

**WOMEN'S EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AND THEIR
PARTICIPATION IN THE THAI CENTRAL REGION
LOCAL POLITICAL DECISION-MAKING PROCESS**

Ratchaneepan Sodsangchan

**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
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School of Applied Statistics
National Institute of Development Administration
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**Ratchaneepan Sodsangchan
School of Applied Statistics**

The Examining Committee Approve This Dissertation Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
(Population and Development).

Associate Professor.....*Kanikar Sookasame*.....Committee Chairperson
(Kanikar Sookasame, Ph.D.)

Associate Professor.....*Suwanlee Piampiti*.....Committee
(Suwanlee Piampiti, Ph.D.)

Associate Professor.....*P. Sukreeyapongse*.....Committee
(Pisit Sukreeyapongse, M.Sc.)

Assistant Professor.....*Preecha Vichittamaros*.....Committee
(Preecha Vichittamaros, Ph.D.)

Associate Professor.....*S. At*.....Dean
(Surapong Auwatanamongkol)

Date.....*Nov. 3, 2008*.....

สัญญาอนุญาตให้เผยแพร่วิทยานิพนธ์

ทำที่ คณะสังคมวิทยาและมานุษยวิทยา
สถาบันวิจัยและพัฒนาเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้

วันที่ ๑ เดือน พฤศจิกายน พ.ศ. ๒๕๕๑

สัญญาฉบับนี้ทำขึ้นระหว่าง รัชต์ พรรณ สดแสงจันทร์

ที่อยู่เลขที่ หมู่ ๑ ถนน แขวง

เขต จังหวัด ซึ่งต่อไปในสัญญานี้เรียกว่า "ผู้อนุญาต"

ฝ่ายหนึ่ง กับ สถาบันบัณฑิตพัฒนบริหารศาสตร์ โดย รศ. ดร. สุรพงษ์ เชื้ออินทนามงคล

คนบดัดคณะ สังคมวิทยา สถาบันบัณฑิตพัฒนบริหารศาสตร์

ที่อยู่เลขที่ ๑๑๑ หมู่ ๑ ถนน สีหราชูทย แขวง ดลองจัน

เขต บางกะปิ จังหวัด กทม. ซึ่งต่อไปในสัญญานี้เรียกว่า "ผู้รับอนุญาต"

อีกฝ่ายหนึ่ง คู่สัญญาทั้งสองฝ่ายได้ตกลงทำสัญญามีข้อความดังต่อไปนี้

1. ผลงานลิขสิทธิ์

ผู้อนุญาตเป็นเจ้าของลิขสิทธิ์งานวิทยานิพนธ์ เรื่อง WOMEN'S EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AND THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE THAI CENTRAL REGION LOCAL POLITICAL PARTICIPATION-MAKING PROCESS ซึ่งสร้างสรรค์ โดย รัชต์ พรรณ สดแสงจันทร์ ผู้อนุญาตรับรองว่า เป็นผู้สร้างสรรค์งานขึ้นเอง

2. เงื่อนไขการอนุญาต

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2.2 ผู้อนุญาตอนุญาตให้ผู้รับอนุญาตใช้สิทธิตาม 2.1 เพื่อใช้ในห้องสมุด และเครือข่ายอินเทอร์เน็ตของห้องสมุด สถาบันบัณฑิตพัฒนบริหารศาสตร์ รวมทั้งเครือข่ายอินเทอร์เน็ตของโครงการพัฒนาเครือข่ายห้องสมุดในประเทศไทย (ThaiLIS)

3. การโอนสิทธิและ / หรือหน้าที่ตามสัญญา

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ของตนตามสัญญานี้ให้แก่บุคคลภายนอกได้ เว้นแต่จะได้รับความยินยอมเป็นลายลักษณ์อักษรจาก
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(นางรัชชัญญะ อดิศักดิ์)

ลงชื่อ วิมล คุ้มทอง ผู้รับอนุญาต
(วิมล คุ้มทอง)

ลงชื่อ พวง พยาน
(นางพวง อดิศักดิ์)

ลงชื่อ พวง พยาน
(วิมลคุ้มทอง อดิศักดิ์)

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation	Women's Educational Achievement and Their Participation in the Thai Central Region Local Political Decision-Making Process
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The purpose of the study is to understand the relationships between women's educational achievement and their participation in the Thai central region local political decision-making process. The objectives of this study are: first, to study women's personal characteristics and their participation in the local political decision-making process; second, to study the relationships among educational achievement, demographic status, civic attitudes and obstacles to women's political participation; and third, to study women's engagement in the local political decision-making process.

The concept model was developed to be tested through statistical analysis. The research is a quantitative survey of 395 women in Chantaburi and Samutprakarn Provinces. Various analytical techniques were employed including ANOVA analysis, Hierarchical regression analysis, Path analysis and qualitative data analysis, using in-depth interview from women who have elected to position in local political offices, and as local community leader.

This study found that qualities like age, occupation and political background are statistically significance as are variables of political background, and participation at the political supporter level.

The relation of educational achievement found that success in reaching news information has a direct and indirect influence. Obstacles that hinder participation had a direct positive affect as well as success from learning, social networks, occupation and the number of years in formal learning. Age, income, political background and being a member of an institution had negative affects.

The comparison between women's educational success and participation showed the opinions of women who live inside the municipal area matched those of women who live outside the municipal area. Success in accessing news, success in the study about social networks, and involvement in institutions had indirect positive effects. Women who lived in municipal areas had different opinions from those living out of municipal areas regarding the success of education, ability in learning and number of years learning which had indirect positive effects, while age, and political background had indirect negative effects.

Outer factors that hinder participation were culture, tradition, customs Thai social values, support from political parties and support from the government and private sectors. Inner factors were; the readiness of the family, the political confidence and physical condition of women.

This research suggested that the educational achievement of women has a significant relation to the participation of women in local political decision-making procedures. In order to promote this aspect, the participation of women in political decision-making procedures has to be encouraged. The educational achievement of the women will decrease the problems and obstacles towards political participation by women according to the nature of the population, economy and society.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of the Problem

One of the goals in human resource development is to develop leadership characteristics in humans, so that they can function as capable leaders with integrity and initiative minds, leaders who make sound decisions. Any human being, regardless of gender, value, custom, or any belief, should have an equal chance to develop his or her potential. In order to achieve the aim of human resource development in the political realm, the responsibilities of both men and women are required, and opportunities must be given to women to participate in politics. Women, as intellectuals, should share an equal part in policy planning, making decisions, and, together with men, taking charge of social responsibilities (Kusol Soonthorntada and others, 1995: 3).

Thailand has seriously begun taking steps towards women's development since 1972 by including several issues related to women's development in the Third National Development Plan, 1972–1976. Subsequently, the first women's development plan, that is, the long-term development plan for women, was created 1982-2001. This plan formed the basis for the women's development plan for a period of five years; and included in the Fifth National Social and Development Plan, 1982-1986 as well as the Sixth National Social and Development Plan, 1987-1991. Later on, when the National Committee for Women's Promotion and Coordination was set up as an entity under the Office of the Permanent Secretary in 1999, the National Committee for Women's Promotion and Coordination had the view that the first long-term women development plan should be revised, which would update the plan in terms of content and direction, keeping in line with rapid social change. A subcommittee was set up to

create a long-term women's development plan, 2002-2011. The work of the subcommittee was used as the basis for the five-year plan and other long-term plans.

At present, the women's development plan is included in the Tenth National Economic and Social Development Plan, 2007-2011. Its main strategy is to promote positive and reduce negative Thai attitudes towards women, aiming to enhance women's opportunities to engage in political and administrative decisions, to promote their health and rights to have healthy reproduction, to strengthen their life security, and to promote their participation in economic activities.

The consistent development of women in many aspects since the year 1972 has resulted in a higher number of women participating in social and national development affairs, positively changing, the overall attitudes of the Thai public towards women. Past attitudes, based on anatomical differences between the two genders, that men are physically stronger than women, validated that the brute force of men was the factor determining the power relationship of the two genders.

Especially, in the past, men were leaders and rulers; they protected their subordinates such as warriors. Men were well-established in the higher class, the administrative class. Most scholars and thinkers, creative artists were men. Therefore, all of the rights in society such as education, opportunities to work as government officers, and other social privileges were granted only to men. At the same time, women recognized and accepted men as the governing class; they had the obligation to do household chores and provide services for their husbands. Women accepted their limited role as a tool to support and honor the prestigious status of their husbands, or a behind the scenes supportive role in making men attain their fame, recognition, honor, and all sorts of successes. Many men, nowadays, still hold the attitude that women are simply objects, and not equal partners in society.

Nowadays more women have greater opportunities to access education, formally and informally. In addition, women have more opportunities to access career training. The more education they have, the greater their awareness of self-reliance and the fewer the limitations on gender equality, resulting from the national education system and the implementation of National Education Act, 1999. Both movements have provided greater educational opportunities, equally, for both genders: formal education, informal education, continuing education, and education for life.

According to Article 10 of the National Education Act, 1999, the state must provide compulsory education for Thai citizens, both genders, for at least 12 years. The state must make education available and accessible for all on an equal basis, free of charge. In addition, the Compulsory Education Act, 2002, requires that parent or guardians of children age approaching six years have their children undergo nine years of compulsory education, resulting in the fact that male and female children, on an equal basis, have the opportunity to access primary and secondary education; thus fulfilling the agreement and the goal of the millennium set by Thailand in 2004.

Apart from compulsory education, more women have accessed tertiary education. In 2007, more women than men attended the tertiary educational level, 54.55 percent and 45.45 percent, respectively. Apart from compulsory education, more women also continue their tertiary education. In 2007, more female than male students attended the tertiary educational level, 54.55 percent and 45.45 percent, respectively. The same trend is also found at the postgraduate level; more female than male students, 54.37 percent and 45.63 percent, respectively. (Table 1.1)

Table 1.1 Number of Pupils and Students in Thailand's Formal Educational System in the Academic Year 2007

Educational Level	No. of Students			Percentage	
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Preschool	903,729	854,844	1,758,573	51.39	48.61
Preprimary	2,873,668	2,690,956	5,564,624	51.64	48.36
Secondary	2,317,833	2,410,930	4,728,763	49.02	50.98
Lower Secondary	1,411,488	1,371,346	2,782,834	50.72	49.28
Upper Secondary	906,345	1,039,584	1,945,929	46.58	53.42
Tertiary	1,104,634	1,325,600	2,430,234	45.45	54.55
Postgraduate	99,297	118,318	217,615	45.63	54.37

Source: Ministry of Education, 2007a.

Academics differ in their opinions of education and its provision. For example, anthropologists view education as an acculturation process; sociologists regard

education as a socialization process; economists hold the view that education is a part of the social development process, the process of building human social capital, while political scientists maintain that education is but a political process (Chaiyos Imsuwan, 2000: 52). It can be seen that education pervades all dimensions of society.

Nowadays, education has undergone reformation; it has been modernized, aiming to promote creativity in learners, develop their quality of life, build up the learning society, and create democratic values. New education also aims to develop autonomous learners who are capable of making their own decisions, functioning as knowledge creators and doers. All of the knowledge must be update; ethics, morality, values and culture must be emphasized. Kovit Prawalpruek. (2002: 11) has proposed that education should empower learners, arguing that education is an analytical process for people to analyze themselves and social changes; it is a learner-centered process, aiming to develop people's power relationships and develop human resources. These aims can be achieved by cultivating learners' skills and knowledge, shaping their desirable learning behaviors, and promoting their critical thinking in the realms of society, power, inequality, and changes.

Therefore, education is a human cultivation process, from children to adults. It helps make humans aware of choices in life and the prudence to make good choices; education is thus a strong factor determining the development of citizens of any civilized society, and the quality of its citizens. The development of a country needs to focus on improving the quality of its people or developing human resources, which can be done, essentially, by providing sound education (Wittamon Niwattichai, 2000: 1)

Given the widespread range of educational opportunities, more and more women have been educated; new and broader perspectives enable them to take new roles in society, apart from their traditional ones at home. They have started to recognize and become aware of their rights and responsibilities in society; many of them have engaged in political activities, especially as political representatives, making it more convenient to address women's problems and their issues have been better addressed, under the assumption that nobody can understand women better than women themselves.

Since the change of Thailand's political system from absolute monarchy to democracy in 1932, women and men have been granted equal rights. Over the past

decades, more women entered the political arena by running for house representatives; yet, the number is still low compared with men. The first Thai woman to be elected as a representative occurred in the year 1949. More women nowadays have been elected to sit in the house of representatives and as senators, but the number still low compared with male members of parliament.

In the general election of 2001, women were elected, both as conventional candidates and party-list members, as many as 46 of them or 9.20 percent of the total representatives. The figure was higher than that in the year 1996 where only 22 female representatives or 5.60 percent were elected.

The 2005 general election saw the number of female representatives as high as 53 or 10.60 percent. In the election of 2006, the number stood at 55 or 11.34 percent; and in the latest election in 2007, the number of female representatives was 55 (11.46 percent), out of a total number of national representatives of 480. Out of a total of 80 party-list MPs, 74 of them or 92.50 percent were men; only 6 (7.51 percent) were female.

The total number of constituency MPs was 400; 351 or 87.50 percent of them were male; 49 or 12.25 percent were female. This shows that the proportion of women at the national level of politics has increased, but at a slow pace, lower than the target set by the international body as well as the target set by the national committee for economic and social development, which would like to see the number of female politicians increase to 30 percent or higher (Bureau of Gender Equality Promotion, 2008). (Table 1.2)

Table 1.2 Number of National Representatives Elected in 1996-2007

Year	Total (person)	Women		Men	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
1996	393	22	5.60	371	94.40
2001	500	46	9.20	454	90.80
2005	500	53	10.60	447	89.40
2006	485	55	11.34	430	88.66
2007	480	55	11.46	425	88.54

Source: Bureau of Gender Equality Promotion, 2008.

