the municipal level, there are some perspectives towards this activity.

'I don’t think that this activity will be able to be managed at the local
level. It will be a waste of time for them. Actually, the performance
management has been designed and put in a manual guide for them
already. No need to re-implement at the local level. I see no point
why they need to conduct it once again, it will be much overlapped’
- DOLA Officer (1) 2010

'If asking me, I would say that the activity sounds nice. I am
a personnel officer here but I never have a chance to be involved in
such an activity. I think if staff would have a chance to know what they
will be assessed on; it will force them to work harder. Besides, during
the process, the ultimate goal of the municipality must be emphasised
and confirmed. This activity will make them eager to work and be
energetic’
- Municipal Personnel Officer (4) 2010
‘The activity will allow us to participate in the process of performance management. It is good as a participation aspect. It will be hard or impossible to happen. Normally, we are doing what we are told to. Not only by the central government but also the provincial level also ordered us. I think the municipality seems like an organisation which emerges to support the upper level only. They will not let us know what we will be assessed on.’
- Municipal Clerk (1) 2010

It is rather obvious that municipal officers or staff would feel more confident if they were involved in performance management. The performance management system needs seem to be compatible for them in terms of their preparation for the appraisal process. However, the main argument certainly falls into the same category of central-local discourse. As a result, the HR activity cannot be supportive if the activity has never been carried out. However, there is certainly some possibility to establish the starting step for performance management.

6.4.4.2 Job Evaluation and Promotion System

The system of job evaluation can contribute to the team or committee who conduct the job evaluation only. They would be able to capacitate the capability in adapting and learning through the process of job evaluation. This activity will have only a rare possibility to involve municipal staffs. However, there has been a chance for the researcher to interview an officer at DOLA who had participated in the process of job evaluation since the time when his department was still under the responsibility of DOPA.

‘I was in the committee at that time. We were selected by the position we held. There was nothing much to consider because most of the jobs for local civil servants were very similar to central ones so that we could copy the jobs designed by OCSC.’
- DOLA Officer (2) 2010

Apparently, the job design and job evaluation were prescribed by the DOPA and DOLA. Therefore, there is no chance for local civil servants to be involved in the activity.

The promotion system on the other hand has been more positive for municipal officers to participate. However, it falls to the typical of politics of HRM. This could be an obstacle to capacitate the capability to adapt and learn through the promotion system.
'It is possible to build up the capability to adapt and learn through the promotion system in my opinion. However, the promotion system differs in practice in each municipality. Mayors and municipal clerks are the key to this success. We designed quite transparent system for them; it depends on how they would apply it.'
- DOLA Officer (1) 2010

'It is twice a year that municipal officers can be promoted. This means there are two times that the incentive mechanism should be working. This would be like an encouragement scheme for good and diligent officers. Moreover, the promotion process can include some feedback, so that these officers would have learned what they should improve and what should they maintain.'
- DOLA Officer (2) 2010

'I think it is hard. The municipality will not perceive the feedback for them as important. Higher salary or more fringe benefits would be more of their interest than the feedback to improve their performance. Besides, I have never seen that during the promotion process or after the performance appraisal, that the officers would be given their feedback.'
- DOLA Officer (3) 2010

It appears that the promotion system could be supportive to the adapting and learning of capacity building; however, it is rather difficult in practice. One argument here would be that the politics in HRM and the central government still play important roles in this activity. There is scarcely a chance to implement a promotion process without the influence of local elites or the central government.

6.4.4.3 Performance Appraisal Process

The performance appraisal process has been considered the most vital but the most vulnerable activity which can either support or discourage the capability of adapting and learning. Effective performance appraisal is expected to create confidence in the system among employees. Moreover, during the performance appraisal process examinees can have a chance to learn their strong and weak points. Included would be some feedback and some suggestions on how they could improve their performance. Criteria of expected performance
were set in advance by DOLA and distributed to municipalities in the form of a manual or guidelines for each position. Inside the documents related to performance appraisal, no procedures for giving feedback for municipal officers were found. Therefore, regarding the policy of performance appraisal, there is none. In practice though, municipal officers perceive this activity in a positive way.

‘Certainly, it will be nice. Although I don’t like to be told what is weak about me, but if it is really for improvement, I am willing to hear about it. I can learn and then adapt myself to what I should do. Nowadays, I have never ever received any feedback like that’
- FGD (1) from a municipality 2010

‘We lack of this kind of mirror system. No reflection, no comments because we all are afraid of doing wrong. I don’t like this way of thinking. I am willing to be criticised but in a constructive way. We, municipal officers, have so little chance to learn and adapt ourselves to the wider context as in the national level. If we think again, municipality is the government which is the closest one for the citizen but we just ignore it’,
- Municipal Clerk (1) 2010

‘I think it is possible that the performance appraisal system can be supportive to make us be more adaptive and learn more from one another. If we share our performance weakness and try to improve it together, I am quite certain that it will be positive and we would be more capacitated’
- Municipal Personnel Officer (3) 2011

Therefore, the quotations have reassured that there are possibilities that the performance appraisal process can be positively conducted in a way that supports the capability building of adapting and learning for individual.
6.4.5 Managing Trade-offs and Dilemmas through Performance Management

6.4.5.1 Performance Management System Needs

The aims of capacitating the capability to manage trade-offs and dilemmas is to find ways to balance conflicting objectives and demands such as coherence versus diversity. Performance management system needs is the activity which aims at balancing the diversity of needs in the performance management system. For employees to know and be prepared before they are appraised can be a way to moderate the conflict between the assessor and the ones who have to be assessed. The performance management system needs can provide the information on what objectives the organisation expects an employee to do and what shall be rewarded to the employee in return. However, the Performance management system needs have never been accomplished at the local level in Thai public administration. There have been some perspectives towards this activity.

