
Social Welfare for Thailand's Elderly: Policy Perspectives and Proposals for Co-production

Nipapan Jensantikul

**Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Khon Kaen University,
Khon Kaen 40002, Thailand**

Corresponding author's e-mail: nipajen@kku.ac.th

Received: January 21, 2022 Revised: March 21, 2022 Accepted: December 28, 2022

Abstract

With the increasing number of older adults and the mechanisms driving elderly work in the past, most work is separated. There is a redundancy in the issue of promoting and supporting the welfare of the elderly and redundant space. Many agencies deal with the elderly. As a result, the operation of the elderly is not considered part of the overall welfare provision. The objectives of this study were (1) to study the problem of social welfare provision for the elderly, according to the process of public policy, categorized into policy formulation, policy implementation, and policy evaluation, and (2) to analyze the social welfare provision for the elderly in the areas of health, housing, income, employment, education, recreation, and general social services from the perspective of experts. Qualitative research was conducted on secondary data and data collected using an Ethnographic Delphi Futures Research technique, whereby twenty-five informants were classified into three groups: 1) Nine people with direct or indirect roles and responsibilities in the development of welfare schemes and setting guidelines for the elderly; 2) Ten individuals with roles providing welfare services to the elderly in either provincial or local areas, and 3) Six academics studying welfare provisions for the elderly. In-depth interviews were conducted, and data systems were organized to analyze and classify content. The analysis found that: 1) Public policy is currently inadequate due to the following problems and management conditions: a) A central authority determines policy formulation concerning welfare for the elderly. As a result, welfare provisions cannot respond to the specific problems of the elderly in each area; b) A gap exists between policy formulation and implementation of each welfare policy; and c) While welfare policies do undergo an evaluation process, assessments are low quality and incomprehensive according to standards outlined in Thailand's Elderly Act; 2) All experts agreed that government mechanisms should provide welfare for the elderly in cooperation with the government, private and public sectors to address insufficient budget allocation and reduce the redundancy of receiving interest. It is proposed that social welfare for the elderly should follow a pluralistic model. Many parties participate in welfare provision utilizing groups or networks of people in the community.

Interconnected networks require co-production and joint management to optimize the efficiency and quality of public services.

Keywords: Policy perspectives, Elderly welfare, Co-production

Introduction

Thailand's demographic transition, currently characterized by increasing proportions of older people and declining proportions of children and working-age populations, poses vital challenges to the country's financial and fiscal stability, investments and savings, economic growth, social security, and sustainable natural resource management. The country's goal of becoming a more developed nation is at risk. Thailand continues to face multidimensional inequality and equity problems, as wealth and resource distribution are highly concentrated, development opportunities are not widely offered, and land ownership inequalities continue to affect the masses. Thailand's various population groups require access to information, knowledge, capital, quality public services and the justice system. Therefore, Thailand must confront social change on its path to becoming an aging society and be pressed by changes in social structures and population characteristics (Prasertrungruang & Ayuwat, 2017).

In Thailand, plans, rules, regulations, and laws are in place to ensure a satisfactory quality of life among the elderly. These are covered under the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, B.E. 2560; the Elderly Act, B.E. 2546; the Elderly Act (No. 2), B.E. 2553; the Elderly Act (No. 3), B.E. 2560; and the National Plan for the Elderly (No. 2), B.E. 2545-2564. At the same time, such policies have interacted with the elderly through social security, public assistance, and social services. On a certain level, they have proven ineffective; mainly, they do not thoroughly meet the needs of the elderly due to budget constraints and the increasing number of older people (Sudsomboon, 2014).

When considering the provision of welfare services for the elderly, both in terms of law and related agencies, it was found that government agencies and institutions primarily provided the service. This is a passive operation, resulting in the lack of coverage of social welfare dimensions in terms of social security, public assistance, and social service that will enable the elderly to develop and have a good quality of life, physically, mentally, emotionally, socially, and spiritually, and a lack of continuity in activities for the elderly, reflects problems in policy formulation, policy implementation, and policy evaluation related to welfare for the elderly.

Therefore, under the concept of supporting social partnerships, the welfare system plays an increasingly important role in reducing the inaccessibility of welfare among the elderly and supporting the creation of social welfare with diverse groups. The provision of adequate and appropriate social welfare for the elderly must truly meet the basic human needs and rights of target groups in society and ensure that all individuals are treated as human beings; without prejudice, discrimination, or oppression (Giordano, 2005; Kumhom & Sombat, 2018). Conditions or supporting factors, such as government policies and government support that help to drive the development of social welfare services, require cooperation from all sectors of the country at the central, regional, and local levels. Policy advocacy by local administrators emphasizes the need for participation from people in the community (Foundation of Thai

Gerontology Research and Development Institute, 2020). Social partnerships are created to support various sectors involved in social welfare, including volunteers, civil employees, local educational institutions, and private sector members. This article, therefore, attempts to identify approaches in public policy and social structures that are viable for the next generation of elderly in Thailand (Martin & Lee, 2015). This research is beneficial to improve government-run mechanisms because it aims to promote comprehensive and inclusive welfare of the elderly for good quality of life and reduce the disclaiming and clearly define the roles of the agencies involved.