Thai women's political engagement was lower than those in developed countries. For example, female representatives in Sweden have been as high as 45.3 percent, 38 percent in Denmark, and 37.5 percent in Finland. The number of Thai female representatives was also lower than those of many ASEAN nations. In Vietnam, for example, it was as high as 27.31 percent, 25.22 percent in the People's Democratic Republic of Laos, 24.47 percent in Singapore, and 15.25 percent in Philippines. The number of Thai female representatives was only 11.34 percent. (Table 1.3)

The number of women engaging in the local political decision-making process was lower than their participation at the national level. In the year 2007, the number of female members of the Subdistrict Administration Organizations was as low as 6.73 percent; 4.61 percent of women were members of Provincial Councils. The female chairs of the Provincial Administration Organizations comprised only 12 percent (Department of Provincial Administration, 2007: 13). (Table 1.4)

Table 1.3 Percentage of Women's Engagement in National Level Politics among ASEAN Nations

Country	Female Representative (%)
Vietnam	27.31
Lao PDR	25.22
Singapore	24.47
The Philippines	15.25
Thailand	11.34
Indonesia	11.27
Cambodia	9.76
Malaysia	9.13

Source: Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development, 2008.

Table 1.4 Number of Elected Representatives in Local Administrative Organizations

Position	Number			Percentage	
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male
Member of Provincial Council	107	2,215	2,322	4.61	95.39
Chair of Provincial Admin Organization	9	66	75	12.00	88.00
Member of Municipal Council	720	10,167	10,887	6.61	93.39
Major	76	1,068	1,144	6.64	93.36
Members of SAO	8,591	119,003	127,594	6.73	93.27
Chair of SAO	301	6,335	6,636	4.54	95.46
Head of village group (Kamnan)	205	6,760	6,965	2.94	97.06
Village head (Phoo Yai Ban)	3,069	64,240	67,309	4.56	65.44
Member of Bangkok Municipal Council	11	59	70	15.41	84.29
Member of Bangkok District Council	54	305	359	15.04	84.96
Total	13,143	210,218	223,361	5.88	94.12

Source: Department of Provincial Administration, 2007: 13.

It can be seen that it is extremely challenging for women to enter the realm of political decision-making process, compared with men. Several obstacles block their path. This makes most women feel insecure and uneasy to get involved in politics, even at the local level. One important obstacle is the traditional role prescribed to them by society, handed down from generation to generation. The society has traditionally assigned certain roles for women to look after many family matters, look after the wellbeing of family members, which is different from the men's roles outside the house. This radically different role expectation by society has created a certain image for women as well as a certain attitudes the society has adopted towards women, which is almost the opposite of men's. For generations, women have been cultivated to accept conditions that are inferior to those of men. This has resulted in the fact that most women and men believe that men are leaders and women followers.

Given the perception that politics is the male's domain, women cannot easily enter that arena, especially when women have to perform their roles as wives and daughters, looking after household chores and other family matters. This has made it

difficult for them as they have little time left, and if they wished to pursue a political career, without help from men to lessen their burdens, it would be difficult indeed for women to be successful (Surasawadee Hunpayon and Chanatip Boonyaket, 2002: 51). Another view holds that not allowing women the opportunity to participate in political decision-making mechanisms deprives them of their political rights and responsibilities as citizens; it excludes them from voicing their opinions concerning law and policy making processes; it excludes them from having their say in the allocation of budget and resources. This is also viewed as an act depriving society from accessing the expertise and perspectives of women (Wirada Somsawas, 2003: 33).

Even though women's participation in social development has been recognized, most people in society either overlook or discriminate against women, providing them limited opportunities to exhibit their potentiality. All of them are the result of biases based on a set of values, norms, and laws that discriminate against women. As the new wave of attempt to improve gender relations has begun to take shape, there are now many practices that aim at empowering women, resulting in their greater roles in decision-making processes, responding to women's needs much better than the past situation. Several approaches to improve women's conditions exist such as educational support, and occupational skill development for the enhancement of economic opportunities. At the same time, efforts have been made to abandon all forms of discrimination against women, including an attempt to promote men to look after women's education and share more responsibilities in other areas (Passorn Limanon, 2001: 172).

It is worth noting that attempts to improve the above-mentioned women's conditions do not entail their role as communicators that would empower women, especially, their roles in the political arena of the decision-making process, which is a significant mechanism for the development of society. As women are now entering the territory traditionally occupied by men, their readiness is crucial; they need to prepare themselves. If they are well-prepared and accumulate all the necessary experience, to a certain level, they will, surely, utilize their potential for the development of society; this would be beneficial for all members of society, both male and female alike. With regard to their preparation and accumulation of

experience, attaining education is a means to enhance their communication effectiveness, a set of tools to gain knowledge and acquire other skills.

It can be said that, under the rapid changing environment, nowadays, women should assume more roles in the decision-making process; they should be able to determine directions of societal development. This would appropriately address their needs; and better manage the human resources of society. This requires that men and women must proportionately share their roles and responsibilities in society. This would improve the quality of any decision, as more perspectives would be sought and duly considered. It is, therefore, imperative that women attain more and better education, which would improve the quality of politics, from local to national levels, making it more transparent, just, and under good governance.

In the past, Thailand divided its governing structure and administrative power into two spheres; the administration at the regional level was under the administration of regional bodies. However, when King Rama V reformed the kingdom's administration, the administrative power was centralized, and the administration was revamped into many ministries; regional administrative bodies were abandoned (Orapin Sopchoakchai, 1997: 9-10). This reformation has resulted in the Thai Centralization of Thailand's administrative power, including political power, and Bangkok has become the center of national administrative and political power. Even though the main aim of the reformation was to unify and consolidate the nation, several consequences result, the marginalization of local politics and the weakness of local administrative power and politics. The reformation resulted in the domination and greater political power of national level politics, as evidenced today.

However, later on, changes were made in people's perspectives and understanding of politics, resulting in a new wave of provincial administrative reform. In the past, under Thailand's parliamentary democratic system, many municipalities were under provincial administration. However, after the political upheaval in 1932, a new law was passed. The Provincial Administration Act became effective, and the Municipal Administration Act 1933 was enacted. Since the year 1956, Thailand has separated its political administration into two levels: national and provincial.

Thailand's provincial administration allows Thai citizens in their own locality to participate in different political activities. The law requires that people be elected to

represent their political areas; and, a variety of elections, based on its organization's history have evolved. It is, therefore, useful and essential to classify women's participation in the political decision-making process into three groups as follow:

Group 1: Women's political engagement in large cities, i.e., Bangkok Municipality and Pattaya Municipality

Group 2: Women's political engagement at the provincial level, that is, the Provincial Administrative Organization (PAO)

Group 3: Women's political engagement at the community level, that is, Subdistrict or Tambon Council (TC) and The Subdistrict Administrative Organization (SAO)

Even though provincial-level politics have been viewed as being less important than national-level politics in terms of impacts and the scope of political power, it is a 'political space' for Thai people to take part in monitoring and managing resources and benefits directly related to their lives.

Therefore, women's political participation at the local level is very significant; women, regardless of political level, should have the opportunity to take part in politics, and their roles in provincial politics will be significant, as they can help men in monitoring and managing the resources and benefits of various political groups.

Moreover, women's political participation at the local level establishes their presence at the fundamental political level. If more women have the opportunity to take part in the local political decision-making process, it will be beneficial for women in three aspects: (1) it can guarantee fairness and equality of people in society, (2) women can protect their rights by monitoring and managing the resources of their own community, and (3) their engagement allows them to accumulate experience and prove themselves in the political sphere, opening up their opportunities to enter national politics (Ormthip Mekraksawanich Camp. 2003: 44).

It can be seen from the above discussion that in order to promote greater women's participation in the local political decision-making process it is important to empower them, especially the decision-making process. This requires that women attain high education levels, resulting in their development in all aspects.

When the potential of women and their opportunities are enhanced, they have better access to political information, and develop their knowledge and skills,

especially those related to politics. Education develops their rhetorical and writing skills, and equips them to deal successfully with political activities, including wider and greater social networking. All of these developmental aspects result in the improvement of women's potential, and their engagement in politics would be effective and successful, as, via better education, they will become more autonomous.

Given the significance of education for women and their roles in local politics, the researcher is interested in investigating women's educational achievement and their participation in the local level political decision-making process. The researcher would like to explore the nature of the relationship between these two factors, their characteristics and patterns, including the levels of their political engagement. Factors that enhance or promote women's participation in the local political decision-making process will also be investigated. The results of the research would contribute to the advancement of existing body of knowledge regarding women and politics. It is thus hoped that this investigation would contribute to the advancement of academic study; the results of which could be applied to solve practical problems.

1.2 The Purposes of the Study

The three stated aims of the study are:

1.2.1 To study women's personal characteristics that contribute to their participation in the local political decision-making process.

1.2.2 To study the relationships between women's educational achievement,, demographic status, civic attitudes, and other obstacles to their participation in the local political decision-making process.

1.2.3 To study the problems and obstacles preventing women from taking part in the local political decision-making process.

1.3 Scope of the Study

The scope of the study include:

1.3.1 This study only addresses the relationship between women's educational attainment and their participation in the political decision-making process at local levels, namely, the provincial district, municipal, and subdistrict administration levels.

1.3.2 This study will only investigate areas in the Thai Central region of Thailand based on the categorization by the Department of Local Administration, Ministry of Interior. Two provinces were chosen: Chantaburi Province and Samutprakan Province. As far as local Thai politics is concerned, Chantaburi Province is the province with the highest political voting record (71.47 percent); Samutprakan Province represents the opposite, that is, the province with the lowest political voting record (47.16 percent). The data were based on the local political voting record of 14 March 2004 (Office of Election Commission of Thailand, 2004a).

1.4 Expected Benefits

This study is expected to provide a body of knowledge that would benefit the following:

1.4.1 The results of this study would be useful in providing information for the promotion and support of women's education attainment and their greater roles in the decision-making process in local politics.

1.4.2 The results of the study would provide basic information for the development of women's educational achievement so as to enable more women to effectively participate in the decision-making process at the local political.

1.4.3 The results of this study would provide a set of suggestions to reduce women's obstacles in the local political decision-making process.

1.5 Structure of Presentation

This research is divided into seven chapters. Chapter 1 is the introduction, and Chapter 2 reviews the literature on women and politics, theories and concepts of political decision-making process and participation, women and local political administration, women's engagement in the political decision-making process, women's educational attainment, demographic and socio-political factors affecting women's political decision-making process, civic attitudes, and obstacles to women's political engagement in the decision-making process. This second chapter also includes terminology, the research conceptual framework, and the set hypotheses.

Chapter 3 presents the research methodology, detailing the description of the population and the samples, how the data were collected, operational definitions, and assessment criteria, the variables and the measures to assess them, and the quality of the developed research measure or instruments. This chapter also describes the essential characteristics of the samples and data categorization and data analyses.

Chapter 4 presents the demographic and personal data of women that influence their political engagement in the local decision-making process, including the characteristics of women's participation in the political decision-making process. Women's educational attainment and their civic attitudes, and the factors that deter or prevent their political participation are also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 5 presents the relationship between women's educational attainment, their demographic data, and their levels and characteristics of engagement in the local political decision-making process. Chapter 6 presents the qualitative analysis of the problems and issues that obstruct women's political decision-making involvement. Finally, Chapter 7 summarizes the research, including research implications, suggestions, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This research on women's educational achievement and their participation in the Thai central region local political decision-making process covers the following main topics: 1) Women and politics, 2) Theories and concepts related to women and their participation in decision-making in local politics, 3) Women and local politics and administration, 4) Women's participation in political decision-making process, 5) Women's educational achievement, 6) Demographic, Socio-Economic factors affecting women's participation in the political decision-making process, 7) Civic attitudes, 8) Barriers to women's political participation, 9) Definitions of key terms, 10) Research framework and 11) Research hypotheses.

2.1 Women and Politics

Research has been conducted on women and politics; one issue being women's participation in the political decision-making process. The issue on political decision-making participation has been widely investigated. The role of women in politics has been mentioned by Plato, who stated that women, like men, should take part in important matters such as military affairs and administration of states. Giving women domestic roles such as raising children, household chores, responsibilities detached from citizenship roles, is to waste valuable resources. Plato, obviously, did not view this as a violation of women's rights, but as a waste of human resources (Tinnapan Nakata, 2002: 1-3).

Thai society in recent times has given opportunities for women to take greater part in politics and administrative matters. Thai women have run for local administrative offices such as members of subdistrict administrative organizations, village heads, heads of village groups, or council members, and members or chairs of

provincial administrative organizations. Women have also been chosen as assistant district officers, governors, etc.

It is not fair to conclude that women and politics do not mix; that politics is unclean for women or too tough for women. The evidence from women's participation in politics reveals that the quality and efficiency of political work depends on individual abilities and skills, rather than on their genders. Kanchana Kaewthep (1995: 12 and Suthira Thompson (1998: 32) conducted a study on the roles of female politicians and summarized that the reason women decided to become candidates for Bangkok representatives was that they wanted to take a greater part in politics; they felt that Thailand had many problems that needed to be solved. Another reason was that they, as women, wanted to participate in politics to help solve Thailand's problems, caused by both genders. In reality, they said, very few women participate in politics and administration; women could contribute their abilities and skills and solve those problems. Men and women, therefore, should play an equal part in developing society, and together they can better deal with the problems. Problems concerning women, in particular, would be better addressed if women were put in charge, as women can better understand women's problems.