'I know that it is not possible for a municipality to conduct such activities on their own. It will be complicated for us. However, if it is possible, I am sure it is a good procedure which will allow the municipal staff to understand more on what they should do and why. This will create more awareness for them and for an organisation to reward them as they are told or informed'.
- Municipal Clerk (1) 2010

'It will certainly be clearer for me and my colleagues on why we have to be assessed in the way they chose. I will admit that if I know what I will be assessed and then finally I cannot reach that objective. I will not hesitate to admit my weaknesses.
- FGD (3) from a municipality 2010

Although the activity may not emerge in practice, it might be useful to take it into consideration for policy reformation. Some evidences state that it is very useful to create such activities in order to create ‘awareness’ for officials. Therefore, it must be a kind of mechanism to encourage the performance management needs assessment to be practically implemented.
6.4.5.2 Job Evaluation and Promotion System

Job evaluation can support the better understanding on the value of each job and respond to the question of why each job has a different salary rank. The notion of job evaluation at the local level would be impossible. Nevertheless, there have been some perspectives on this activity.

‘Again, we may not be able to arrange or conduct such an activity but some information from the DOLA disseminated to us would be very nice. The HR section of each municipality should be able to provide this information for the municipal colleagues. However, it is a very technical activity. Not many people would be interested in it’
- Municipal Clerk (2) 2010

‘It is possible that we may prevent the conflict from central-local government through the job evaluation process. However, I know it is impossible in reality’
- FGD (3) from a municipality 2010

It is rather obvious that this activity has never been carried out for Thai local government, especially the municipality. However, the excerpts have shed light on this issue to indicate that if only it was possible to implement it in action, it would achieve the desired effect in employees

6.4.5.3 Performance Appraisal Process

The performance appraisal process is likely to be the most influential of the performance management activities. It is very crucial in terms of its result. The result could make differences for municipalities. Some trade-offs and conflicts may emerge at this point so it is very important that the performance appraisal process is conducted with cautiousness. Performance appraisal can be an equaliser to realise the capability in managing trade-offs and solving dilemmas. Even though it rather difficult to state that only a merit system could ease the performance appraisal process, a more transparent system seems doable.
‘I don’t believe that the merit system will be true in Thai local administration. The national level is even worse. Nowadays, when you decentralise all the systems, you also have to admit that corruption is decentralised. In the past, officials had to access the bribery system at the central level; nowadays, they can do this at the local level. Performance appraisal is hardly carried out without patronage system’
- DOLA Officer (3) 2010

‘I have tried to collect all data and folders for each official and propose them to the mayor for his consideration. However, I am sure he had his decision in his mind even before I submitted these documents to him’
- FGD (2) from a municipality 2010

‘I always hope that this appraisal process will be enhanced. I am quite certain that merit system or better equalised system would allow local civil servants to be more capacitated. Not only in an aspect of resolving the trade-offs and conflict, but also in all aspects of capabilities’
- Municipal Clerk (4) 2010

Hence, it is quite apparent that this capability is expected to be come about through the performance appraisal process. However, once again, it is suggested that this activity must be completed with an equal system. Hence, performance appraisal process has been a critical issue as other capabilities and other HR practices.
6.4.6 Concluding Annotations on HRCB through Performance Management

Table 6-3: Results summary for performance management and HRCB activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HRCB activities</th>
<th>Performance management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Performance management System Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committing and engaging</td>
<td>✓ / x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing and accomplishing tasks and objectives</td>
<td>✓ / x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Building relationships and attracting resources</td>
<td>✓ / x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning and adapting</td>
<td>✓ / x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing trade-offs and dilemmas</td>
<td>✓ / x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data Analysis

According to table 6-3, performance management has been the least conducted activity of HR practices carried out by Thai local government. This HR practice is very crucial in its function as an auditor for the organisation. However, it was the least practiced activity in municipalities. The symbol ✓/x illustrates that 13 issues out of 15 have been perceived as possibilities for performance appraisal to enhance the capacity of individual municipal officials; however, they have not yet been carried out by the municipalities in Thailand. Only job evaluation and promotion system are considered as outstanding activities which can certainly enhance the committing and engaging capability for an individual. At the other end of the scale, the performance appraisal process was considered to be an activity which cannot improve the capability of performing and accomplishing tasks and objectives for an individual.
Thus, to conclude, performance management is an HR practice that can be supportive to HRCB. However, it requires well-organised and well-planned processes in order to conduct the activities and achieve the target or ultimate goal of both HRCB and performance management.

6.5 Concluding Remarks: the chapter summary

According to the findings reported above, some activities of human resource practices at municipal level are impossible to be implemented. Some human resources practices do not occur at the local level, and this also affects the capacity building process. This means only some of the HRM activities can support the human resources capacity building process. However, not all HRM activities which can be implemented at municipalities would be successful. Some of them are perceived as opportunities and can be supportive or compatible with the human resource practices activities. At the same time, some of the activities have been considered as challenges, scarcely able to support capacity building. However, there are more HR practice activities that can support individual municipal staffs’ capacity building than ones that cannot. Hence, it can be summed up from the results that some human resource activities can support the human resource capacity building.
CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

7.1 An Overview of the Chapter

The chapter intends to provide the conclusion of the study. Firstly, the conclusion on the comparison amongst the theoretical perspectives with the empirical findings is presented. The decentralised human resource management in the municipality is initially addressed. Afterwards, human resource capacity building and its opportunities and challenges are described. After that the conclusion of the research as a whole is presented. Finally, the contribution of the research and recommendations for policy and future research are stated.