Objectives

1. To study the problem of social welfare provision for the elderly according to the process of public policy, categorized into policy formulation, policy implementation, and policy evaluation.
2. To analyze the social welfare provision for the elderly in the areas of health, housing, income, employment, education, recreation, and general social services from the perspective of experts.

Research conceptual framework

The conceptual framework for this study was based on a review of the concept of social welfare for the elderly and public policy processes to understand the origin of the policy relationships between stakeholders, the organization, relevant departments and the success of the policy and lead to suggestions on social welfare provision for the elderly.

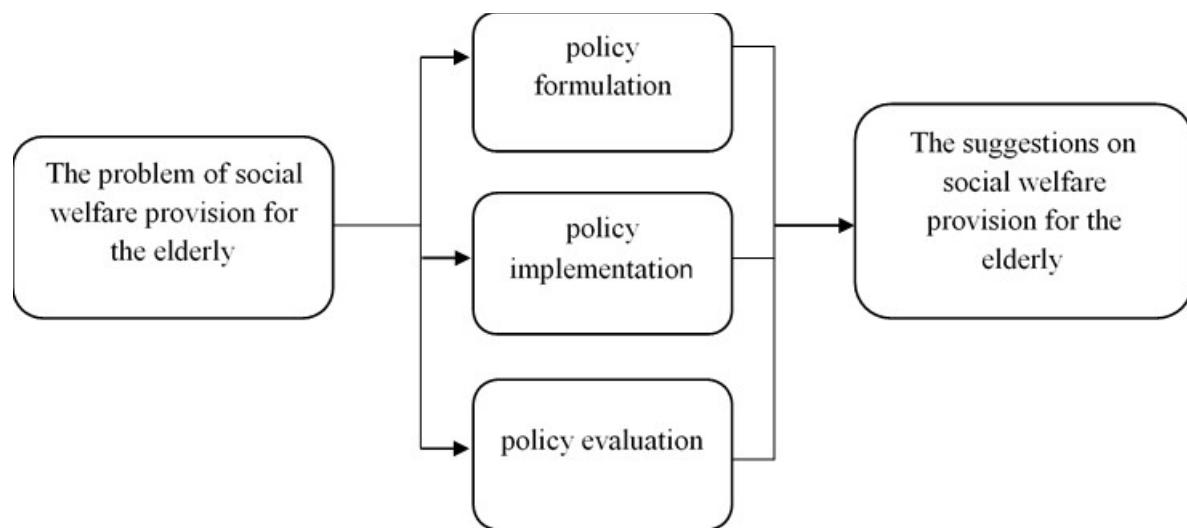


Figure 1 Research conceptual framework

Methodology

Qualitative research was conducted through the collection of secondary data and an Ethnographic Delphi Futures Research technique (Poolpatarachewin, 1986). The researchers

conducted a prospective study at three stakeholder levels: national, regional, and local, selecting specific specialists as informants based on their position and expertise (Serban, 2015; Dunn, 2017; Almeida & Gomes, 2018). The research procedures and methods were as follows:

Step 1: Panel of experts

The experts in this research included individuals with a role and involvement in policymaking at either the regional or local level and individuals with academic experience related to the study of welfare provisions for the elderly, whether within or outside Thailand's higher education institutions. Twenty-five experts were categorized into three groups: 1) Nine people with either direct or indirect roles and duties in the development of welfare schemes and guidelines for the elderly; 2) Ten people with roles and responsibilities in providing welfare services for older adults at either the provincial or local level; and 3) Six academics involved in research on welfare provisions for older adults.

Step 2: Interview Guidelines

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to address topics related to government practices and state mechanisms for organizing senior social welfare systems. Interview guidelines were consistent with standard applied concepts and theories and current research. Quality improvements were based on the content validity index (1.00) and assessment by three experts.

Step 3: Interview and results analysis

A questionnaire was created for experts to consider interview response trends. Each expert was provided with all trend data from the interviews, and opinion congruence was analyzed to form an organized conclusion.