Thailand's 2007 Constitution addresses the equality of men and women in Article 30, stating that all citizens are equal under the law, and they shall be equally protected by the law. Men and women have the same rights. Any act of discrimination or any unfair treatment based on a person's race, hometown, language, gender, age, disability, health, personal status, socio-economic status, belief or religion, education background, or political orientation, is not allowed and violates the constitution of Thailand. Any state-sanctioned measure aiming to lessen or eradicate biases and to promote more equality in rights and freedom is not, in principle, considered an unfair or biased practice and act. Article 87 states that the state needs to take into consideration the equal proportion of male and female citizens, requiring that any plan, policy, and implementation of the policy needs to have people's participation, and the proportion of both genders needs to be appropriate.

Moreover, Article 97 states that political parties need to take into consideration an equal proportion of male and female members or candidates, providing both genders equal political opportunities (The Secretariat of the House of

Representatives, 2007). Besides, the Tenth National Economic and Social Development Plan, 2007-2011 clearly states that any strategy for the development of human resources and Thai society as a knowledge-based society requires that men and women have equal opportunities. It specifically recommends that women be promoted to take greater roles in politics and administration at all levels. The plan also calls for Thai society to adjust its attitudes towards women, providing more opportunities for women to participate in the political decision-making process at all levels.

It is therefore important to include women's knowledge and perspectives, which are different from men's. Such a body of knowledge and contributions would provide different approaches to project planning, problem identification, and problem solving in society. Today, Thailand is facing many problems. The society urgent needs to look after children, teenagers, women and families as basic social institutions. At present, social problems, trends of violence against women and children; cases of child and sexual abuse, within families and in public are on the rise. Cases of international human trafficking are increasing. All of the problems mentioned reflect the inequality in Thai society from the past, the ignorance of the importance of women's roles in social and economic development, an inadequate emphasis regarding quality of life and environment issues, and less emphasis on virtue and morality.

The United States has stated that, since women and men show different values, the fact that more women are now taking part in politics allows women to share their side of knowledge and values. This shows that traditional values restricting women's roles creates a loss for society as a whole. When more women take part in the political decision-making process, it is posited that these political matters would affect human private spheres. This would mean different approaches towards natural conservation, environmental development, and cultural preservation, resulting from differences in worldviews between men and women (United Nations, 2000: 135-146).

In sum, women need to have greater roles in politics and the country's administration. Thailand's Constitution 2007 emphasizes gender equality, stating that all people are equal before the law. They shall be equally protected by the law. Moreover, the Tenth National Economic and Social Development Plan, 2007-2011 has set up the strategy to develop human resources and Thai society towards a

knowledge-based society. It also promotes gender equality, promoting more women's participation in political decision-making process, women's roles in planning socio-economic development, including the role in monitoring the exercise of state power in all political levels. The plan also promotes equal rights for men and women in politics and administration.

2.2 Theories and Concepts Related to Women and Their Participation in the Thai Central Region Local Political Decision-Making Process

Two theories and one concept are related to this research: Women's Inequality Theory, System Theory, and Concept of Feminism.

2.2.1 Women's Inequality Theory

The theory explains the inequalities being faced by women as members of society. Such gender inequalities make it difficult for women to take part in politics and hinder social development. Four subtheories to this theory are namely: 1) Culture dualism theory, 2) Social evolutionary theory, 3) Developmentalism theory and 4) Dependency theory. These theories address issues related to gender inequalities in terms of cultures determined by men to control women's behavior and limit their social roles and responsibilities, resulting in women's disadvantages (Elliot, 1977: 1-8).

2.2.2 System Theory

The theory classifies political systems and explains interactions in political systems, revealing political dynamic interactions at all levels and systems. It posits that any political system, in any given time, needs factors or inputs from the environment of that system, i.e., demands and support; then the political system processes the inputs and produces outputs. The outputs are political decisions, which will interact with the environment. This theory on political systems explains overall human interactions for appropriate allocation and management for the good of the society via rules and laws for the people to follow (Easton, 1985: 112). It is a theory that explains factors related to political decision-making participation, including the relationship between the factors or variables.

2.2.3 Concept of Feminism

Feminism explains women's movements calling for their rights and protecting their interests. Feminists argue that since many women have been oppressed; it is high time for the society to treat women better. This movement reveals how women view the world and their thoughts; it can explain present-day situations and why calls for women's rights are increasing.

Indeed, feminist movements began in many countries in the West. Several sub-groups exist, namely, radical feminism, Marxist feminism, and socialist feminism (McQuire, 1984: 26-31). All of these movements view that many problems and issues in society involving women are inter-related to one another, ranging from sexual issues to political ones. They also focus on the oppression of women in their own families as well as women's and men's roles in the workplace and at home. They argue that society often views women's problems as their personal ones, so the limited opportunities given to women coupled with certain traditional practices cannot effectively solve the long-existing problems. It is important for the global society to stand up for and support the rights and social roles of women. By building up networks of women's development with other systems, such networks would result in the progress of feminist movements and women's development (Thitirat Vichaidit, 2006: 10).

It is useful, therefore, to explain women's conditions and problems via these theories and concepts. Such theories and concepts can serve as the basis for understanding what the effects of women's educational attainment have on women's political participation, especially their participation in the decision-making process. They would illuminate the complex dynamics of the political decision-making process, and analyze different political systems at all levels; they would be able to explain how gender inequality has been conditioned by culture, resulting in limited opportunities imposed on women, including other issues such as women's rights.

2.3 Women and Local Politics and Administration

The Thai government has a clear policy on decentralization in line with the principles of democracy; it has formulated policies on natural resource allocation and

distribution, promoted local administrations as legal bodies for a more effective administration of the problems for rural people in provincial areas. However, an important aspect for women involved in local politics is the need for more women in local politics. Many problems are related to the well-being of women in the community: food shortage, malnutrition, AIDS, and other community's problems - all have an impact on women's quality of life. It is logical, therefore, to involve women in solving those problems. As there are still more men than women in local politics, the empowerment of women in Thai society is needed for more effective decentralization (Wirada Somsawas, 2003: 32).

Provincial administration is a part of the country's administrative machines, allowing local communities a certain level of autonomy. Local power is under state power, and local administrations are not independent bodies; they are organizations bound under the law, set up to benefit the well-being of the people in the community.

Currently, four kinds of provincial administration are operating in Thailand (Office of Election Commission of Thailand, 2004c: 3-10).

1) Provincial Administration Organization

The Provincial Administration Organization is the largest body of Thailand's provincial administration; each province has one, except Bangkok. The PAO covers the whole area of the province, and is set up with the aim to manage and provide public services within its province, helping the works of municipalities and the subdistrict administrations. It does so by collaborating with other administrations within the same province to avoid power redundancy and utilize appropriate budget allocation.

The Provincial Administrative Organization (PAO) consists of two administrative bodies. The first is the administrative body led by the chair of the Provincial Administrative Organization; he or she is responsible for all the administrative affairs of the province. The second is a legislative body where members of the Provincial Administrative Organization issue rules and regulations as well as monitor the management of the provincial organization.

There is only one chair of each Provincial Administration Organization; he or she is elected by the people in the province. The main duty is to monitor and manage the Provincial Administration Organization led by the permanent secretary of the

organization, who functions as the top executive of the organization. The chair appoints his or her assistants, who are not members of the provincial administration council, to help him or her run the administrative affairs of the organization. The assistantship serves four years. Duties include managing and monitoring provincial administrative affairs, making sure that the administration is done in accordance with provincial acts and regulations and the provincial development plan. Other duties include planning the development of the province, setting up annual budgets to be submitted to the provincial administrative council, and reporting performance indicators and expenditures to the Provincial Administrative Council.

Members of the PAO are directly elected by the people; they are elected to a four-year term. Their duties and responsibilities include enacting rules and regulations to be used within a particular province or district such as regulations on petrol and tobacco taxes, monitoring of the administration of the PAO, and monitoring and evaluation of project expenditures. Their roles and responsibilities also include approving the provincial development plan, a collection of plans and projects submitted from municipalities and subdistrict administrative organizations. Plans may entail road construction or other infrastructure. They also take part in approving the province's annual budget, which is the management of the public money, managing the collected taxes levied from the public, including property tax and indirect taxes such as trade and business taxes. These collected taxes, in principle, would be returned for the development of the province or municipality (Office of Election Commission of Thailand, 2004b: 3 - 8).

2) Municipalities

Municipalities refer to provincial political units, such as a city or town and is classified in three categories: 1) subdistrict (Tambon) municipality, 2) district (Muang) municipality and 3) city (Nakorn) municipality, depending on population size and the civility and development of that particular area.

Municipalities are set up to manage and provide basic infrastructure for people in local areas; they permeate the daily life of people from birth to death. In theory, a municipality's administration is autonomous. Municipal staff and the permanent secretary function as local government servants, carrying out their duties under the supervision of the municipal council directly elected by the people.

A municipality entails two bodies: legislative and administrative. The legislative body's main duty is to enact local regulations and monitor the administration of the municipal council while the administrative body manages the affairs of the municipality via the executive power of the mayor and the members of the municipal council.

The mayor is directly elected from the eligible people with a particular constituent, serving a term of 4 years; each municipality entails 2 council members from each subdistrict (Tambon), 3 council members from each district, and 4 council members from the province.

Members of the municipal council are directly elected from the eligible voters, serving a term of 4 years. The number of council members depends on the type of municipality: 12 for the subdistrict municipal council, 18 for the district municipal council and 24 for the city municipal council (Office of Election Commission of Thailand, 2004b: 3-10).

3) Special Provincial Administration

The Special Provincial Administration refers to the administration of Bangkok. The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration divides its administration into districts and subdistricts. The Bangkok Administration Council functions as a legislative body, and the governor of Bangkok is the head of the administrative body. The governor and members of the Bangkok Administrative Council are elected by direct vote. The term for the members of the council is 4 years. The other special provincial administration is the administration of the city of Pattaya; it entails a city council as the legislative branch with 24 elected members. The mayor of Pattaya is elected by the people, serving as the head of the executive branch.

4) Sub-District Administration Organization

The Sub-District Administration Organization is a provincial administrative organization under the Councils and Subdistrict Administration Organization Act 1994, functioning as a local administrative organization at the subdistrict (Tambon) level, and thus, very close to the people of the community. A Subdistrict Administration Organization develops from a Tambon Council with income up to a certain level. It is established to manage public services at local levels, village and

subdistricts, as it is impractical for the government to administer all of the villages in the country, numbering over 70,000.

A sub-district administration organization entails two branches: the legislative and executive branches. The legislative branch comprises members of the organization. Their main duties are to pass local laws and monitor the administrative affairs of the subdistrict. The executive branch is led by the president of the organization who chairs the subdistrict administration organization. The chair of a subdistrict administration organization is elected by the people functioning as the head of the administrative branch for a term of 4 years.

Members of the subdistrict administration organization are directly elected by the people of the community; their administrative term lasts four years. The number of the members for each subdistrict varies, depending on the number of villages within a particular subdistrict. The subdistrict organization of only one village can only have 5 members. If the number of villages is two, each village is allowed to vote for three representatives. The organization with more than two villages is allowed to have two representatives for each village (Office of Election Commission of Thailand, 2004d: 3-8).

In summary, this study investigates women's political participation at three local levels: the provincial administrative organization level, the municipality level, and the subdistrict administrative organization level. They are closely aligned with the local people's daily lives, as they provide basic services to the people, taking care of the well-being of the people in the community. They represent the power of the central government. Therefore, people's political participation at these local levels is very important, and the law requires that every eligible citizen cast his or her vote in the local level election. Anyone who fails to vote in an election will lose some rights as specified by laws.

2.4 Women's Participation in Local Political Decision-Making Process

People's participation in local political decision-making process refers to their behavior in various forms, on a voluntary basis; and in order to be successful, such participation needs to be systematically managed, be it a single decision-making event

or a continuous one. The result would influence the selection and policy of the government and have an impact on the election of political representatives and leaders, locally and nationally (Weiner, 1971: 123). The people's political participation, therefore, men and women, is a significant variable for the development of democratic processes of a country. The more a society promotes and develops its people to participate in political activities, the more it can develop democracy. Thus, it can be said that people's participation in political decision-making process is both a political goal and process. To develop its politics and become more democratic, a society needs to set goals in promoting and providing opportunities for people to participate, as much as possible, in political decision-making activities, both male and female citizens. This can be done by increasing the percentage of women's participation in the political decision-making process to as high as 30 to 50 percent (Bello, 2003: 1).

The political participation of people moves from having no interest at all to those who have some interest in political activities. For those who are interested in politics, their interest level moves from low to high. People's political interest depends on time, the situation, and society, but their interest in politics does not differ much from each other, maybe one or two level differences.

In addition, political participation is an accumulative process, that is, if a person participated in one political activity, he or she is likely to engage in other political activities. This shows that a person's participation in a political decision-making process has its hierarchy, that is, from a lesser to a greater extent. They, first, engage in political activities as spectators; they then become politician supporters. In other words, they participate in transitional activities; they, gradually, become people who engage in gladiatorial activities (Milbrath and Goel, 1977: 126; Rush, 1992: 114).

2.4.1 Spectator Activities

2.4.1.1 Interest in Political Activities

The fact that more women are interested in politics reveals that political factors influence them to become more interested in politics and to be keener to engage in the political making process. They follow news and political updates from TV, newspapers, radio, and other new media, including small talks with co-workers

and neighbors and attending political speeches and rallies. Nowadays, political information comes from various kinds of media. The extent to which women become interested in seeking political information depends very much on each individual woman. In general, however, the more people interested in politics, the greater the chance they are likely to engage in political decision-making (Sitthipan Bhudhahun, 2001: 152-154). Besides, Tripp (1999: 24) has found that people's interest in politics is related to power, and the level of women's political participation varies from culture to culture. The more women become interested in politics, the more they are likely to engage in political activities.