7.2 The Decentralised HRM initiatives in Thai Local Governance

According to the secondary and primary data which were collected and presented, it has been rather obvious that the decentralised HRM initiatives have had quite influential effects on Thai local personnel administration. There have been both opportunities and challenges for Thai local public administration. This section will draw on the analysis and discussion of what happened to decentralised recruitment and selection, training and development and performance management in the case of Thai municipalities.

7.2.1 Decentralisation: the friendly foe of local public personnel administration

Since the 1997 Constitution, Decentralisation Act 1999 and Local Personnel Administration Act 1999 have been promulgated; guidelines, manuals and new rules and regulations have been established to support the decentralisation policy. New departments, especially, the Department of Local Administration were founded. New positions and new jobs at the central government also were very attractive for people. However, the 1997 Constitution, the articles 287-288, certified the new local governments and also upgraded the previous small Tambon Administration Organisations (TAO) to be municipalities. Therefore, the decentralisation spread out increasing numbers of local governments around Thailand. The buildings (offices) for local government including municipalities were arranged. This phenomenon required
a massive construction budget. Therefore, the hardware of an organisation has been seriously taken into account.

In practice, the human side of an organisation was also concerned. Civil servants from the central government and provincial governments were encouraged to transfer to the local level with attractive incentives and bonuses. Therefore, this is how the local civil servants were internally recruited and selected. Simultaneously, the recruitment from external prospective candidates was also conducted. A particular challenge emerged due to the fact that the recruited people were from different origins. The value and perception of civil servants and local civil servants differed. This also requires capacity building on negotiating of conflict within these new amalgamated organisations. However, some opportunities also emerged. Local civil servants could choose to work for their hometown and this incentive was expected to bring a sense of belonging and commitment for the local staff to perform their best to their hometown.

Conversely, due to the fact presented in chapter five, the findings have indicated how the patronage system is embedded in Thai society as a norm. Not only in terms of society, but also from the influence from religion in which Buddhism teaches to be grateful and pay back good deeds in return. The patronage system could be described as a way in which Buddhism was employed in an effective way. The one who has been helped or supported would feel gratitude and prospectively perform well in an organisation. On the contrary however, the one who has never been supported would feel the opposite. Patronage system could be a discouraging device which promotes the disparity between effective staff and ineffective ones. Decentralised HRM was perceived as a way of conducting decentralised money-less corruption. The authority and decision making on corruption can easily be made at the local level. Prior to the decentralisation, the central government - the DOPA and later on DOLA, held the decision making authority in all HR practices. This was the origin of limitations or constraints to access the authority at the central level. Patronage system, nepotism and kinship support were limited and restricted to a few groups of people. After the decentralisation, this phenomenon spread and scattered through all the country. It could be perceived that decentralisation has allowed corruption to be accessible by the local authority. Elite capture, as a result, has effortlessly occurred.
If only considering the process of recruitment and selection, these dual activities have been affected significantly. Particularly the examination process; it was told to be a critical activity that has encountered cheating techniques from the candidates at the local level. This phenomenon has illustrated how decentralisation has been misused and misinterpreted. The main aim of decentralisation is to bring the closeness between local citizen and the local civil servants. Besides this, it should provide for better decision making at the local level, not elite capture or the local mafia. The occurrence of local elite capture could distort the main aim of decentralised recruitment and selection. Moreover, this sobering fact has diminished the trust, commitment and faith which supposed to support better working conditions amongst the colleagues. The instable start to an organisation could lead to such bad processes, and therefore results.

Training and development, as well as recruitment and selection, are two activities that have been malfunctioning. Decentralised HRM have urged faulty training selection in the form of a ‘reward’ for some particular staff. This action did not only destroy the trust and commitment for other municipal officials but also misled staff about the rationale of training and development activities. There was evidently little intention for real training. The situation that has happened could deteriorate the quality of training and affect the effectiveness and efficiency of municipal officials. Neither the training needs assessment nor the training course evaluation was completed at the municipal level. Therefore, the term decentralised HRM could not be well-suited to the two activities. The absence of these activities could lessen the sense of belonging and commitment to an organisation. In addition to the fact that the design stage of training and development was implemented at the central level, the training course itself has always been carried out by the institute belonging to the central government. This certainly implies the centralised and hierarchical sense which exists for the municipal officers. The notion of trainers’ backgrounds, or of them having previously been officers from DOPA or DOLA or provincial government, has depreciated the feelings of municipal officers.

In regard with performance management, these activities are mainly provided by the DOLA. The promotion and appraisal processes are conducted at the municipal level, but the reports of these decisions must be verified by the district chief officer or the provincial governor. The mayors and the municipal clerks have a consensus on this issue that it is in fact a strategy of the central government. The DOLA has not actually decentralised the authority to the local governments. Once again, the appraisal system has touched the area between patronage
system and the merit system. As a result, the performance evaluation would certainly affect the promotion system as a ‘domino effect’.