Step 4: Data analysis

Data analysis was conducted as follows:

1. Content analysis was conducted on the data obtained from expert interviews. Issues were grouped and categorized by frequency and relevance to the respondent's experience or perspective on welfare for the elderly.

2. Information from the interviews was used to create questions on a 5-level Likert scale with responses ranging from least to most expected. The numbers were then replaced with values representing each expert's assessment of the most likely trends. Data were analyzed in terms of median, baseline, median differences, and the interquartile range for each question.

Results and discussion

1. Problems in welfare management

The problems incurred by welfare management for the elderly in terms of public policy are as follows:

1.1 Policy formulation

As Thailand's central authorities have formed elderly welfare policies, the implementation of welfare provisions has not corresponded to the problems of the elderly in each area. Policy-making has stemmed from the superstructure of a social system that

maintains centralized administrative and decision-making powers. The policies created are top-down, with a broad set of laws and practices arising from a small, elite number of stakeholders, and are, therefore, unable to meet the needs of the people (Anyebe, 2018; Pokharel, 2019; Calland, 2010; Abdullahi & Othman, 2020). The likelihood of a policy gap can be deduced from the information provided by a key informant, who explained:

“The organized welfare system attempts to meet the SDGs, such as extending the age of informal workers, having a National Savings Fund to provide social security, and promoting employment of the elderly in the private sector. Twelve private companies are participating in the Pracharath Combined Project, which promotes employment for the elderly by preparing a Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation on Strategic and Policy-Driven Initiatives that Extend the Age of Employment of Older People in the Workplace” (September 3, 2020).

Although policy formulation aligns with development goals intended to reduce inequality, establish equitable welfare arrangements, and reduce bias and discrimination against the elderly, such broad policymaking harms the government's fiscal burden. It has impeded the prospects for management in the future. The increasing number of older people, together with a decreasing youth population and the dropping working age, led one interviewee to determine that:

“The budget is not big enough. Disbursement is a difficult process” (September 8, 2020).

Therefore, the formulation of welfare policies for the elderly should result from the input of many parties joined through a policy network. Such a network should be designed with the participation of the people and continued by all governments. Additionally, public policies must be consistent, following principles of decentralization to local government organizations by clearly defining roles, duties, powers to act, and decision-making powers. This is consistent with *plural welfare*, which states that policy-making must involve diverse sectors to share welfare (Taderera & Madhekeni, 2012). Application of this concept would reflect a shift in the approach to welfare, away from the original focus and toward empowering the elderly and making society aware of the value and dignity of older people. The concept is consistent with the perspective of one informant, who stated:

“Providing welfare for the elderly means helping out and promoting welfare: for example, by doing housing repairs, carrying out promotion, or participating in the “Time Bank” project; teaching families and communities to care for the elderly, and creating activities to improve their quality of life” (September 24, 2020).

However, for policy formulation to be consistent with the needs of the elderly, the interrelated concepts of a policy network and plural welfare must be clarified. Individuals and groups must

be connected in a direct relationship; at the individual level, indirect relationships should connect people. The objective is to exchange resources between the public and private sectors according to norms, cultures, and social learning processes, and to persuade groups of people to join together (Dempwolf & Lyles, 2012). A key informant explained that:

“Caring for the elderly requires many agencies, such as the Internet Foundation for the Development of Thailand, to help with online training, teaching as much as possible about media, and creating mobile infographics and videos for seniors. The Muang Thai Yim Foundation organized the eyeglasses project. SCG helps design housing for the elderly, provides Khon Kaen elderly home care, and takes care of mental health emergency contacts. In the event of an older person being abused, we have many agencies that come to support them. However, it is not enough” (September 24, 2020).

The concept of co-production would narrow the policy gap through equal relationships between service providers and government officials and service users and communities. All parties must trust each other and be mutually prepared to take risks within service arrangements, as this would help facilitate equal participation under a democratic regime. It is essential to come together and jointly produce public services for citizens, with government representatives sharing power, resources, and responsibilities to optimize public service production (Boyle & Michael, 2009; Needham, 2008).

1.2 Policy implementation

The present study determined that implementation of welfare policies for the elderly must consider: a) a large number of stakeholders; b) a variety of implementation objectives; c) many government policies and projects; and d) the various levels of relevant departments. Implementation must consider the policy standards and objectives, policy resources, communication between organizations and activities supporting the policy implementation, organizational characteristics, economic, social, and political conditions, and the potential for cooperation from policy leaders (Prepem, 2017). The following perspective confirms the importance of giving attention to these factors:

“The agency lacks knowledge and understanding, and their practices lack continuity and clarity” (September 24, 2020).