2.4.1.2 Voting

In theory, voting represents a person's political engagement. Voting in an election empowers people, making them feel more powerful than politicians, and influencing the politicians' behavior. Politicians adjust their behavior and policy to please their voters (Verba, Nie and Kim, 1978: 223). Voting shows that a person respects the system rather than acting based on his or her preference. Voters are thus people of civic conscience; they respect the social norm; they live as responsible citizens (Milbrath and Goel, 1977: 115). According to Pornamarin Promgird (2000: 79), voting is an important political process in a democratic society; voting is when the people can exercise their rights in choosing who their political leaders and representative are. To be effective, voting needs to be conducted in a way that allows people to fully exercise their rights, without any interference and without any obstruction. The candidates must be honest and fair; elections must adhere to sound principles, that is, each citizen has one vote.

2.4.1.3 Exchange of Political Perspectives

Humans, by nature, pay attention what is useful and suits their interests and well-being. When women realize that politics is important for them and can offer them opportunities and benefits they become more interested in participating in political activities, especially activities concerning the exchange of political views and opinions that have impact on the society and the economy of the country (Emig, Michael and Samuel, 1996: 266). The level of political involvement varies from one woman to another; those who express themselves in political matters are more likely

to engage in political activities, compared with those who merely listen to other people's political perspectives.

Activities entailing an exchange of political views enable members of the family, co-workers, or other acquaintances to stimulate members of the community to engage or take part in solving problems within their community. Other political activities include writing political essays or letters to newspapers, telephoning TV or radio stations to express opinions, and participating in a forum or public discussions in various places and settings (Rush, 1992: 114).

2.4.2 Transitional Activities

2.4.2.1 Making Contact with State Officers or Politicians

Making contact with state officials or political leaders is an act of a person aiming to gain some benefits or to protect some rights of a person or a group of people. Sonthi Techanan, (2000: 103) has written that when people make direct contact with a politician or state officer, maybe to file his or her complaint or express their opinions and offer solutions to problems, it is believed that they have a high level of political engagement; they reveal what is very important in a civil society, that is, a citizen has an equal right to access public services; a citizen has the right to seek assistance and help from the state. When a person makes a direct contact with a politician, it often means that he or she or his community has problems, and they need help (Verba and others, 1978: 225-226).

Therefore, when a person contacts a state official or politician, his interest in politics is said to be saliently manifested. Indeed, his or her political interest increases; he or she may prefer to get close to politicians on a person-to-person level; he or she may communicate directly with the politician or officer; they may suggest solutions to problems or express their views, or even support their favorite politicians. The direct contact with politician maybe a factor that determines a person's interest in the political world, transforming their status as onlookers to participators (Huntington and Nelson, 1976: 284-285).

2.4.2.2 Encouraging People to Vote in an Election

Encouraging people to go and vote in elections is to persuade other people to engage in political activities. According to Prasit Santikarn (2001: 4), voting

is an obvious political act, revealing a person's enthusiasm; it is salient because, in addition to voting, the person also persuades others to vote. Such the persuasion often means that the person encourages other people to vote for his or her preferred candidates. This persuasion may be made because the person believes voting is a duty of every citizen. Voting is a duty that must be fulfilled by every eligible citizen, based on their constitution. According to Kam, Cheung, Cham and Leung (1999: 628), when a person persuades or encourages other people to vote for his or her preferred political candidate, it is an obvious sign revealing that that particular person is actively involved in politics, a manifestation more salient than mere political talk or small talks on politics. Those who persuade other people to follow their political choices believe that their candidates are capable and effective as politicians.

2.4.2.3 Attending Political Rallies or Meetings

When people participate in political rallies or meetings, they exhibit salient political behavior. They exhibit signs of consensus and close relationships with others on political affairs. When people participate in political rallies or meetings, they exhibit their political support mentally and physically; they show that they provide moral support for those whom they believe are good and share their political perspectives. This kind of activity represents potent political force, needed by all politicians, novices and veterans (Huntington and Nelson, 1976: 286).

As far as local politics is concerned, an individual is eligible to participate in local political meetings such as meetings of members of the subdistrict councils. They may join meetings on public matters; they may get involved in public relations affairs, attend social development meetings; they may follow up on the administration of the local organization, the management of the budgets and other plans. People may updated themselves by following the news at the village level via the broadcast towers, community radios, and news updates from local administrative organizations. They are eligible to have their say on activities and projects implemented by local administrative bodies (Office of Election Commission of Thailand, 2004d: 27). In many cases, people who join a political meeting are those who have entered the political sphere, especially regular participants are examples of people who are actively involved in politics. In general, the people whose political

commitment is high attend political meeting at the core level and the strategic level (Milbrath and Goel, 1977: 161).

2.4.3 Gladiatorial Activities

2.4.3.1 Joining Political Campaigns

Contributing time in political campaigns is to show that a person has exhibited his or her gladiatorial behavior. In order to join the campaign, the person must be confident and steadfast in his or her political will, ready to assert his or her share of that political contest. According to Finkel (2000: 17), when a person joins a political campaign during an election, he or she is actively involved in politics.

In the local political context, when a person has joined a political campaign, he or she is said to exhibit, among others, the following behaviors: taking part in activities related to the monitoring and evaluation process of the local administrative bodies, proposing a motion to disqualify corrupt members of administrative bodies, proposing new laws or law amendments, and voicing their opinions on significant matters (Office of Election Commission of Thailand, 2004a: 28). Joining political campaigns includes providing time and energy in order to run a campaign for one's preferred candidate, functioning as an active member of a political party or group (Verba and Nie, 1972: 31).

2.4.3.2 Candidate for Office

Being a political candidate for the office is an important decision a person makes in politics. It is so, because being a candidate in a political contest exposes oneself before the public; he or she must be confident of his or her ability and skill. He or she must be self-confident, creative and be able to convince the public that he or she is a person who is trustworthy. More importantly, the candidate must be able to win over the hearts of the public, convincing the public that the best person as their representative is he or she, that he or she can make their lives better and can bring them success and prosperity.

2.4.3.3 Holding Political Office

A person who holds political office reveals that he or she has actively engaged in politics at the highest level. In order to hold an office, he or she must win

an election; holding the office as a politician is thus an important role; what the politician does has long-lasting effects on society as a whole and the well-being of individual citizens. His decisions affect the public trust in politics and politicians. Honest, capable, and effective politicians influence the satisfaction level of the people. Their performance determines their chance of being reelected to the office. Holding a political office is thus considered the highest level of a person's political participation (Pateman, 2003: 8).

In summary, a study on women's participation in political decision-making process is a study of human behavior concerning their political activities under the assumption that such behavior has different degrees of intensity or potency and such behavior has levels or is hierarchical, from less to more or low to high-from the level of people who show their political interest, the people who function as political supporters; they may join political rallies, and decide to actively engaged in political activities such running for office or holding office.

2.5 Women's Educational Attainment

2.5.1 Concepts on Women's Educational Attainment

The importance of having a systematic and effective education depends on each community's development and beliefs in public development. Each community needs to manage equality, especially national economic policy and the political process, rules for practice, and having the ability to manage the political environment as well as the people's participation in public process. Other factors include needs of the labor market. The salient significance of education lies in its plan and ability to explain social dynamics, culture, religion, including economy, and each local community's context (The World Bank, 1999: 15).

Nowadays, more women have access to education, making them more powerful. They are empowered because they are literate; their skills are developed. This has shaped their lives and enhanced their ability to develop themselves, expanding their roles to the wider public. Today, more women have more opportunities to enter careers important for national development; many of them have entered the political career. The more education they have, the higher their values are;

education attainment contributes to their success (Arends-Kuenning and Amin, 2001: 126-127). Education also makes women participate more in the political decision-making process; their political participation means that women have been more recognized by society, and this has resulted in positive attitudes of the public women in politics. Women's educational achievement contributes to their career success as individual and the success of the wider society.

However, still, few women in politics and not many of them have power to determine economic development. For example, the number of women who are political representatives, local politicians, and judges is still low (UNESCO, 1997: 5-7). The Beijing Declaration on "Women and Education" has called for the support of women as leaders. It states that if more women were to be leaders and engaged in politics, more of them would need to be educated. Women's literacy is an important key that empowers women, allowing them to take a greater part in the decision-making process, promoting women's roles in politics. More education for women means making them more competitive; education helps them to make better political decisions (United Nations, 2000; Ahern, Nuti and Masterson, 2000: 6).

In this study, women's educational attainment is addressed in four dimensions as the follow.

2.5.1.1 Women's Educational Attainment an Their Access to Information

Education is perhaps the most powerful factor stimulating people's political participation. Research has found it to be related to other factors. Well-educated people have better access to needed information; they have higher levels of political efficacy, positive civic attitudes, and self-discipline (Seri Wongmontha, 1995: 720-723). A study conducted by Orathai Kokpol and Soparat Satuwong (1996: 65) found that women's educational attainment gave them more opportunities to access political information; nowadays, education, is, thus, a salient factor predicting women's political participation levels. Women with more and better education have advantages over those who have less, as they have better access to knowledge and are better equipped with critical thinking skills. In general, people who are well-educated are those who have better access to media; they are most likely to consume printed media, compared with other kinds of media (Connor, 1995: 4). The World Bank

(1999: 15) has reported that education is an important key that supports people in their effective consumption of media; education enables people to understand complex issues and problems, providing them choices. Similarly, Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980: 24-25) have asserted that education is a factor contributing significantly to the people's ability to access the required political information; it also familiarizes people with political knowledge and environment, and helps develop people's learning of politics.

Therefore, women's access to information is influenced significantly by their educational attainment. With knowledge and skills, women have more opportunities to access the required information from various sources such as radio, TV, newspapers, including new media. Education equips them with skills and knowledge to effectively consume the media. This makes their political participation more knowledge-based, as they have greater access to more channel linking women and politics.

2.5.1.2 Women's Educational Attainment an Their Learning Capability

Education is a process to enhance people's skills and knowledge, and within the realm of politics, reading skills are important learning skills for the people, making women interested in politics, equipping them with necessary skills to engage in political activities (Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980: 35-36). Bennet and others (2000: 173) have found that the reading skills of Americans influence their participation in the political decision-making process. The subjects exhibited greater reactions to politics, compared with those who have lower literary skills. Besides, Nie, Junn and Stehilk-Barry (1996: 8) have found that educational attainment has resulted in an increase in the number of organization members; education affects people's cooperation in engaging in activities that enhance their learning; they exchange knowledge and opinions with other members of the organization.

Education brings about a learning process, especially the learning about politics; it affects a person's political interest, his or her political understanding, including his or her political participation and education affects the government of the state; it affects a person's effort to engage in politics and their determination to influence the political decision-making process and outcomes (Carbonaro, 1999: 18).

The World Bank (1999: 15-16) has reported that education is an important key in developing human abilities and knowledge of politics; education enhances their access to training as well as innovations and technologies.

Women's ability to learn means that they can develop and enhance their political knowledge. Their political knowledge and skills are enhanced by their participation in educational activities such as trainings, workshops, and attending formal institutions. Education enables them to share ideas and opinions; it enhances their potentials; it enables them to learn to develop themselves.

2.5.1.3 Women's Educational Attainment and Their Verbal Ability

Education also affects verbal ability; it enables a person to develop his or her speaking and writing skills; it enables the people to access political information, and that empowerment motivates them to engage in political activities (Jaffe, 1995: 10; Klesner, 2001: 9). Moreover, Milbrath and Goel (1977: 41) have found that the people's participation in political campaigns, political rallies, and other activities related to communication require that they are highly competent in verbal skills. Education also influences a person's diplomatic skills, which is important for his or her ability to engage in political activities; his or her ability to use words, orally and verbally, would enable him or her to debate in political matters, persuade people, deliver information to other politicians and the government; it is also a powerful predictor of people's intention to vote in a political election (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993: 46; Nie and others, 1996: 61; Carbonaro, 1999: 6).

Verbal ability is, therefore, a competency necessary for women to successfully engage in political activities; it enables them to communicate their ideas and feelings, campaign, give political speeches, and run in political elections.

2.5.1.4 Women's Educational Attainment and Their Ability to Build Social Network

Education attainment opens up women's opportunity to create social networks necessary to engage in political decision-making activities (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993: 135-136). A study by Carbonaro (1999: 16) has found that education influences people's values and the formation of social norms in society. Education promotes political participation; social networking provides people the required information on social affairs, and functions as a process towards political careers.

Women with more education are enabled to form necessary social networks and engage in political groups. Education enables them to develop skills and knowledge necessary to handle complex issues and solve complex problems; it enhances their communication skills. The more they communicate in political contexts, the more they become familiar with the process of political decision-making (Nie and others, 1996: 39).

The women's ability to form social network influences their frequency and level of communication, accessing required information and keeping them updated on current affairs, including the fact that such the networks supports their engagement in the political decision-making process.

In summary, four components of the education factor that affect women's participation in the political decision-making activities are 1) Access to information, 2) Learning capacity, 3) Verbal ability and 4) Social Networking. They are the results of the women's educational attainment, influencing the women's participation in the political decision-making process.

2.6 Demographic and Socio-Economic Factors Affecting Women's Participation in Local Political Decision-Making Process

Research has reported that demographic and socio-economic factors influence women's participation in local political decision-making process; the more they are likely to engage in political activities. Hence, it is recognized that people's demographic and socio-economic factors determine their political engagement (Bennet and others, 2000: 174; Goldstein and Ridont, 2002: 23-24; Yang, 2003: 17). Demographic and socio-economic factors that influence women's political participation include the following.