Hence, it has been rather comprehensible and apparent that decentralisation can be like ‘a friendly foe’ to human resource management for local administration. The decentralised HRM has fallen into the similar trap of ‘discrimination’ once again like in the central government. The history, culture and norms embedded in Thai society have certainly affected local personnel administration.

7.2.2 Recentralisation or Pseudo-decentralisation: the ways forward for Thai local personnel administration

Apparently, central government officers seem to be quite certain that decentralised HRM has been effective. From their perspective, both policy and the implementation from the DOLA have been sufficient to support municipalities, especially the HRM policy. According to the findings in chapter five, there have been some obstacles and reluctance between the central and local government in the aspect of HRM. For instance, the recruitment and selection processes could be good examples to show the complexity of the new decentralised system. There have been moments of ‘swing back’ for centralisation, decentralisation and recentralisation of the two activities. It has been noticed that at the early stage of the recruitment and selection, decentralisation has allowed extreme power for mayors in HRM decision making. Some tricks of getting recruited and selected have been swelling throughout municipalities around Thailand. Not all municipal officials, especially Personnel Officers, would accept that there have been such tricks at their municipalities. However, after crosschecking with other sources of information, it has been obvious that all four municipalities investigated have encountered some of this moneyless corruption in the form of patronage system, nepotism and kinship support.

However, it appeared that the local civil servants had new requests on returning the activities of recruitment and selection back to the DOLA. It was due to the extent of patronage system and tricky techniques adopted by the local civil servant candidates being far too severe to be handled by the municipalities. Finally, to solve this problematic issue, some stages of HR practices, especially recruitment and selection, have been recentralised to the DOLA. The Exam A has recently become implemented by DOLA’s arrangement. Not only recruitment and selection, but training procedures have never been actually decentralised. Extra
curriculums for municipal officials have been limited. The LPA Act 1999 has limited the HRM budget for each municipality to only 40% of the total budget. Besides this, the HRM budget also depends on the decision of each mayor at each municipality. Some mayors are not concerned about the HRM issues and that would certainly limit the opportunity for training and development for those municipal officials. DOLA and its department would receive some money from each municipality for arranging and organising training courses. Therefore, this is a huge budget for DOLA and the Institute for local civil servants Training and Development. If the local civil servants are freely trained, the institute may not be sustained and therefore not exist. This activity may not be considered recentralised but pseudo-decentralised.

Including performance management, all guidelines and manual have been designed and indicated by the DOLA. Therefore, few activities would be implemented at the municipal level. Despite the pseudo-decentralisation implementation, national and provincial politics were still influential in performance appraisal and promotion systems for municipal officers. Performance appraisal is often perceived as routine tasks without any strategic plan or implementation. Each municipality has considered this activity differently. The promotion system has always either been an attractive issue or discouraging point for municipal officials. Informal groups and interest groups within the municipality have played an important role in promotion systems. The mayor’s opponents would hardly ever be promoted, while the allies of mayors have been distinguishably promoted to higher ranks in a municipality without difficulty. Not only does each mayor have influence on promotion decision making, but some mayors have also have been controlled by higher ranking politicians. This phenomenon significantly illustrates the status and condition of Thai society which is embedded and intertwined into organisational culture, especially in the public sector.

Theoretically, decentralisation should have certainly brought the citizens and the local civil servants closer. More effective and efficient local public services are supposed to be accomplished. Nevertheless, in Thailand, its long history of bureaucracy and the status of Unitarian state have been preserved into the present with centralisation. According to the findings, at first glance policy and implementation have been decentralised. In reality and practice, centralisation and the tendency to be recentralised has been rather more apparent. Recentralisation could be observed and perceived as a better way to remedy the recent situation. However, it has not been recognised as the only solution to decentralised HRM.
7.2.3 Does HRCB exist in Thai Local Governance?

In accordance with the findings in chapter five, HRCB has hardly ever existed in Thai local governance. As an aspect of individual capacity building, it has been perceived as the activities for training and development only. The capacity building process, theoretically, could be interpreted and implemented in different ways. In this research, thanks to the definition and scope of the theories employed, Thai local governance has rather limited alternative options for HRCB. HRM for Thai local governments only focus on the aspect of management and administration. None of the policy or implementation regarding capacity building elements would be adhered to. Only HR strategic management has been included in the policy formation stage. However, it has been reluctant, and the process was distorted when it came to be implemented. As a result, this would certainly affect the second research question on HRCB through HR practices. However, some ideas and proposals from the field have been resonated from the municipal level. The notions of possible HRCB were portrayed in chapter six, and some conclusions regarding it will be made in the approaching section.

7.3 Human Resource Capacity Building in Thai Local Governance

According to the secondary data and primary data which were collected and addressed in chapter six, it has been rather understandable that the decentralised HRM initiatives and human resource capacity building processes are feasibly compatible and reciprocally supportive. There have been both chances and disputes for the two processes. This section focuses on the analysis and discussion in regard with the findings on human resource capacity building in Thai local governance and the compatibility with the decentralised HRM.

7.3.1 Human Resource Capacity Building through HR Practices in the Municipality: a new possibility to build up capacity of municipal officers?