A lack of attention to the above considerations has led to gaps between welfare policy formulation and its implementation. For example, in the case of medical treatment for the elderly, a legal contradiction with regulations set by the Ministry of the Interior specifying that local government organizations cannot use funds to arrange long-term services has caused persistent drawbacks. Most elderly care has been conducted in hospitals rather than in the community and has been focused on health promotion and acute care explicitly catered to the elderly. However, sub-acute care (medium-term care, long-term rehabilitation services, and end-of-life care) for the elderly continues to be scarce. This is detrimental to the elderly with

chronic illnesses requiring extensive rehabilitation. Because the regulation above restricts access to funding, medium-term and long-term care centers in Thai society have not been developed sufficiently and are often inaccessible. A disconnection between in-service and out-of-service care and a lack of power to connect private, state, and community services has also become apparent. It is consistent with the key information provided in the present study:

“We should strengthen the community’s ability to care for the elderly, including bedridden and vulnerable groups who currently do not have access to health care” (September 2, 2020).

These findings imply that elderly welfare policy should combine top-down and bottom-up implementation, focusing on local mobility and the capacity for each operational direction to reduce access-to-service disparities. Implementation of social welfare policies in the past has stopped short of achieving social justice due to property ownership inequalities between the highest and lowest ranks of the population; inequalities based on social hierarchy, such as caste and gender; and inequalities based on social segregation, such as those resulting from discrimination based on color, gender, and status (Satidporn et al. 2017; Kumhom & Sombat, 2018).

1.3 Policy evaluation

Social welfare should ideally function as a social service management system oriented toward prevention. The present study’s evaluation of welfare policies for the elderly highlighted the cruciality of development that corrects weaknesses in policy setting and implementation to meet people’s basic needs. Promoting social security would improve quality of life and foster self-reliance appropriately and fairly. However, evaluations of current welfare policies for the elderly have shown low effectiveness and have determined them to be unamenable to the policy outlined in the Elderly Act. Problems and insufficiencies within the elderly pension scheme include uncomprehensive storage infrastructure; Moreover, systematic interpretation of qualifications, and inefficient processes for selecting beneficiaries, have become obstacles for local government agencies tasked with improving living conditions, (JanJam & Chantachum, 2013; Sokdul, 2014).

A focused policy evaluation will help to shift the paradigm. Clearly defining policy decision-makers, the organizational structure of the policy sector, and policy enforcement/acceptance will lead to policy innovations for the elderly. Therefore, policymakers at the national level must review all aspects of welfare for the elderly and disseminate information to the public, creating awareness of proper welfare arrangements for the elderly. Those involved in social welfare provision are a diverse faction, including government bodies, such as the executive and legislative branches. They jointly determine the appropriate public policy options for the elderly. Civil society, charitable organizations, volunteers, and communities offer additional support. Economic and commercial sectors in the free market provide services. Meanwhile, the government’s role in managing the social welfare of the people, referred to as *plural welfare*, is fulfilled through the following actions: a) sharing

resources by allocating personnel, budgets, management tools, and equipment in order to reduce public service operating costs and increase efficiency; b) network sharing and helping with many types of work among diverse stakeholders, thus connecting the whole system; and c) sharing cultures, building trust, and encouraging common beliefs and practices. This co-production creates social capital and social acceptance, resulting in mutual trust, improved quality in public services, and more effective allocation and distribution of (elderly) benefits.