2.6.1 Population Factors

2.6.1.1 Age

One of the demographic and socio-economic factors is age. Age influences a person's political participation. It is found that as their age increases, people participate more in political activities. However, after they have reached the

height of their middle-age, their political interests begin to decline. The studies conducted by Bennet and others (2000: 174), Goldstein and Ridont (2002: 23-24), Robert (2003: 345), Yang (2003: 17) support the significance of age in determining women's political participation in the decision-making process. Research also has found that the older the people are more enthusiastic to engage in political activities, compared with younger citizens; the reasoning being that older people possess more experience and their stakes are higher in society.

2.6.1.2 Marital Status

Women's marital status is found to be related to their political participation local the decision-making process, that is, married women participate more in political activities (Uhlener, 2002: 12); women who are political representatives or office holders are mainly married (Prasit Santikarn, 2001: 96; Thomas, 2002: 347). A study conducted in the US has found that female political leaders are those who are supported by their families, and in Thailand it was found that a woman's marital status influences her political participation characteristics, that is, 90-95 percent of married couples voted for the same political candidates (Likhit, 1992: 68). It is also found that female politicians are those who are connected to politicians; they may be their daughters, or wives; their political performance matters less than their connections and relations with politicians (Panprapa Intaravittayanan, 1998: 11). In addition, studies conducted by Goldstein and Ridont (2002: 23-24) and Bennet and others (2000: 174) found that women's marital status plays an important role in determining their participation in political decision-making activities.

2.6.1.3 Number of Children

The age and number of children are related to women's participation in political decision-making activities. A study found that women who are political representatives were those women who were married with two children (Thomas, 2002: 347). It is recognized that the number of children influences women's careers, especially those with children. This seems to prevent them from performing their required duties and responsibilities (Jones and Mckenna, 2000: 252-254). A study conducted by Misra (1996: 6) has found that the outside of home work of married women is significantly affected by their family obligations, their obligation to nurture their children aged lower than 6 years.

2.6.2 Economic Factors

2.6.2.1 Income

Income has been found to significantly correlate with people's participation in political decision-making activities; income is highly related to political activities that require acceptance and respect from the public, or any other activities that require capital. In the US, income has been found to influence political activities related to media consumption and political affairs more than activities related to political elections and individual communication. The reason that explains why people's income affects their political-decision-making is that their income influences their attitudes and other socio-economic activities (Nie and Verba, 1975: 81). In addition, studies conducted by Goldstein and Ridont (2002: 23-24), Bennett and others (2000: 174), and Praweena Inwasa (2001: 16) found that income was an important factor affecting women's political participation and political decision-making.

2.6.2.2 Occupation

What a woman does as a career affects her political participation (Finkel, 2000: 43), especially a career that involves higher levels of education and is associated with honor and social norms and values, and valued by democratic principles (Paweena Inwasa, 2001: 16). A study by Huntington and Nelson (1976: 7) and a study by Chumpol Nimpanich (1999: 21) found that people with 'higher' careers tend to exhibit and reveal their enthusiasm at a greater level than other careers or occupations. Chalidaporn Songsemphan (2006: 5) reported that education and occupation contributed to women's independence, emancipating them from the male's world and dependency. In addition, Orathai Kokpol and Soparat Satuwong (1996: 19) have asserted that a person's occupation affects his or her political behavior and attitude. Government officials were found to be less progressive than those who worked in private organizations.

2.6.3 Social Factors

2.6.3.1 Education

Education has long been a factor affecting people's political participation; it is also an intervening variable affecting other factors. Many scholars

such as Milbrath (1971: 122-124) assert that education is the most important factor, arguing, strongly, that people with higher education participate more in political activities. People with the same level of education have more or less the same level of political participation. Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980: 156) found that education was the most powerful, predictor influencing women's political participation, regardless of their race, culture, and occupation, or education,

It was reported that, in Thailand, women who voted were mostly those in the middle-class and above with a bachelor degree or higher. These women voted with self-conscience and made decisions on who they would like to vote for, faster and more determinedly than women with lower education levels (Patan Suvanmongkon and Thapanat Phrom-In, 1994: 146; Suthira Thompson, 1998: 9).

A study conducted by Kusol Soonthorntada and others (1995: 3) reported that the fact that more Thai women had played greater roles in society was the result of the support of their education; Thai women participated more in politics because of their educational achievements. Similarly, studies conducted by Nicholson (1999: 1), Paweena Inwasa (2001: 16) and Goldstein and Ridont (2002: 23-24), support that notion that education is a social factor affecting women's political engagement.

2.6.3.2 Political Background

Women with different political backgrounds have different levels of political participation, especially their political membership. Women from politically-active families-those families associated with politics or currently engaging in political affairs were found to participate more in politics, compared with women without political backgrounds (Cassel and Lo, 1997: 325-327). The studies conducted by Kirkpatrick (1979: 324) and Prasit Santikarn (2001: 63) explained the family and community factors that influence women's political participation in decision-making process include the following:

- 1) Family Support has been found to be another factor influencing women's decisions to enter into a political career. Family support influences their decisions to run for political offices, and the ability to look after their children. Support also alleviates their household routines and duties; these supports from their families allow women to formally participate in political activities. The

Thai society, in particular, has its process of acculturation, molding Thai women to possess Thai values; they are expected to fulfill the required duties within their own families before going out to engage any outside activities (Thomson and Shelia, 1991: 11-14; Pinyo Tuntipittayakup, 1998: 43-44).

2) Education and Occupation of Parent have been found to be factors influencing women's decisions to enter politics at the decision-making level (Carbonaro, 1999: 9; Yang, 2003: 17). Treiman and others (2003: 15) have reported that parent educational achievements are related to the educational achievement of their children.

3) Family-based Political Acculturation. Research has reported that women whose families have actively engaged in political activities, especially those whose members hold political offices such as members of the House of Representatives, tend to get more involved in politics, compared with women who do not (Panprapa Intaravittayanan, 1998: 11; Pinyo Tuntipittayakup, 1998: 21). Closeness and Familiarity help forge the relationship between politicians and other people; such bonds and relationships help prepare people for political acculturation (Kirkpatrick, 1979: 288-290).

2.6.3.3 Organizational Involvement

Research has found that the women's involvement in organizational activities determines their level of political engagement. It has been reported that women who are more involved in organizational activities tend to engage more in politics, compared with those who are less involved in such activities (Verba and others, 1995: 136; Tripp, 1999: 1; Carroll, 2000: 1; Klesner, 2001: 17). A study conducted by Nie and Verba (1975: 165) found that being an active member of an organization (involving in organizational activities) was an independent variable that affects a person's political engagement. The nature of the effect was cumulative and gradual.

When people get involved in activities provided by organizations, due to many similarities and compatibilities, they become involved in political activities and gradually become members of those organizations. This broadens their circle of influence, and expanding their interests (Tripp, 1999: 66-67; Goetz, 2003: 341).

In Thailand, many women's organizations have shown some degree of success and improvement, locally and nationwide. Indeed, many policies on women's roles as well as other women's activities have helped contribute to the enhancement of women's knowledge, motivating and educating them to take a greater part in politics at all levels (Pinyo Tuntipittayakup, 1998: 21). Research conducted on women's organizational involvement has pointed out that women's organizational involvement enables them to have greater access to education and training, enhancing their decision-making skills (Clark, 2003: 141-151). Research has also suggested that women whose organizational involvement is high are often those more likely to engage in political activities. The more they get involved in an organization's activities such as being political candidates and holding offices, the more they get involved in politics (Prasit Santikarn, 2001: 120). In sum, the more women get involved in organizations and hold executive positions in the organizations, the more they are likely to participate in political activities.

2.7 Civic Attitudes

Many social and psychological theories explain that civic attitudes make the difference in people's political participation, that is, people with higher social status are generally more enthusiastic in politics than those with lower social status. Those with higher social status, generally, have obtained higher education. They, hence, possess political knowledge. This makes them develop positive attitudes towards civility (Verba and Nie, 1972: 132; Parry and others, 1992: 124; Klesner, 2001: 12). Nie and Verba (1975: 112) found that people with higher socio-economic status participated in politics at a level higher than those with lower socio-economic status; the factor determining their participation level was found to be their civic attitudes. In Thailand, a study on attitudes towards women's roles and status found that women with higher attitudes towards women's status and women's support participated in politics at higher levels than women with lower levels of attitudes towards women's role and status (Prasit Santikarn, 2001: 84). Civic attitudes entail the following constructs.

2.7.1 Sense of Civic Obligation

The sense of civic obligation is determined by measuring a person's self-perception of his or her role in politics and administration; this sense means that the person regards his or her role in political affairs/activities as important. If people have been cultivated this sense of civic obligation, they would help improve political activities (Prasit Santikan, 2001: 122). A study by Kam and others (1999: 627-629) found that a person's sense of civil obligation influenced the political participation of the subjects who were people in the retirement centers in Hong Kong. Therefore, a person with a high sense of civil obligation is more likely to exhibit a higher level of political participation (Lawrence, 1981: 322-326).

2.7.2 Sense of Political Efficacy

A person's sense of political efficacy is measured by his or her interest in politics and knowledge, including his or her self-confidence and belief in his or her ability, including the impact they can create in the formulation of public policy and administration of the government (Finkel, 2000: 18). Prewitt (1968: 225-227) defines a person's sense of political efficacy as being a factor affecting a person's political behavior, based on the concepts in sociology and social psychology. This construct measures a person's belief in his or her ability to influence political change. Moreover, a study has reported that people's sense of political efficacy is correlated with women's political participation; it has the power to predict the level of women's political participation (Emig and others, 1996: 264; Pinkleton and others, 1998: 75).

2.7.3 Sense of Political Trust

A person's sense of political trust refers to his or her belief concerning those with power or those who hold offices and their social responsibilities, how they are accountable for their roles and duties as politicians, how well they have responded to their well-being of the people. This sense is thus very important for the development of politics. The people's feeling towards the government and the political system indicates their satisfaction, trust, their political support, including the stability of that particular political system (Pornsak Pongpaew and Saithip Sukhatipan, 1993: 52). The people's sense of political trust determines change in politics; it controls politicians, making them do what is right and fair (Belanger and Nadeu, 2002: 8). It

is also a measure of opportunities and strengths of potential conflicts, or political stress. This trust is related to the people's social engagement and political participation, a key factor towards the development and strengthening of modern democracy (Emig and others, 1996: 264).

2.8 Barriers to Women's Participation in Politics

Even though more Thai women have taken part in the decision-making process, including the political ones; there exists, however, gender inequality, and such inequality is common and widespread (McQuire, 1984: 26-31). Such inequalities directly affect women, and are manifested in the women's roles in the family and society, including local and national political realms.

Barriers to the women's political participation include their long-held values, traditions and customs, norms, as well as the social structure unsupportive of women's participation. In addition, women still lack political competencies, resulting from a lack of support from the state in terms of policies, plans, budgets, and other measures, be they political, social, and economic ones (Prin Prachayanuporn, 1996: 2). Should women remain steadfast in their aim to pursue political ambitions, they would open up more and greater opportunities to meaningfully and significantly participate in political activities (Vissandjee, Apale and Wieringa, 2005: 123-141). In this study, the barriers to women's participation in politics are divided into two factors: external and internal factors.

2.8.1 External Factors

External factors affecting women's political participation include social values determined by the processes of socialization and cultivation. Such processes determine women's roles, choices, beliefs, and attitudes, i.e., that men have power and are the sex best suited for politics (Kotom Areeya and others, 1997: 36). Similarly, Suthira Thompson (1998: 4-5) has the opinion that cultural barriers on sex difference has made politics the business of men for a long time; political culture is, thus, the culture created by men. Men also determine what women can do and should do. This psyche has been accepted for centuries; it is an important barrier. Thai

society expects women to limit their roles and duties with their families running household chores, which is different from men whose roles are often outside of their homes.

Such a role difference has created a certain identity for women and certain attitudes towards men and women; most men and women have been made to believe that men are leaders, and women are followers. Thai society, in particular, still adheres to the social norms that prescribe suitable tasks and duties for men and women (Pimonpun Issarapakdi, 2005: 12). Moreover, Thai political bodies have been structured in ways that empower men; the proportion of Thai women in politics has been low, so it is difficult to pass laws that matter more to women's quality of life and well-being (Anongwichaya Saributr, 2005: 5). At present, many barriers prevent women's political participation such as women's socio-economic status and laws (Milbrath, 1971: 30-42; Orathai Kokpol and Soparat Satuwong, 1996: 5-8).

2.8.2 Internal Factors

The internal factors that function as women's barriers to their political engagement are lower than for men, self-confidence and self-perception, resulting from the culture sanctioned by men and their worldview, restricting women's roles in politics (Center for Asia Pacific Women in Politics, 2000). Women at all levels have been assigned limited and specific tasks and duties, based on the society and its culture. Men have long been assigned tasks and duties that contradict their roles in the family and at work (Jones and Mckenna, 2002: 252-254). Most women's roles are family-based, that is to say, as mothers, wives, and daughters (Surasawadee Hunpayon and Chanatip Boonyaket, 2002: 65-66; Chalidaporn Songsemphan, 2006: 154-155), which are different from the roles of the politicians who need to utilize knowledge, experience, and support in time and many others to be successful. These make it challenging for women to enter the political world (Orathai Kokpol and Soparat Satuwong, 1996: 5-8; Suthira Thompson, 1998: 5)

A study conducted by Center for Asia Pacific Women in Politics (2000) and Tripp (2002: 68) found that the limited number of women in the political decision-making process and other factors that obstruct their political participation are their natural limitations, their lack of political experience, their education, and their lack of

political contact with politicians. Moreover, Chalasma Julaped (2005: 46) argues that it takes women a greater deal of effort to go outside the realm of their families; they must, firstly, win over the support of their own families before entering the political arenas.