According to the findings in chapter six, HR practices and activities are substantially compatible with human resource capacity building. Although, secondary data do not imply the possibility to build up an individual capacity through the HR practices and activities, the 1997 and 2007 Constitutions gave a broad view of the decentralisation context. The Decentralisation Act 1999 mainly focused on the power decentralisation, not the
administration. Local Personnel Administration was the direct legal permission for local personnel management. However, the LPA Act 1999 does not include the details of HR practices and capacity building. When crosschecking with reports and unpublished documents at each municipality; Human Resource Strategies are also scarce in the municipal ordinances and policies from DOLA. Only the normal HR management and administration, new laws and new rules were well-written. These evidences have illustrated that human resource capacity building is still an omitted and deserted issue for local administration.

In regard with the in-depth interview and focus group discussion at four municipalities, it has been apparent that there are no standardised procedures of capacity building processes. Some municipalities have never conducted human resource planning, needs assessment or performance assessment needs. Besides, the HRD issue has been ignored by not offering any of the Human resource development plans to the administrative team. Therefore, the HR practices and activities are quite dependent on the leader of each municipality. However, amongst these HR practices, there are some degrees of capacity building, which aware of by the municipal officers.

### 7.3.2 Awareness: an emerging issue

According to all the findings, especially from the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, ‘awareness’ has been an emerging issue from the interview. Awareness has been defined by the informants and the interviewees as ‘Consciousness of one’s’ responsibility and commitment to their organisation and to oneself’. It was said to direct capabilities into an enhanced quality by establishing the consciousness of their duties.

Awareness is rather hard to be measure, whether it has been embedded in ones’ mind or behavior. Regardless, wherever it exists, it would certainly contribute to capacity building, and vice versa. Human resource capacity building was said to be founded by the emergence of awareness. The key informants and the participants have exercised the word ‘Jit-samnuek’ which means ‘awareness’ in English. This awareness would urge the employees to be conscious of what they carry out. Local civil servants would be more cautious about what they would perform, manifesting awareness to influence their mind and their decision making. Jit-samnuek here does not only refer to the responsibility and the commitment to the organisation, but also includes a sense of ‘guilt warning system’ whenever they are about to commit a bad deed in an organisation. In Thai context of
Buddhism, being ashamed of committing guilt or a sin has also intertwined in working condition in an organisation. Corruption in an organisation in any form can be considered as conducting some ‘guilt or sin’ in Buddhism. Therefore, some training courses founded for local civil servants are related to Buddhism. However, this also said to be varied in accordance with the religion in the municipalities’ area. Awareness, then, is an emerging issue which is critical for human resource capacity building because it can certainly support and contribute to an individual’s commitment and tasks.

7.3.3 Leadership: the origin of a way forward

According to the findings, leaders in an organisation are the key people for most of a municipality’s success. Mayors have been the ones who all local officials have mentioned and remark upon, both in positive and negative ways. However, both positive and negative things that have been carried out by mayors and this have influenced the officials’ feelings and motivation for their performance.

Decentralisation, especially the HRM aspect, has been a drastic change in terms of implementation. There have been cases when decentralised HR practices have actually been adopted and implemented, whereas some HR activities have been centralisation in disguise. This reluctance has created awkwardness for local civil servants. Clarity is scarce when the leader does not take action. The vagueness and blurred direction of the HRM in the organisation could be occurring when the mayors ignore the HRM issue. Not only does the primary data confirm the legitimacy of the mayor’s role, but the LPA Act 1999 also pointed out clearly that the role of the mayor as the top-leader of each municipality.

The power of a mayor has been a controversial issue since this power is said to be exceedingly dominant, especially in an aspect of HRM. Decisions were made by mayors of each municipality. Theoretically, this issue is straightforward and solid. However, opinions are most critical on how each mayor employs his or her power. When power has been employed in an unjust way, it can be more threatening than encouraging to officials. The only way forward out of this problem is that the mayor should adopt the ‘middle path’. The ‘Middle Path’ is also related to the Buddhist way of living. It signifies the stage of being neutral and just. In the mayor’s case, he or she must be able to employ this authority in constructive

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22 Islam is the main religion in the Three Provinces in the South of Thailand. However, Songkhla as a selected case study is not one of the three provinces.
ways; in other words, not in the patronage system or nepotism. If the mayors exercise their power in constructive ways, the local officers would certainly be motivated and have good intentions to carry out their works as well as they can.

As a matter of fact, the human side of an organisation is intangible. Because it deals with people’s minds and behavior, it is very difficult to provide for its procedures on how to manage or administrate. The style of administration from each mayor is an art which depends on each person. However, genuine leadership and the mayor’s commitment surely is the starting point which can lead the municipalities in a successful way.

7.4 Conclusion: current challenges and future opportunities for Thai decentralised HRM

7.4.1 Current Challenges for Thai Decentralised HRM

According to the findings and the discussion, it is apparent that there are challenges in both theoretical and practical perspectives. Firstly, in terms of the theoretical issues on decentralisation and HRM, many scholars have addressed decentralisation in forms of power, politics and fiscal management. Few scholars have conversed on the aspect of HRM and decentralisation in the administrative aspect. Secondly, in the context of East Asia and South East Asia, especially in the case of Thailand, a unique country of a Unitarian-kingdom state, it has been even more exceptional for scholars to explore its decentralised HRM. This means the legacy of history and context must be taken into account. Lastly, the linkages between the HR practices and human resource capacity building have been unclear. Therefore, these theoretical challenges have been addressed and discussed in this research.