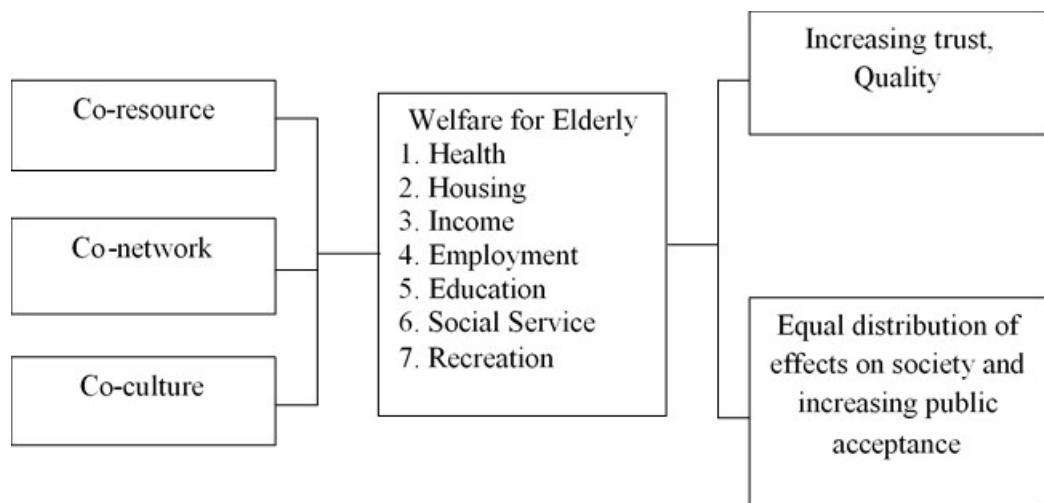


Figure 2 Co-production of Social welfare for Thailand's elderly

The present study identified significant public policy problems in welfare management for the elderly, including limitations in policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation. The top-down role of the government in providing welfare for the elderly through public services lacks a connection between concept and action. In recent years, more research into public management has focused on delivering and managing public services. The relationship between the government and the people, has shown that the traditional government-centered public service model wrongly assumes that bureaucrats prioritize legitimacy and equality when providing services.

The concept of co-production involves service management processes and service planning, design, management, delivery, monitoring, and evaluation processes. Co-production encompasses a user's voluntary or involuntary participation in any public service process. Cooperation within the provision of public services relies on civic development: fostering a spirit of participation and integrating diverse resources from public, private, and civil society sectors. The key feature of civic education is promoting participation in social policy-making processes, and encouraging collaboration between the government and NGOs. The work together to improve the quality and quantity of services. Co-production is thus a contemporary practice that considers a participatory process in the design and planning of public services.

2. The social welfare provision for the elderly from the perspective of experts

The present research found that all experts shared the same observation of a centralized operating mechanism that manages welfare for the elderly in Thailand in terms of health, housing, income, and employment. On the other hand, education, recreation, and general social services, on the other hand, were described as aspects jointly operated by a centralized operating mechanism together with provincial and local sectors. In the future, to address insufficient budget allocation and reduce redundancy, government mechanisms should provide welfare for the elderly in cooperation with the government, private, and public sectors.

2.1 Health

Expert groups agreed that the government allocated health welfare at all levels. However, it was suggested that future health welfare arrangements should start at the individual level. All personnel aged 50 and over should have access to outdoor sports grounds, indoor sports and areas for exercise, knowledge and health insurance promotion, and in-house health care. Every community should also have a group psychological counseling program for the elderly and a knowledgeable doctor with expertise in geriatrics (Mo.-Med. = 0.00, QR. = 1.00).- Operating mechanisms should be classified into three levels: 1) Centralized operations by the National Health Security Office should allocate universal health insurance, covering health check-ups, medical treatment, health promotion, and disease prevention; 2) Regional operations by district health promotion hospitals should administer medical and public health services and provide specialized channels for the elderly to receive treatment separately from general service recipients in the outpatient department, and 3) Community-based operations should provide health care programs and home care services for the elderly with mild symptoms who may have difficulty traveling and should manage a local volunteer program for caring for the elderly. Beyond these three levels of operation, cooperation between communities and governments at each level is essential and should be characterized by principles of plurality (Kumhom, 2011; Sudsomboon et al. 2016; Pongboriboon, 2020).

2.2 Housing

Expert groups agreed that government regulations should allow for the disbursement of medical supplies, such as diapers and pads, for the elderly who are bedbound. Elderly care service categories should be organized according to the physical and mental health of the elderly, with separate areas or buildings to suit the characteristics, including gender, of different groups of elderly, for example, those who are healthy, unhealthy, or experiencing mental health problems. A feasible budget should be allocated for hiring nursing personnel in nursing homes (Mo.-Med. = 0.00, QR. = 1.00). The current centralized operating mechanism means the government, through the Department of Social Development and Welfare, implements policy on housing and care services in nursing homes, including the management of housing repairs. This has caused problems related to incomplete services and insufficient budget allocation for state housing. Experts commented that, budget allocations yet to cover food and senior care costs in the past. As a result, nursing homes have been forced to ask for donations and use the

funds to pay for items that the government failed to distribute. The struggle to meet these needs was compounded by nursing personnel and nursing care shortages (Department of Older Persons, 2020).

2.3 Income

Expert groups agreed on the need to enhance income stability among the elderly at the individual level by spreading knowledge related to long-term savings, especially to people aged 50 years and over. Consulting centers should be accessible to the elderly, who would seek advice on fund management, including procedures, regulations, and conditions. The rules and process for accessing each type of fund, including the Elderly Fund, National Savings Fund, Employment Loan Fund for the Elderly, and Old Age Savings Fund, should be easily understood and followed by the elderly (Mo.-Med. = 0.00, QR. = 1.00). Moreover, the living allowance rate for the elderly should be adjusted to the current cost of living. Home establishment for the elderly and the elderly welfare fund are centralized operations. However, overlapping welfare schemes have allowed some older people to receive more than one benefit from the government sector. In contrast, others cannot access any scheme at all. This is not only unfair but also reveals the ineffectiveness of the welfare management system (Kumhom & Sombat, 2018; Chewasopit, 2019).