In summary, there are two main factors functioning as barriers to Thai women's political participation: external and internal factors. The external factors are values, social traditions and customs, traditional views on the roles of men and women, and the political support of women in politics. The internal factors refer to their self-confidence and self-examination, their political knowledge and skills, and their duties and obligations as key members of the family.

2.9 Definitions of Research's Key Words

Following are the key terms used in this research:

1) Women's Educational Achievement refers to their educational attainment. It has been recognized that women's educational achievements maximize their potential, open up their windows of opportunities in many aspects of life, including their ability to access needed data and information, their learning enhancement, verbal ability, and their ability to build up their own political and social networks.

2) Information Access refers to women's opportunities and ability to access needed information, resulting from their application of knowledge and skills, via the educational process, to process and make use of data and information from the media.

3) Learning Capacity refers to women's ability to develop themselves so that they have the ability to learn about politics, resulting from their educational attainment.

4) Verbal Ability refers to the women's ability to develop their verbal skills in communicating with other people. It refers to their ability to effectively give public speeches, discuss given topics, and express their opinions and comments on significant subject matters.

5) Social Networking refers to women's ability to form social networks, enabling them to develop themselves and their abilities to engage in the political world.

6) Demographic, Socio and Economic Factors are women's demographic, socio-economic characteristics, that is to say, age, marital status, the number of children under 6 years old, income, occupation, educational level, political background, and organizational involvement.

7) Age means the age of women at the time of the study, restricted to those who are eligible for voting in an election; they must be 18 years old or above.

8) Marital Status refers to the marital status of women at the time of the interview, namely, single, widow, divorced, separate, married, and de facto marriage.

9) Number of Children refers to the number of children of women, under 6 years old, who have not entered the formal schooling system and are dependent on the care of their parents or guardians.

10) Income refers to the actual income per month of women under the study, including income from their main occupation and other periphery or supplementary jobs.

11) Occupation refers to women's main careers, that is to say, government officials, employees of the state enterprises, employees of private organizations, and other independent jobs.

12) Education Level refers to the number of years women under the study have spent in a formal schooling system, limited only for those who have lower secondary education and above.

13) Political Background refers to women's family and community background, including the environment that would promote their political participation. Their political background, thus, is measured by determining the number of women's family members who 1) use to hold offices and 2) are holding offices.

14) Relationship with Organizations refers to women's participation in various political bodies, enhancing their experience, knowledge, and skills, as well as motivating them to take a greater part in political affairs at all levels.

15) Civic Attitudes refers to women's enthusiasm about their involvement and participation in political activities. They entail three aspects, namely, citizenship behavior, political efficacy, and their trust in politics.

16) Citizenship Behavior refers to women's awareness of their own behavior when participating in the political decision-making process, what they should do as members of the civil society.

17) Political Efficacy refers to women's confidence in their own behavior, that their role and contribution have an impact on the administrative affairs of local political bodies such as the provincial administration organization.

18) Political Trust refers to women's trust in local administrative bodies and the contribution and works of local politicians, viewing them as being responsible and interested in the benefits and well being of people in the community.

19) Barriers to Women's Political Participation refers to the barriers to women's participation in the political decision-making process; such the barriers due to two factors: internal and external.

20) External Factors refers to such factors as social values, customs and traditions, men and women's equality in society, and the support of women for their political participation.

21) Internal Factors refers to women's self-confidence and self-examination, and the realization that they possess knowledge, skills, and experience, as well as an awareness of their roles and duties towards their own families.

22) Women's Participation in Political Decision-Making Process refers to women's behaviors in the political decision-making process at local levels; and such behaviors are those that affect the state's choices of policies and the political leaders of the government. Three levels are: 1) the level of those who are interested in political activities, 2) the level of those who render politicians their support, and 3) the level of those who engage in political activities such as running for political office.

23) Political Participation at the Spectator Level refers to women's political interest at the basic level. At this level, they exercise their political rights by casting their votes in political elections as well as voicing their political opinions.

24) Political Participation at the Transitional Level refers to women's contact with state officials, political leaders or representatives, and other politically related activities, i.e., encouraging people to vote or express their political views.

25) Political Participation at the Gladiatorial Level refers to women's active involvement in politics such as joining political campaigns and running, as candidates, for office.

2.10 Conceptual Framework

Based on the above literature review, the researcher has come up with a conceptual framework are as follows:

- 1) Women's Educational Achievement: Access to information, Learning capacity, Verbal ability, and Social networking
- 2) Demographic and Socio-Economic Factors, namely: Age, Marital Status, Number of children, Income, Occupation, Education, Political background, and Relationship within an organizations
- 3) Civic Attitudes: Citizenship behavior, Political awareness, and Political trust
- 4) Barriers to Women's Political Participation: Internal and External factors of Women
- 5) Women's Participation in Local Political Decision-Making Process: Political activities at three levels: (1) those interested in politics, (2) political supporters, and (3) political engagement.

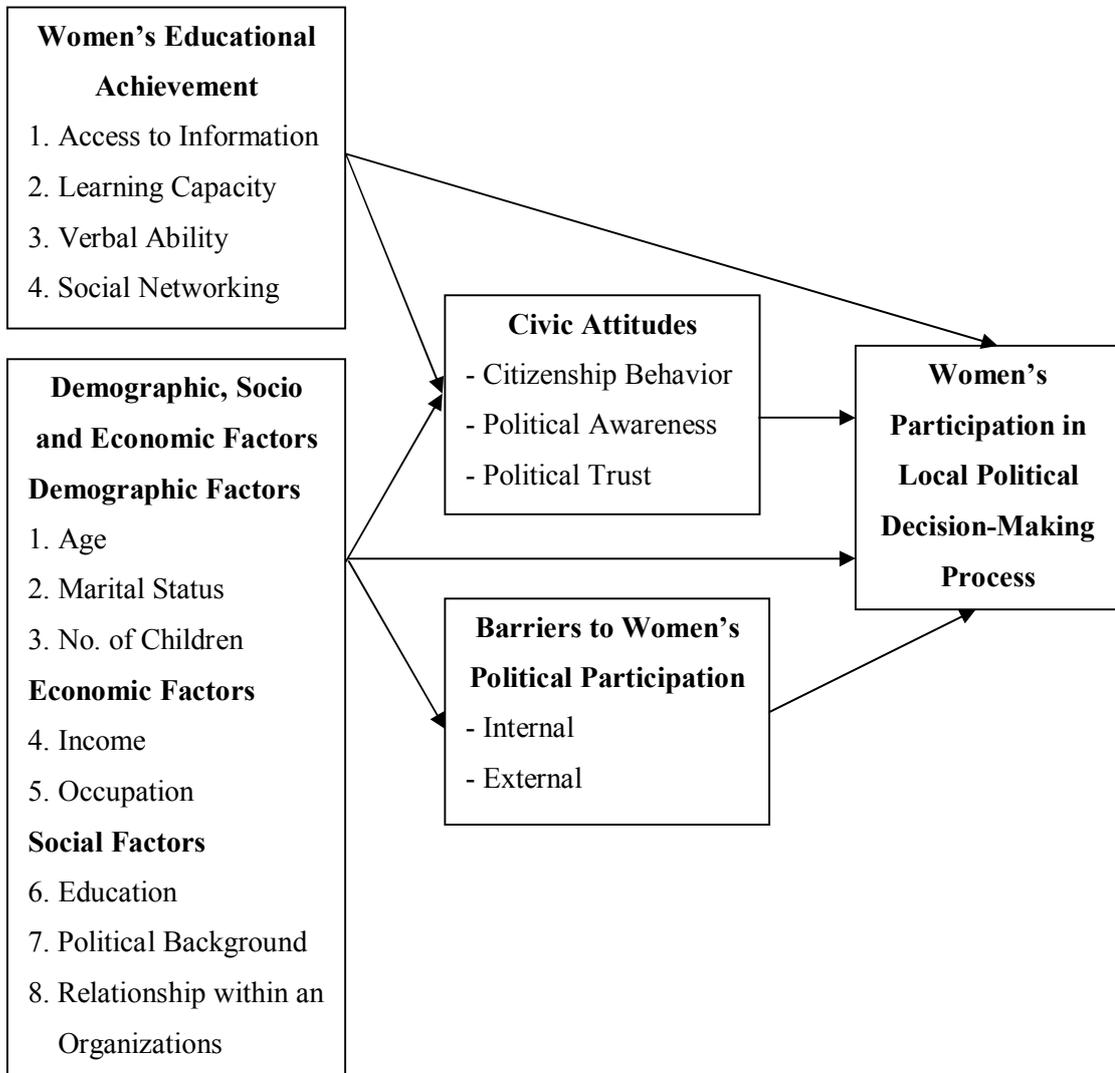


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework of Women's Educational Achievement and Their Participation in the Thai Central Region Local Political Decision-Making Process

2.11 Research Hypotheses

Based on the above research framework, the researcher has proposed.

2.11.1 Educational achievement of women and their political participation at the local level will be significantly correlated.

2.11.2 The following factors, demographic and socio-economic factors, the women's civic attitudes, and other barriers and challenges will significantly affect the women's participation in central region local politics decision-making process.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter entails the following topics: 1) Target population and samples, 2) Data collection, 3) Operational definitions and instrumentation, 4) Variables and measurement criteria, 5) Testing reliability of the measurement 6) Primary characteristics of the sample, and 7) Methods of data analysis.

3.1 Target Population and Samples

The population and the samples are as follows:

3.1.1 Target Population

The population under this study was composed of Thai women from the central region of Thailand. They were classified into three groups:

1) Women elected and holding political office. They were members of the provincial administration organization, members of the municipal council, and members of the subdistrict administration organization.

2) Women who were local leaders. They were village heads, heads of village groups (Tambon), and leaders of local organizations within their communities, namely, career groups, savings groups, housewife groups of, and volunteer groups related to religion or culture.

3) Women who were ordinary Thai citizens, at least 18 years old on the 1st of January 2005, eligible to vote in an election; with names listed on the household registration no less than 90 days; and who had completed formal compulsory education according to the Compulsory Education Act 2002.

3.1.2 Samples

The samples in this study were selected to represent the population; the sampling was purposive sampling and quota sampling. Below are the sampling processes:

1) Geographical Scope

(1) The provincial level. The researcher determined the geographical scope of the study based on the classification of the Department of Provincial Administration, Ministry of Interior. The Kingdom of Thailand is composed of 75 provinces (excluding Bangkok). This study only investigated the Central Thai Region with 25 provinces. Two provinces were randomly selected based on the number of people who voted: the highest and the lowest, in the local election held 14 March 2004, namely, the election for the chair of the provincial administration council and the election for members of the provincial administration council. It was found that Chantaburi Province was the province with the highest number of people who voted (71.47 percent); while Samutprakan Province had the lowest voter turnout (47.16 percent) (Office of Election Commission of Thailand, 2004a).

(2) The district level. Two sampling techniques were employed, specific sampling and quota sampling. For each province, two sampling methods were employed: specific and random.

In each province, the researcher collected data from the subjects within the municipal area of that particular province and randomly selected the samples from one of the districts in the province. This was done so as to compare the samples within and outside the municipal areas.

For Chantaburi Province, the samples were selected from Amphoe Muang District and Thamai District. For Samutprakan Province, Amphoe Muang District and Bang Plee District were selected.

(3) The subdistrict level. For each district, two subdistricts were selected. For Amphoe Muang District, subdistricts within the municipality were chosen. For the non-Amphoe Muang district, subdistricts outside the municipality were selected. These subdistricts were under the administration of the subdistrict administration organizations.

Within Amphoe Muang Chantaburi District, the selected subdistricts were: Chantanimit Subdistrict (within the municipality of the province) and Tha Chang Subdistrict (within the municipality of Tha Chang Subdistrict); within Thamai District, Klong Kood Subdistrict and Khao Woa Subdistrict were selected.

Samutprakan Province. Within the municipal area, Tambon Praek Kasa (Samutprakan Municipal Area) and Tambon Samrong Nua (Tambon Samrong Nua Municipal Area) were selected; for Bang Pli District, Tambon Bang and Tambon Nong Plua were selected (outside the municipal area).

2) Samples and Sample Size

(1) Women elected to local offices, namely, members of the provincial administration organization, members of the provincial council, members of the subdistrict administration organization, and leaders of the community were purposively selected. They were selected from the sampled areas as follows:

Chantaburi Province

Two members of the Chantaburi Provincial Council were chosen. Two of the women selected were members of the Amphoe Muang Chantaburi Municipal Council. Two women were selected from members of the Tha Chang Subdistrict Municipal Council. Two more women were selected from members of the Klong Kood Subdistrict Administrative Council; two were from the Khao Woa Subdistrict Administrative Council, and **twelve** women who were community leaders, were selected from three subdistricts (**three** from each subdistrict).

Samutprakan Province

Two members of the Samutprakan Provincial Council were chosen. Two were selected from members of the Samutprakan Municipal Council. Two women were selected from members of the Samrong Nua Sub-District Municipal Council; two were selected from the members of the Bang Chalong Subdistrict Administrative Council, and two were from the Nong Prue Subdistrict Administrative Council. Like the former case, and **twelve** women who were community leaders, were selected from three subdistricts (**three** from each subdistrict).

The researcher collected quantitative data using the questionnaire as the research tool to ask women elected as local representative and holding offices as well as women who were community leaders. The total number of selected women

from Chantaburi Province was 22 and 22 from Samutprakan Province, that is, 44 in total. Of the 44, five women from each province were selected from in-depth interviews for qualitative data.

(2) Women who were ordinary citizens from Chantaburi and Samutprakan Province were Thai citizens, whose names were on the list of eligible voters; recorded in the household registration form for at least 90 days. They completed compulsory education based on the Compulsory Education Act 2002. In total, 28,959 of them were under this category. Sampling was done to select the representatives using the formula proposed by Yamane (1970: 580-581). According to the standard confident level of 95 percent, 395 was the required sample size.