In terms of actual practice, the HRM in municipalities of Thailand has scarcely been explored. Only the budgeting of local personnel management has been previously examined. From what has been found in the current study it is obvious that the challenges for decentralised HRM fall into both policy and implementation levels. It has not only been challenging for the central level but also the local level. Firstly, the HR administration for municipalities is still reluctant and overlapped between the central-local duties. The decision making on HR practices and activities still depends on the politics of HRM. The tug-of-war
between the central and local government still exists. This condition has led to the status of ‘recentralisation’ and ‘pseudo-decentralisation’. Hence, the making decision priority has still been an important issue. This also means the structure and communication hierarchies of the municipalities have still been complicated. History, context and the legacy of bureaucratic polity is deeply embedded in Thai public administration, as well as the local government. It is difficult to deny the fact that local elites and local politicians have sustained and maintained their power and employed their power in both positive and negative ways. These politics in HRM have still been crucial and challenging for decentralised HRM. This was because politics seem to be so powerful that it could change any decisions. Thus, the challenges for Thai local HRM is still exist and an administration which takes the context into account is required.

Another challenge in practice would be the notion of Human Resource Capacity Building. This is not only because there are few straight policies for it but also that they are scarcely implemented. From the findings and the analysis, HRCB is compatible with HRM or HR practices; and it is too early a stage to conclude that they are not viable to be implemented. At the same time, there must be some effort to implement them as well. The study has illustrated the possibility for local civil servants to be capacitated and supported by the HR practices which should take into account the capacity building processes. This is still challenging because the decision on what to do or not to do with capacity building would fall into the same obstacle of the political issues once again.

### 7.4.2 Future Opportunities for Thai Decentralised HRM

Although there are some challenges for Thai local HRM, there are still some opportunities for the future. First of all, at least there is the main law which clearly states that HRM must be decentralised. Theoretically, decentralisation has supposedly brought more efficient and effective services to local people. Therefore, the first step has been completed. It means that the legitimacy of local autonomy has been well prepared.

Secondly, according to the findings; a substantial number of local official informants are optimistic and think positively for their organisation. It has been so apparent that some HR practices have never been implemented for municipal officers, however, there has been a light shed on the possibility of carrying out these activities as innovations for municipality development. Once again, this development for capacity building for local civil servants
requires ‘awareness’ from all of the staff. Moreover, according to the observations, the local officials have regained and established more confidence in their careers as local civil servants. Thus, this is certainly another opportunity for local administration to strengthen and enhance their capacity of their organisation through the individual capacity.

Finally, in terms of local units, since the law allows the possibility for some autonomy, it certainly is a chance to build up capacity of each local unit. Once again, this opportunity also related to the leadership. Mayors and municipal clerks are the key persons for municipalities. Especially the mayor, as his or her vision in administration can contribute most to each municipal administration, as well as the HR aspect. The autonomous mayor is a double-edged sword. This can either support the development of municipal capacity or deteriorate the organisation because of the corruption of their device. Hence, there is still a light at the end of the tunnel for Thai local administration in the form of municipality, and also its HRM and HRCB.

7.4.3 Contribution of the Research

This research has contributed to both theoretical and practical ways. Firstly, it is a piece of the gigantic jigsaw for HRM and HRCB. The capacity building issue has never been explored through human resource practices, especially recruitment and selection, training and development and performance management. Moreover, in practice, the research has focused on the evolutionary local government unit in a paradoxically decentralised-Unitarian state like Thailand. Primary data collected from local civil servants has provided better understanding and sensible perspectives from the affected group of people.

7.4.4 Recommendations for policy and future research

Both theoretical studies and field research has pointed out that Thai local administration, especially the HRM at the local level, is recommended to be designed with some participation of the local civil servants. The needs, requirements and values that need to be created at the local level should be resonated to the central level and also the policy level. It is apparent that some activities may not be implemented at the local level. The inauguration of conducting some HR activities for local civil servants must be seriously striven for.