2.4 Employment

Expert groups uniformly supported the suggestion for measures to promote independent career development by providing seniors with the skills and opportunities to gain experience in running a business while in their 50s or older, with at least 5 years of continuous promotion. Work protection laws, particularly those that pertain to elderly workers, should be established to clarify such practices, and personnel should be hired who can provide career advice and counseling for the elderly. Short-term forms of employment should be established for the elderly, and a wage rate appropriate to the knowledge and abilities of elderly employees should be considered (Mo.-Med. = 0.00, QR. = 1.00). Extension of retirement should be offered to wholesale, retail, hotel, and restaurant labor just as it should be to members of the highly skilled workforce, such as academic and government workers (Barnes et al. 2009; Tishman et al. 2012; Khamngae et al. 2014). As a centralized operating mechanism, the Ministry of Labor has implemented its March 8, 2019, announcement requesting cooperation in promoting and encouraging employment of the elderly, and on April 6, 2018, the Office of the Prime Minister announced the National Reform Plan. However, legal enforcement of elderly employment in the business sector is nonexistent. Meanwhile, proper approaches toward employing older workers in the government and private sectors remain under study.

2.5 Education

Expert groups agreed on several aspects of education. They determined that the focus should be on creating a systematic database to facilitate knowledge and wisdom collection. The elderly with particular expertise should be able to transfer their knowledge in university,

government, and workplace settings to make them feel valued and recognized by society (Mo.-Med. = 0.00, QR. = 1.00). The Ministry of Education should build a specific area/school for the elderly in every district, focusing on relevant skills and knowledge— For example, the elderly should pay service fees-for a computer education club. Education management can be delegated by the central administration, which should authorize local government organizations to implement policies and guidelines. This would lead to each area organizing a distinct elderly club or school with characteristics unique to their local area and diverse personnel responsible for the education unit's operation. Some areas might assign it to the district health promotion hospital. In contrast, others might authorize the welfare department, reflecting the varied administrative structures of local government organizations and their administrators' focus on different provisions of elderly welfare (Ya-hui Lee, 2015; Pipatpen, 2017; Wang, 2018).

2.6 Social service

Expert groups agreed that conventional social services run by the government only reach some sites. Public facilities that accommodate the elderly, such as toilets, ramps, and car parks, must be provided, and public transportation for the elderly must be organized, in every community. A multipurpose center for the elderly should be established in every province, and a plan of service channels suitable for the elderly should be established in every area (Mo.-Med. = 0.00, QR. = 1.00). Awards should be given to establishments, honoring those that provide employment and welfare for the elderly. The tax deductions can reward private establishments that improve their workplace to accommodate older workers. Moreover, incentives such as compensation, welfare, and other benefits should be given to elderly care personnel to build morale. While the Department of Older Persons a major operation by managing the Elderly Fund, local functions are responsible for clubs, multipurpose centers, and community centers for the elderly. Temple-based elderly service centers should also be run by community operations (Chairungruang, 2015; Department of Older Persons, 2019).

2.7 Recreation

Depending on the type of recreational activity, operating mechanisms are currently run at the central, regional, and local levels. The experts agreed that religious activities should be organized for the elderly in every community at least once a month. Community / Elderly Coffee Councils should be established to run community meetings relations activities should be organized, such as music, dance, and elderly performing arts (Mo.-Med. = 0.00, QR. = 1.00). Sporting events or other community activities held at least once a month can help to promote the physical health and wellness of the elderly (Department of Older Persons, 2020).

In Thailand, elderly welfare covers 7 areas: health, housing, income, employment, education, recreation, and general social services. All experts confirmed that a centralized operating mechanism currently manages welfare for the elderly in Thailand regarding health, housing, income, and employment. Meanwhile, education, recreation, and general social

services are all aspects jointly operated by a centralized operating mechanism and provincial and local sectors. This arrangement reflects a diverse number of stakeholders.

Gathering information on current conditions among elderly populations will facilitate more appropriate needs analysis surrounding elderly welfare (Hutahaean, 2016). However, actions carried out by centralized operations affect regional and local implementation. The policy is implemented differently at different levels, rendering it unfeasible to understand changes in social conditions (Serban, 2015). Therefore, future welfare provisions for the elderly should allow flexibility regarding how central, provincial, and local mechanisms operate. Decentralization of authority and decision-making must occur as localities lead implementation. In addition, complicated laws and regulations prevent the elderly from understanding and following them. Laws should be revised to be flexible and consistent with current conditions (Kohler, 2015; Whangmahaporn et al. 2018; Nontapattamadol, 2020).