Multistage sampling was employed, that is, the sample was selected based on the percentage of the population of each province or subdistrict. This enabled the researcher to collect data from all the areas under the study, covering all subdistricts and villages. Accidental sampling was used to collect the data from the women. The target samples in the target communities were asked, one family per one sample. This made the data collected truly representative of the intended population. Based on the formula proposed by Yamane, the adequate samples were 395 women. Of that number, 219 were from Chantaburi Province and 176 were in Samutprakan Province. (Table 3.1)

Table 3.1 Population and Sample Categorized by District and Subdistrict

Amphoes	Tombons	No. of Villages	Population		Samples
			No.	Percentage	No.
Chantaburi Province					
1. Municipality	1. Chanta Nimit	11	4,119	14.2	56
Chantaburi	2. Ta Chang	11	3,862	13.3	52
2. Tha Mai	1. Klong Kud	12	3,684	12.7	50
	2. Khao Vua	9	2,821	9.8	39
	Total	43	14,486	50.0	197
Samutprakarn Province					
1. Municipality					
City	1. Preak Sa	10	4,995	17.2	68
Samutprakarn	2. Samrong Nua	9	3,151	10.9	43
2. Tha Mai	1. Bang Chalong	9	3,649	12.6	50
	2. Nong Prua	7	2,678	9.3	37
	Total	35	14,473	50.0	198
Total		78	28,959	100.0	395

Table 3.2 Sample Summary of this Research.

Sample	Province		Total
	Chantaburi	Samutprakarn	
1. Women elected and holding political office	10	10	20
2. Women who were local leaders	12	12	24
3. Women who were ordinary Thai citizens	197	198	395
Total	219	220	439

3.2 Data Collection

This research collected both quantitative and qualitative data. Qualitative data were collected to supplement the rigor of the quantitative data. The data were from documentary research, qualitative and quantitative sources.

3.2.1 Documentary Research

This was the research of documents related to women's educational achievement and their participation in the political decision-making process at the provincial level. It was done to answer one of the research questions.

3.2.2 Qualitative Study

In this study, the qualitative data were collected by means of in-depth interviews. Ten women, who were local politicians and community leaders, were chosen as informants: Five were from Chantaburi Province and five were from Samutprakan Province. The questions of the interview were similar to those of the questionnaire items. This was done in order to gather data at the deeper level. The in-depth interview was meant to elicit responses concerning barriers to the women's political participation, an important issue of this research.

3.2.3 Quantitative Study

In this research, the quantitative approach was the main approach employed. The population was divided into two main groups. The first group was interviewed using the items from the questionnaire. The first group's informants were 44 women who were local politicians and community leaders. This was done to elicit information on the strength of the role and influence of local-level female politicians and community leaders. The second group was also interviewed using the questions from the questionnaire. The informants were 395 ordinary women in total. This was done to investigate the relationship between their educational achievement and their participation in the political decision-making process. The questionnaire for the interview was divided into five parts as follows:

Part 1 Demographic data, namely, age, marital status, number of children, income, career, education, political background and organizational involvement

Part 2 Women's educational achievement, namely, information access, learning capacity, verbal ability and social network

Part 3 Civic attitude: citizenship behavior, political awareness and political trust

Part 4 Barriers to women's political participation: internal and external factors

Part 5 Women's participation in local political decision-making process: political activities at the three levels: 1) those interested in politics, 2) political supporters and 3) political engagement

3.2.4 Data Collection Period

Data were collected during the period between October 2005 and January 2006. The sole collector of the data was the researcher. The qualitative data were collected from in-depth interviews of ten informants, who were the women holding local political offices, and the women who were community leaders. Using the questionnaire items, 44 women, who were local politicians and community leaders, were also interviewed. Also selected were 395 ordinary women to answer the items of the questionnaire. All the questionnaires were returned with complete information

3.3 Operational Definitions and Instrumentation

In this study, operational definitions were made and the instrument to measure them was constructed. There were 14 independent variables and one dependent variable as follows:

3.3.1 Operational Definitions

1) Women's Educational Achievement

Women's educational achievement refers to their educational development in four factors, which are:

(1) Information Access (ACH1)

Information access refers to the extent to which women under the study have access to the information on politics from various media. This level of information access was measured by determining their information access within the past six months, i.e., the extent to which they have applied their knowledge and skills acquired from their educational achievement to access the required political information available from the media. The scale ranges from 0 (least) to 10 (most).

(2) Learning Capacity (ACH2)

Women's capacity to learn refers to their ability to learn about politics; such ability is the result of their education. Their capacity to learn is determined by their capacity to learn in the following aspects: their access to innovations and new technologies, their reasonable voting behavior, their ability to grasp political complexity, their choice of information useful for decision-making, their sound knowledge of politics, their opportunities to enhance their education through training and seminars or workshops within and outside of their community. The scale ranges from 0 (lowest) to 10 (highest).

(3) Verbal Ability (ACH3)

Verbal ability refers to the women's ability to develop their verbal skills in communicating with other people; such ability is the result of education and experience. It is determined by their ability to effectively give public speech, their expertise and skills in making political speech, their participation in political discussions, their feeling of freedom to talk about politics, and their possession of political information and perspectives. The scale ranges from 0 (least) to 10 (most).

(4) Social Networking (ACH4)

Social Network refers to the women's ability to form their social networks, enabling them to develop themselves and their abilities to engage in the political world. Their social network was measured by determining the following indicators: their ability to provide the information on individuals and current events of the community, the collaborative problem solving activities within the community, the exchange of information, and the support they provide each other for greater participation in the political decision-making process. The scale ranges from 0 (least) to 10 (most).

2) Demographic Characteristics

Women's demographic characteristics are the women's demographic and socio-economic characteristics, that is to say, age, marital status, the number of children under six years old, income, occupation, educational level, political background, and organizational involvement.

(1) AGE (AGE)

Age refers to the age of the women who were at least 18 years of age on the 1st of January 2005.

(2) Marital Status (STA)

Marital status refers to the marital status of the women at the time of the interview; this variable is divided into two categories: 1) those who are single, widowed, divorced, or separated, and 2) those who are married and still residing with their families. The scale has two dummy codes: 1 (single, widowed, divorced, separated) and 0 (married, residing with their spouse and living together as a family).

(3) Number of Children (CHI)

The number of children refers to the real or actual number of children under six years old, dependent, who must be nurtured at home. Such children have not yet entered formal schooling education.

(4) Income (INC)

Income refers to the women's actual or real income per month, including the income from the main and the subsidiary occupation.

(5) Occupation (OCC)

Occupation refers to the women's main career or job, that is to say, government official, employee of a state enterprise, employee of a private organization, and other independent jobs. This variable is scored using two dummy codes: 1 (civil servant/employee of a state enterprise) and 0 (employee of a private company and others).

(6) Education (EDU)

Education refers to the number of years the women remained studying in a schooling system, starting from lower secondary school education and above.

(7) Political Background (BACK)

Political background refers to the women's family and community background, including the environment that would help promote their political participation. Their political background, thus, is measured by determining the number of women's family members who (1) used to hold office and (2) are holding offices. Their background in politics is determined by two dummy variables: Yes (1) and No (0).

(8) Organizational Involvement (ORG)

The women's organizational involvement refers to their being members with titles or positions within local socio-economic groups or organizations. Their involvement is determined by two dummy variables: Yes (1) and No (0).

3) Civic Attitudes (ATT)

Civic attitudes refers to the attitudes of women towards political enthusiasm in the following aspects: citizenship behavior, political efficacy, and political trust. The operational definitions of the factors are as follow:

(1) Citizenship Behavior

Citizenship behavior refers to their awareness that their political action or behavior is worthwhile, as it is an obligation for every citizen. The questions asked are: every citizen should heed the importance of politics as it involves everyone of them, going to vote is to protect one's right and is thus a duty of every citizen, it is a duty of every citizen to monitor the performance of government officials and local politicians, and the exercise of one's right by going to vote is one's liberal right, subject to coercive force from no one.

(2) Political Efficacy

Women's political efficacy refers to their conviction that they can affect the performance and policy of their local administrative bodies. The questions deal with the following aspects: voting will impact the change in the behavior of members of the provincial administrative councils, voting is a means for women to have their say regarding the administration of the government, women can perform as well as any others when it comes to politics, citizens have many ways, legally, to monitor the administration of the local administrative bodies, and women are capable to take part and help solve political problems.

(3) Political trust

Women's political trust refers to their confidence in the administration and work of local politicians, that is, politicians have responsibilities and are concerned with the well-being of the people in their constituency. The items address the following: the policy of the government on provincial administration is the right one, those who have entered politics have done so to help people needing help and to develop the community, decision-making at the local level is done so based on the benefit of the people and that of the nation, rather than the benefit of the politicians themselves and their cronies, provincial politicians perform their duties and responsibilities with honesty, and politicians will honor their election promises.

The scale ranges from 0 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree).

4) Barriers to Women's Political Participation (OBS)

Barriers to women's political participation refers to barriers to women's participation in the political decision-making process; such barriers are due to two factors: internal and external.

(1) External factors

External factors refers to such factors such as social values, customs and traditions, men and women's equality in society, and the support of women in their political participation.

(2) Internal factors

Internal factors refers to women's self-confidence, self-examination, and the realization that they possess knowledge, skills, and experience, as well as their awareness of their roles and duties towards their own families.

The scale ranges from 0 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree).

5) Women's Political Participation at the Local Level (PAR)

Women's political participation at the provincial level refers to the women's behaviors regarding the political decision-making process at local levels; and such behaviors have the potential to affect the policy of the government and political leaders of the government. This participation is divided into three levels: the level of those who are interested in political activities, the level of those who render politicians their support, and the level of those who engage in political activities such as running for political office.

(1) Political Participation at the Spectator Level refers to the women's political interest at the basic level. In this level, they exercise the political rights by casting their votes in political elections as well as voicing their political opinions.

(2) Political Participation at the Transitional Level refers to the women's contact with the state officials or political leaders or representatives; their other political-related activities, i.e., encouraging people to vote or expressing their political views.

(3) Political Participation at the Gladiatorial Level refers to the women's active involvement in politics such as joining political campaigns and running, as candidates, for offices.

The scale ranges from 0 (never) to 10 (always).

3.3.2 Measurement

In this study, the researcher constructed the instruments using interval scales that can measure variables both in nominal and ordinal scales. Measuring assumes equal intervals, that is, one unit of measurement is equal to the other unit of the same measurement. However, the interval scale has no absolute zero, so it is not possible to compare the value of each interval within the same measurement. For example, in the scale from 1 to 10 (1, the lowest; 10, the highest), the value 10 does not indicate that it is twice the value of 5, as it has no absolute zero referential point.

Each scale entails statements or items meant to measure women's participation in the provincial decision-making process. The respondent reacts to the item by stating his or her level of agreement/disagreement, and, 10 reflects the highest level of agreement and 0 reflects the lowest.

In assigning a score to reflect the opinion of the respondent (Agree/Disagree), the respondent is asked to read the item. He or she then chooses the item that best corresponds to his or her opinion.(Figure 3.1)

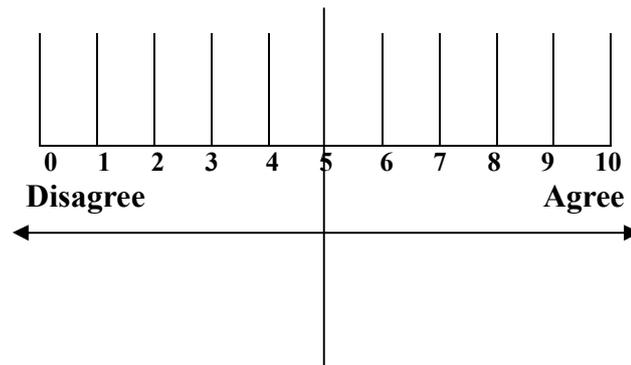


Figure 3.1 Score to Reflect the Opinion of the Respondent

Source: Suchart Prasith-Rathsint and Kanikar Sookaseme, 2003: 157-158.

3.4 Variable and Measurement Criteria

The variables analyzed entail one dependent variable and 14 independent variables. The variables and their measurement criteria are shown in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 Construction of Variable Scoring for Data Analysis

Variables/Analyzed Items	Measurement
One Group of Dependent Variable	
(1) PAR: Women's Participation in Local Political Decision-Making Process	Measurement of PAR = sum of participation in 22 activities
Fourteen Groups of Independent Variables	
(1) ACH1: Access to Information	Measurement of ACH1 = sum of access to information in 12 activities
(2) ACH2: Learning Capacity	Measurement of ACH2 = sum of learning capacity in 6 activities
(3) ACH3: Verbal Ability	Measurement of ACH3 = sum of verbal ability in 5 activities
(4) ACH4: Social Networking	Measurement of ACH4 = sum of social networking in 5 activities
(5) AGE: AGE	Measurement of AGE = number of years old
(6) STA: Marital Status	Measurement of STA: 0 = Married and living with spouse 1 = Single/Divorced/Widowed/Separated
(7) CHI: Number of Children	Measurement of CHI = number of children under six years old,
(8) INC: Income	Measurement of INC = income per month
(9) OCC: Occupation	Measurement of OCC: 0 = Private organization employee and other 1 = Civil servant/Public enterprise
(10) EDU: Education	Measurement of EDU = number of years the women remained studying in a schooling system
(11) BACK: Political Background	Measurement of BACK: 0 = No, 1 = yes
(12) ORG: Relationship within an Organization	Measurement of ORG: 0 = No, 1 = yes
(13) ATT: Civic Attitudes	Measurement of ATT = sum of civic attitudes in 15 activities
(14) OBS: Barriers to Women's Political Participation	Measurement of OBS = sum of barriers to women's political participation in 10 activities

3.5 Testing Reliability of the Measurement

The researcher tested the quality of the research instrument by conducting a pilot study with women with similar characteristics in Ang-Thong Province. Those were women, 30 in number, who were eligible to vote and had at least completed their compulsory education according to the Compulsory Education Act 2002. The pilot test was conducted to determine the instrument's reliability, and the indicator was Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. Considering seven groups of variables, the author found that the measurement of women's educational achievement and their participation in the Thai central region local political decision-making process showed a high level of Alpha at a range of 0.832 and 0.931, as shown in table 3.4.