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# APPENDIX I

The summary of the concept of Capacity and Capacity Building

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academics</th>
<th>Meaning of capacity</th>
<th>Elements of capacity or focus of capacity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Honadle (1981)</td>
<td>• Capacity Building has meant ‘Increasing the ability of People and institutions to do what is required of them’.</td>
<td>• Characteristics of Capacity:</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>1. Anticipate and influence change</td>
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<td>2. Make informed, intelligent decisions about policy</td>
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<td>3. Develop programs to implement policy</td>
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<td>4. Attract and absorb resources</td>
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<td>5. Manage resources</td>
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<td>6. Evaluate current activities to guide future action</td>
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<td>J.M.Cohen (1995)</td>
<td>• Capacity building is to strengthen the performance of public-sector personnel, building sustainable public sector expertise and reducing the amount of foreign aid expended on the provision of costly expatriate technical assistance.</td>
<td>• The framework dimension</td>
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<td>1. Targeted personnel capacity</td>
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<td>2. Capacity building stages</td>
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<td>3. Training capacity*</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>4. External institutional, manpower and systems support</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>5. Public-sector task environment</td>
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<td>Academics</td>
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| Grindle and Hilderbrand (1995) | • Capacity is the ability to perform appropriate tasks effectively, efficiently and sustainably  
• Capacity building refers to improvements in the ability of the public sector organisations, either singly or in cooperation with other organisations, to perform appropriate tasks. | • The framework for assessing capacity gap                                                                 
  1. The action environment set  
  2. The institutional context of the public sector  
  3. The task network  
  4. Organisations  
  5. Capacity focuses on Human Resources |
| Alan Kaplan (2000)        | • Since an organisation can be described as ‘Open System’; to attain the organisational capacity, the elements must be hierarchically arranged according to their importance. | • Tangible or Intangible                                                                                  
• A conceptual framework of organisation  
• Organisational Attitude  
• Vision and Strategy  
• Organisational Structure  
• Acquisition of Skill  
• Material resources |
| Gambhir Bhatta (2003)     | • The capacity of Human resources tends to equate with organisation capability.  
• The capability refers to the resources, systems, structures and processes necessary to deliver the required level of performance in fulfilment of the mandated objectives.  
• The terms capacity and capability are employed interchangeably.  
• Needs of the organisations and employees should be wedded. | • Resource capability - Financial, Physical and Human  
• System capability – strategic planning, financial management, personnel management, management of information, organisational structure, culture and relationships. |
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| Potter and Brough (2004)  | - Capacity Building refers to the creation, expansion or upgrading of a stock of desired qualities and features called capabilities that could be continually drawn upon over time. It is to improve the stock rather than managing whatever is available.                                                                                 | 1. Performance capacity  
2. Personal capacity  
3. Workload capacity  
4. Supervisory capacity  
5. Facility Capacity  
6. Support Service capacity  
7. Systems capacity  
8. Structural capacity  
9. Role capacity                                                                 |
| Peter Morgan (2006)      | - Capacity can hardly be only Human Resource capacity  
- Capacity is the ability to do something                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | **Five central characteristics of the concept of capacity**  
1. Empowerment and Identity  
2. Collective ability  
3. A systems phenomenon  
4. Potential state  
5. Creation of Public Value                                                                 |
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<td>Peter Morgan (2006) [Continued]</td>
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<td>• <strong>The Five Core Capabilities (2006)</strong>&lt;br&gt;1. The capability to act&lt;br&gt;2. The capability to generate development results&lt;br&gt;3. The capability to relate&lt;br&gt;4. The capability to adapt and self renew&lt;br&gt;5. The capability to achieve coherence&lt;br&gt;These capabilities are separate but interdependent.</td>
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<td>Straussman (2007)</td>
<td>• CB is mainly the human resource management, specifically improving the skills and the quality of government personnel.</td>
<td>• CB should focus on the recruitment, training and retention of skilled personnel for strategically improved organisational performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krishnaveni and Sripirabaa (2008)</td>
<td>• A process that helps an organisation improves its ability to achieve its mission.</td>
<td>• CB could be carried out at the macro level focusing on organisational capacity and at the micro level focusing on individual capacity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antwi and Analoui (2008)</td>
<td>• They also perceived ‘Capacity’ of organisation in an ‘Open System’.&lt;br&gt;• Capacity is the task performance which required achieving the purposes effectively, efficiently and sustainably at an individual, community, organisation and governmental level.</td>
<td>• HRD as the sub-dimension of HRM&lt;br&gt;• Capacity emerged through ‘Open System’ of the organisation in which ‘Skills and abilities of employees are ‘input’, Employees’ behaviours are throughputs or transformation and finally performance and satisfaction is the ‘output’ (pp.508).</td>
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<td>Academics</td>
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| Hope (2009)                           | • Capacity building is capacity development and it refers to the enhancement or strengthening of the organisation.  
  • Capacity development is regarded as an instrument and a process approach to development.  
  • It is also defined as the enhancement of the competency of individuals, public sector institutions, private sectors entities, civil society organisation and local communities to engage in activities in sustainable manners. |                                                                                                                                                                           |
| P.J. Morgan et al. (2010)             | • Individual Competencies refer to the skills, mindsets and motivation of individuals.  
  [Capacity framework from the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM)] | • Competencies include hard skills and soft skills.  
  • Hard skill = technical, financial and logistic.  
  • Soft skills = generating leadership, loyalty and legitimacy, awareness raising and building interpersonal relationships. |
| P.J. Morgan et al. (2010) and Brinkerhoff and Morgan (2010) | • Capacity means the overall ability of an organisation.  
  • Capacity development means the processes of change, both intentional and emergent. | • Collective capabilities are the Five core capabilities  
  1. Committing and engaging  
  2. Performing and accomplishing tasks and objectives  
  3. Building relationships and attracting resources  
  4. Learning and adapting  
  5. Managing trade-off and dilemmas |
APENDIX II

Research question 1

How far have the decentralised administrative initiatives impacted upon human resource management particularly on human capacity building in Thai local governance?

- How can the HR practices contribute to the human capacity building in Thai local governance?
- What is the compatibility or provisions provided through decentralisation

(1) Guideline questions for the secretariat of the Department of Local Administration (In-depth interview)

a. Could you please briefly describe the history of local HRM system in Thailand?

b. What has been changed and what has been maintained in the HRM system?

c. Have the new-decentralised policy affected the HRM system and also the capacity building and capacity of local civil servants?
   i. Does regional geography affect the implementation of the decentralisation of HRM? If yes, what are the results?
   ii. Does culture play as an important role to the organisational culture in different regions?

d. How can the HR practices contribute to the human capacity building in Thai local governance?

e. In your opinion, do the HR practices affect the system or the implementation of capacity building approach for local civil servants?
   i. Who have been in charged of the capacity building tasks, which sub-sector in the department?
   ii. Has this system been appropriate or compatible with decentralised HR?

f. What is the compatibility or provisions provided through decentralisation both vertically and horizontally from the Thai central government?
g. What is your opinion over the changed system or the decentralised
HRM for local government in Thailand?
   i. What are the advantages and disadvantages of having
decentralised HRM?
   ii. Who gain and who lose?
   iii. What are the approaches to solve the problems if there are?

h. Do the local civil servants realise on how they change or are changed?