Conclusion and recommendation

Public service, especially involving welfare, is a service activity organized by the state to meet the needs of the people, supported by law. The work process should be defined by common practices by different parties capable of driving change in the production process and spreading innovations more rapidly through various involved organizations.

Policy recommendations put forward by the present research are outlined as follows:

1. Social welfare provision for the elderly must be varied according to diverse local cultures, traditions, and beliefs. To understand issues specific to different local areas, cooperation mechanisms among all sectors, including government organizations, NGOs, and business, community, and local organizations, must enable these groups to work together as an integrated network rather than as a chain of command.
2. Missions should be transferred to local governments and non-state organizations to enhance civil's society development and build partnerships.
3. Policies must be created with universal design principles that eliminate obstacles, promote accessibility in all areas, and foster safe communities.
4. Policies should encourage and advance innovations and technology for the upcoming, aging society; advancements should be conducive to a quality of life that meets basic needs, developing an environment of social dignity, reducing social inequalities.
5. Social welfare for the elderly should be diversified and combine both pluralism and social networking to achieve the most cost-effective use of resources. Co-production leads to improve service quality builds strong social capital through joint management mechanisms, creating an alliance that promotes public health, reduces fiscal burdens, and creates sustainability. This type of assistance requires time with which to improve laws and develop mechanisms that will create strong partnerships and will cover all dimensions of short-term, medium-term, and long-term care.

Operational recommendations

1. The government's role is to provide essential welfare in parallel with the provisions of compulsory welfare, such as health insurance and basic and compulsory education utility services. Such basic public services are the basis for stability in life. They should be independent of the production of goods or services.
2. Thailand should establish a separate agency to handle duties related to the social welfare of the elderly. At present, the many agencies involved result in multiple pension systems. Management is fragmented according to the laws of each department and these units are unable to each department's laws, and these units can not integrate and work together due to a lack of connectivity; it is a structural problem.
3. Laws must be created to support long-term care for the elderly or dependents, covering both hospital and continued care at home. Communities and local government organizations must be the focus. Wherein main caregivers are clearly defined, and appropriate activities for each target group are provided, leading to a suitable quality of life.
4. Communities and families should be encouraged to care for the elderly. The government should assist in home renovations to suit the elderly through low-interest loans rather than through the provision of welfare homes.

Acknowledgments

This research project was financially supported by the young researcher development project of Khon Kaen University.

References

Abdullahi, M., & Othman, N. (2020) . Bridging the gap between policy intent and implementation. *Journal of Science, Technology and Innovation Policy*, 6(1), 1-10.

Almeida, L. D. A, & Gomes, R. C. (2018). The process of public policy: Literature review, theoretical reflections and suggestions for future research. *Cadernos EBAPE.BR*, 16(3), 444-455.

Anyebe, A. A. (2018). An overview of approaches to the study of public policy. *International Journal of Political Science*, 4(1), 8-17.

Barnes, H., Smeaton, D., & Taylor, R. (2009). *An ageing workforce: The employer's perspective*. Retrieved from https://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/sites/default/files/files/An%20Ageing%20Workforce_An%20Employer's%20Perspective.pdf

Boyle, D., & Michael, H. (2009). *The challenge of co-production: How equal partnerships between professionals and the public are crucial to improving public services*. London, United Kingdom: The New Economic Foundation.

Calland, G. (2010). Bridging the gap between policy and action. *Journal of E-Learning and Knowledge Society*, 6(1), 13-27.

Chairungruang, C. (2015). Development of the life quality of the elderly. *Academic Journal Bangkok Thonburi University*, 4(2), 14-28.

Chewasopit, W. (2019). Aging Society: The changed marketing factor. *Journal of MCU Nakhondhat*, 6(1), 38-54.

Dempwolf, C. S., & Lyles, L. W. (2012). The uses of social network analysis in planning: A review of the literature. *Journal of Planning Literature*, 27(1), 3-21.

Department of Older Persons. (2019). *Measures to drive the national agenda on the ageing society (Revised version)*. Bangkok, Thailand: Amarin Printingand Publishing.

Department of Older Persons. (2020). *6 sustainable 4 change*. Retrieved from <http://www.dop.go.th/th/ebook/001>

Dunn, W. N. (2017). *Public policy analysis: An integrated approach*. New York, United States: Routledge.

Foundation of Thai Gerontology Research and Development Institute. (2020). *Situation of Thai elderly 2019*. Bangkok, Thailand: Foundation of Thai Gerontology Research and Development Institute.