(2) Guideline questions for the Officials at the Office of Local Civil Service
Commission (In-depth interview)

a. Could you please briefly describe the history of local HRM system in
   Thailand?

b. What has been changed and what has been maintained in the HRM
   system at the implementation level?

c. Have the new-decentralised policy affected the HRM system on the
daily tasks for the local civil servants and also the capacity building and
   capacity of local civil servants?
   i. Does regional geography affect the implementation of the
decentralisation of HRM? If yes, what are the results?
   ii. Does culture play as an important role to the organisational
culture in different regions?
   iii. Since you work for a headquarter for the local civil servant, who
or which organisation influence the decision making in HR
practices design?

d. In your opinion and through your experience, how can the HR practices
contribute to the human capacity building in Thai local governance?
   i. Which process or the stage of HR practice play as an important
role to the capacity building practices?

   ii. If there is none of the influence from HR practices to the capacity
building, what is your recommendation towards the issue?

e. In your opinion, do the HR practices affect the system or the
implementation of capacity building approach for local civil servants?
   i. Who have been in charged of the capacity building tasks, which
sub-sector in the department?
ii. Has this system been appropriate or compatible with decentralised HR?

f. What is the compatibility or provisions provided through decentralisation both vertically and horizontally from the Thai central government?

g. What is your opinion over the changed system or the decentralised HRM for local government in Thailand?

i. What are the advantages and disadvantages of having decentralised HRM?

ii. Who gain and who lose?

iii. What are the approaches to solve the problems if there are?

h. Do the local civil servants realise on how they change or are changed?

i. In your department, at the stage of HR practices which you are in charged of, what is its link to the human capacity building?

(3) Guideline questions for the Officials at Municipalities (In-depth interview)

a. Could you please briefly describe the history of local HRM system in Thailand?

b. What has been changed and what has been maintained in the HRM system at the implementation level right after the decentralised policy has been initiated?

c. Have the new-decentralised policy affected the HRM system on your daily tasks?

d. In your opinion and through your experience, how can the HR practices contribute to the human capacity building in Thai local governance?

i. Which process or the stage of HR practice play as an important role to the capacity building practices in your opinion?

ii. Which stage of HR practices that you think is the most important to your career as local civil servant?

e. What is the compatibility or provisions provided through decentralisation both vertically and horizontally from the Thai central government?

f. What is your opinion over the changed system or the decentralised HRM for local government in Thailand?
i. What are the advantages and disadvantages of having decentralised HRM?

ii. Who gain and who lose?

iii. What are the approaches to solve the problems if there are?

Research question 2

Through which processes and stages do the local civil servants have been supported through HR practices to build up their capacity?

- How can each HR practices contribute to each dimension of capability?

(1) Guideline questions for the secretariat of the Department of Local Administration
(In-depth interview)

a. In your opinion, through which processes and stages do the local civil servants have been supported through HR practices to build up their capacity?

b. Are there any possibilities which capacity building issue will be taken into account in any HRM stages for local civil servant?

c. In your opinion, is it important to merge them (the HR Practices and capacity building) together?

d. How can each HR practices contribute to each dimension of capability?

i. How can recruitment and selection contribute to each dimension of capability?

ii. How can training contribute to each dimension of capability?

iii. How can promotion and compensation contribute to each dimension of capability?

e. How can human capacity building be contextualised and established through HR practices?
(2) Guideline questions for the Officials at the Office of Local Civil Service Commission (Focus Group Discussion)

a. In your opinion, through which processes and stages do the local civil servants have been supported through HR practices to build up their capacity?

b. Are there any possibilities which capacity building issue will be taken into account in any HRM stages for local civil servant?

c. In your opinion, is it important to merge them (the HR Practices and capacity building) together?

d. How can each HR practices contribute to each dimension of capability?

   i. How can recruitment and selection contribute to each dimension of capability?

   ii. How can training contribute to each dimension of capability?

   iii. How can promotion and compensation contribute to each dimension of capability?

e. How can human capacity building be contextualised and established through HR practices?

f. Which stage of HR practices can be worth combine with capacity building?

(3) Guideline questions for the Officials at Municipalities (Focus Group Discussion)

a. In your opinion, through which processes and stages do the local civil servants have been supported through HR practices to build up their capacity?

b. Are there any possibilities which capacity building issue will be taken into account in any HRM stages for local civil servant?

c. In your opinion, is it important to merge them (the HR Practices and capacity building) together?

d. How can each HR practices contribute to each dimension of capability?

   i. How can recruitment and selection contribute to each dimension of capability?

   ii. How can training contribute to each dimension of capability?
iii. How can promotion and compensation contribute to each dimension of capability?

e. How can human capacity building be contextualised and established through HR practices?

f. Which stage of HR practices can be worth combined with capacity building?

g. In your opinion as the ones who receive the services and apply the rules, which are the requirements that will allow you to work with your best potential?

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Research question 3

What are the implications of the findings for the policy formulation and implementation on the HR policy for local governance?

This question will be answered from the data and information gained through the data collecting process. Besides, the results and recommendation will be made from the conversation with the key informants through in-depth interview and focus group discussion.