Giordano, S. (2005). Respect for equality and the treatment of the elderly: Declarations of human rights and age-based rationing. *Cambridge Quarterly of Healthcare Ethics*, 14(1), 83-92.

Hutahaean, M. (2016). The importance of stakeholders approach in public policy making. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, 84, 462-466.

JanJam, S., & Chantachum, W. (2013). Evaluate the performance of managing the elderly welfare policy by Khu Sub -district administrative organization, Chana District, Songkhla Province. *Al-Nur Journal of Graduate School of Fatoni University*, 8(15), 97-106.

Khamngae, S., Boonleaing, S., Bungchan, N., & Promsaka Na Sakolnakorn, T. (2014). Social welfare needs and policies for elderly people in Thailand: A case study in Pitsanulok community. *Asian Social Science*, 10(12), 142-148.

Kohler, P. (2015). *Redistributive policies for sustainable development: Looking at the role of assets and equity*. New York, United States: Department of Economics and Social Affairs, United Nations.

Kumhom, R. (2011). *Social welfare and Thai society*. Bangkok, Thailand: Faculty of Social Administration, Thammasat University.

Kumhom, R., & Sombat, L. (2018). Alternative social welfare model for older persons: Decreasing social inequality. *Journal of Thai Interdisciplinary Research*, 13(6), 44-54.

Martin, J. L., & Lee, M. (2015). *Social structure* (pp. 713 - 718). In James, D. W. (Ed.). International encyclopedia of the social & behavioral sciences (2nd eds.). Oxford, United Kingdom: Elsevier.

Needham, C. (2008). Realising the potential of co-production: Negotiating improvements in public services. *Social Policy & Society*, 7(2), 221-231.

Nontapattamadol, K. (2020). *Productive and protective welfare for reducing inequality*. Bangkok, Thailand: Thammasat University.

Pipatpen, M. (2017). Education for the elderly: A new educational dimension for the learning society of Thailand. *International Journal of Behavioral Science*, 12(1), 43-55.

Pokharel, T. R. (2019). Power approaches to policy-making. *Nepal Commerce Campus Journal*, 4(1), 171-180.

Pongboriboon, U. (2020). The elderly situation in Thailand: Health's problems and needs. *EAU Heritage Journal Social Science and Humanities*, 10(2), 47-58.

Poolpatarachewin, J. (1986). Ethnographic Delphi futures research. *Journal of Research Methodology*, 1(2), 24-33.

Prasertrungruang, M., & Ayuwat, D. (2017). Structuration of capability: The node of interaction for capabilities enhancement. *International Journal of Applied Business and Economic Research*, 15(22), 701-715.

Prepem, P. (2017). Affecting factors of social welfare for the elder policy implementation: Donyang Tambon administration organization Muang District Phetchaburi province. *The Journal of Development Administration Research*, 7(1), 65-75.

Satidporn, W., Thananithichot, S., Laiprakobsup, T., & Chorkaew, S. (2017). The creation of social justice through social welfare policy: The case study of the access to and acquiring benefits from the elderly allowance program. *Journal of Thai Ombudsman*, 24(1), 50-79.

Serban, M. (2015). *Supporting public policy making through policy analysis and policy learning*. Turin, Italy: European Training Foundation.

Sokdul, P. (2014). An evaluation of financial aid welfare for elderly project of Pra Kaew Sub-district administration organization, Pachee district, Phranakhon Si Ayutthaya province. *ARU Research Journal*, 1(1), 22-29.

Sudsomboon, S. (2014). Social welfare for aging people in Thailand. *Journal of Southern Technology*, 7(1), 73-82.

Sudsomboon, S., Thammaporn, W., Puttasukkee, T., & Chaimay, P. (2016). Role of local government organization for elderly care. *Journal of Southern Technology*, 9(1), 121-127.

Taderera, H., & Madhekeni, A. (2012). Welfare pluralism in health: Assessing Zimbabwe's policy response to HIV/AIDS with reference to Mbare District, Harare. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2(9), 186-195.

Tishman, F. M., Looy, S. V., & Bruyère, S. M. (2012). *Employer strategies for responding to an aging workforce*. New Jersey, United States: NTAR Leadership Center.

Wang, H. (2018). Continuing education of the elderly in China: Regional difference and family welfare promotion. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, 238, 379-383.

Whangmahaporn, P., Simmonds, P., & Whangmahaporn, B. (2018). Factors affecting quality of life of the elderly in Thailand. *Asian Political Science Review*, 2(2), 79-87.

Ya-hui Lee. (2015). Older adult education: New public pedagogy in 21st century Taiwan. *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, 55(3), 460-476.