Table 3.4 Reliability Coefficient of Women's Educational Achievement and Their Participation in the Thai Central Region Local Political Decision-Making Process

Variab les	Items	No. of Variable s	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
PAR	Women's Participation in Local Political Decision-Making Process	22	0.861
ACH1	Access to Information	12	0.838
ACH2	Learning Capacity	6	0.832
ACH3	Verbal Ability	5	0.917
ACH4	Social Networking	5	0.931
ATT	Civic Attitudes	15	0.854
OBS	Barriers to Women's Political Participation	10	0.907

3.6 Primary Characteristics of the Sample

The sample of this research included: ordinary women; the total number was 395, and women holding political offices and community leaders; the total number was 44. The results of the data analysis were as follow:

3.6.1 Demographic Data

The average age of the sample was 31 years; the youngest was 19 years old; the oldest was 67, and 45.1 percent were between 26-35 years old, 57.2 percent of them were single. Among those who were married, the average number of children per family was 1. The highest number of children was four per family. The women surveyed had the least number of children aged below six years old. Only two women reported that they had children below six years old. Their average income per month was 8466.13 baht; the lowest income found was zero per month, and the highest income per month was as high as 60,000 baht. Employees of private organizations comprised 85.6 percent. Regarding education, 38.5 percent completed upper secondary school/vocational education; on average, they spent 13.36 years in formal education schooling. The lowest educational level was Mattayom Suksa 3 (grade 9); the highest level was the master's degree level. They, on average, have lived in the same area for 24 years; the shortest was less than a year, and the longest was 67 years. Very few had political background (10.9 percent) and only 16.5 percent of them were members of organizations.

The average age of the women who were local politicians and community leaders was 37 years old; the youngest was 21; the oldest was 62 years old, and 43.1 percent of them were between 26-35 years old. The number of the single women was equal to the number of the married women who stayed with their spouses, that is, 47.7 percent. For married women, the average number of children was 1; the maximum number of children was 3, and within this category, the number of women with children aged lower than 6 years old was very low. Their monthly income, on average, was 2800 baht; the highest income per month was 80,000 baht. Merchants and business owners comprised 77.2 percent said, while. 68.23 percent held a bachelor's degree, and on average, they spent 14.95 years in a formal schooling

system. The lowest level of education was lower secondary school; the highest was the Master's degree level. On average, they lived in the same area for 31 years; the longest was 62 years, and the shortest stay was 3 years. Those with political backgrounds comprised 34.1 percent, and 100.0 percent of them were members of an organization.

When comparing the characteristics of ordinary women with those of local politicians and community leaders, it was found that women in the latter group were, on average, six years older than women in the former group, which was in line with a study conducted by Robert (2003: 345) reporting that older citizens were more politically active than the younger citizens, the reason being that those older citizens had more life experience than the younger ones; they also had higher stakes in politics than the younger ones. In terms of income, it was found that the women in the group of local politicians and community leaders earned, on average, 11,000 Baht more than the ordinary women per month. This was due to the fact that most of women in the group of politicians and local community leaders owned businesses, while, ordinary women were employees of private organizations.

In terms of education, the difference between the two groups of women was not difference; women who were local politicians and community leaders had a slightly higher level of education than ordinary women. It is noted that both groups of women, local politicians and community leaders and ordinary women resided in the same area for a long time, 24 years and 31 years, respectively. Some of them had lived in the same community since they were born. In terms of their political background, determined by considering whether or not any of their family members had held political office or were holding office, it was found that very few ordinary women had political backgrounds. Also, few ordinary women were members of any organization. Those women who used to be members of an organization or had a position in a local group or organization were committee members of various groups within the community/village and were members of the volunteer group within their own community/village. It is noted that very few ordinary women were members of their local committees, as most of them gave a higher priority to work or occupation than other political activities. This may explain why small numbers of them had joined their local committees. Women who were members of local groups were

members of the following groups/committees: the village fund, the funeral group, the housewives club, the farm cooperative, the volunteer group, the political party, and the “Palang Paendin” Coordinators. (Table 3.5)

Table 3.5 Descriptive Statistics of the Sample Group

Characteristics	Percentage	
	Ordinary Thai Citizens (N = 395)	Local Politicians and Community Leaders (N = 44)
Age (AGE)		
19-25 years	28.1	11.4
26-35 years	45.1	43.1
36-45 years	21.0	16.0
More than 45 years	5.8	29.5
Ordinary Thai Citizens	Mean = 31.21 S.D. = 8.87 MIN = 19 MAX = 67	
Local Politicians and Community Leaders	Mean = 37.84 S.D. = 12.74 MIN = 21 MAX = 62	
Marital Status (STA)		
Single/Divorced/Widowed/Separated	57.2	52.3
Married and living with spouse	42.8	47.7
Number of Children younger than 6 years old CHI)		
None	83.5	90.9
1	15.7	6.8
2	0.8	2.3
Ordinary Thai Citizens	Mean = 0.17 S.D. = 0.40 MIN = 0 MAX = 2	
Local Politicians and Community Leaders	Mean = 0.11 S.D. = 0.39 MIN = 0 MAX = 2	
Income (INC)		
None	14.9	-
Less than 5,000 baht	18.5	-
5,001-10,000 baht	12.3	9.1
More than 10,000 baht	24.3	90.9
Ordinary Thai citizens	Mean = 8,466.13 S.D. = 6,998.88 MIN = 0 MAX = 60,000	
Local Politicians and Community Leaders	Mean = 20,584.55 S.D. = 20,135.60 MIN = 0 MAX = 80,000	
Occupation (OCC)		
Civil servant/Public enterprise	14.4	4.6
Private organization employee and other	85.6	95.4

Table 3.5 (Continued)

Characteristics	Percentage	
	Ordinary Thai Citizens (N = 395)	Local Politicians and Community Leaders (N = 44)
Education (EDU)		
Secondary school	12.2	9.1
High school/Vocational certificate	38.5	11.4
Under graduate/Diploma	12.9	4.5
Graduate and higher	36.4	75.0
Ordinary Thai citizens	Mean = 13.36 S.D. = 2.39 MIN = 9 MAX = 18	
Local Politicians and Community Leaders	Mean = 14.95 S.D. = 2.40 MIN = 9 MAX = 18	
Political Background (BACK)		
Have	10.9	34.1
None	89.1	65.9
Relationship within an Organizations (ORG)		
Have	16.5	100.0
None	83.5	0.0

3.6.2 Women's Educational Achievement: Access to Information (ACH1)

The opinion of the ordinary women with regard to the effect of educational attainment on their ability to access the required information was determined from the sets of questions: the follow-up of political matters from the media within the past six months and their daily consumption of political news or updates from the media. It was found that the highest mean was the mean of their follow-up of political news from the media within the past six months ($M=7.58$), followed by their follow-up of political news from printed materials, from members of the family, neighbors, and co-workers. The lowest mean was the mean of their access to political information from the Internet, online media, and 1171 Election Hotline ($M=2.51$). With regard to the women's daily update of political news, it was found that they mostly watched TV as a means to keep themselves updated on political matters, the mean of which was as high as 7.45, followed by hourly updates from TV and the news from newspaper. The lowest mean was the consumption of news from Radio Thailand, with the mean as low as 4.35.

Regarding the opinion of the group of women who were politicians and community leaders concerning the effect of their educational attainment on their ability to have access to required information, it was found that the highest mean was their follow-up of political news/updates from radio and TV (M=7.55), followed by their follow-up of political news from print media, from members of the family, neighbors, and co-workers. The lowest mean was the mean of their political information access from community leaders such as the head of the village, the head of the village group, and local politicians (M=3.07). For their daily media consumption of political news, it was found that they mostly watched TV as a means to keep themselves updated on political matters, the mean of which was as high as 7.82, followed by the hourly updates from TV and the news from newspaper. The lowest mean was the mean of their consumption of news from Radio Thailand, with the mean as low as 4.35, and the consumption of news from political newspapers such as Matichon, Siamrath, Thaipost, etc, the mean of which was as low as 5.17.

In sum, it was found that the information access of women of both groups, the ordinary and politicians and community leaders shared more or less similar patterns, in particular, their follow-up of political news from radio and TV. It was noted that women who were local politicians and community leaders had higher mean than ordinary women in all aspects, as they as politicians had greater roles in managing administrative affairs of their own community, empowering them to make political decisions. (Table 3.6)

Table 3.6 Means, Standard Deviations, Maximum, and Minimum Variables
for Analyzing Access to Information

variables	Ordinary	Thai	Local Politicians	
	Citizens (N = 395)		and Community Leaders (N = 44)	
	Means	S.D.	Means	S.D.
In the past six months, how were you updated on politics via the following media:				
(1) Radio or Television	7.58	1.97	7.55	2.25
(2) Printed materials	6.29	2.33	6.53	2.56
(3) Internet or Election Hotline 1171	2.55	3.03	3.25	3.16
(4) Family members, Neighbors, Co-workers	4.75	2.50	5.68	2.90
(5) Community leaders e.g. Village Head, Leader of the village group, local politicians	2.86	2.71	3.07	2.82
(6) Information provided by village or community such as notices or village loudspeakers	4.71	2.87	4.30	3.00
On a daily basis, how did you listen to, watch, or read the following media on political issues				
2.1 Hourly news update from radios	4.79	2.81	5.50	3.34
2.2 News from Radio Thailand	4.35	2.78	5.27	3.47
2.3 News and updates from general newspapers	5.74	2.41	5.95	2.57
2.4 News and updates from political newspapers such as Matichon, Siamrat, or Thai Post, etc	4.59	2.87	5.27	2.86
2.5 Hourly news update from TV	6.68	2.37	6.91	2.87
2.6 Daily news from TV	7.45	2.19	7.81	2.62

3.6.3 Women's Educational Achievement: Learning Capacity (ACH2)

Ordinary women opined that educational achievement helped enhance their learning capacity, enabling them to, first of all, utilize innovations and new technology (M=7.63), followed by their ability to make informed and sound decision in an election and the choice to have reliable information for making political decisions. The lowest mean was the mean reflecting their belief that their educational attainment led them to improve their learning capacity, and such capacity would

increase their opportunities to enter training programs from various organizations; the mean was as low as 5.33.

Women under the category of local politicians and community leaders opined that the learning capacity resulting from their educational attainment could result in their ability to utilize innovations and new technologies. The mean of this belief was the highest (M=7.82), followed by the two beliefs: that it would result in their making better political decisions in elections and that it would enable them to choose to consume reliable information for better decision-making. The lowest mean was the belief that the learning capacity would make them political experts (M=6.36).

The analysis of the impacts of women's learning capacity revealed that it had similar patterns for both groups of women: ordinary women and local politicians and community leaders. However, women who were local politicians and community leaders had higher means than ordinary women in every aspect. In particular, it was found that they had utilized their learning capacity to enhance their ability to make use of innovative and new technologies. This was in accordance with the study conducted by Carbonaro (1999: 16), reporting that education was a key to women's political engagement, enhancing their access to new technologies. (Table 3.7)

Table 3.7 Means, Standard Deviations, Maximum, and Minimum Variables for Analyzing Learning Capacity

variables	Ordinary Thai Citizens (N = 395)		Local Politicians and Community Leaders (N = 44)	
	Means	S.D.	Means	S.D.
Education can develop skills and abilities in the following aspects:				
(1) Understanding of innovations and new technologies	7.63	2.08	7.82	2.03
(2) Ability of choose good political representatives	7.51	2.10	7.57	2.18
(3) Ability to understand complex political issues and subtleties	6.39	2.31	6.80	2.53
(4) Ability to choose well-informed and reliable information which is useful for decision-making	7.26	1.97	7.45	2.42
(5) Ability to become a well-informed citizen on political issues and problems	7.59	2.35	6.36	2.75
(6) Greater opportunities to access more education, training/workshops	5.33	1.27	6.53	2.92

3.6.4 Women's Educational Achievement: Verbal Ability (ACH3)

For the opinion of the ordinary women with regard to the effect of educational attainment on their verbal ability, it was found that such ability helped them to better improve their political speech; the mean as high as 5.60, followed by the conviction that their verbal ability gained from education enabled them to give political speeches with broader perspectives and improved their expertise and skills in political speech making. This was followed by the opinion that their verbal ability helped them to improve their persuasive political speeches. The lowest mean was the mean reflecting their opinion on the effect of their verbal ability on their participation in political talk and discussions (M =4.65).

The opinion of the group of women who were politicians and community leaders, with regard to the effect of their educational attainment on their verbal ability, it was found to be the most salient when it comes to the aspect of the effect it has on

their ability to give a persuasive speech (M=6.23), followed by the conviction that their verbal ability gained from education enabled them to give political speeches with broader perspectives and improved their expertise and skills in political speech. The lowest mean was: their participation in political talk and discussions (M =4.68).

In sum, it was found that both groups: the ordinary women and politician and community leaders had similar opinions with regard to their belief in the effect on their verbal ability and their political participation. Overall, it was noted that the women who were local politicians and community leaders had higher means than the ordinary women in all aspects. In particular, the higher means was found in their ability to give persuasive speeches necessary in political campaigns, community engagement, and communication with the community. Their verbal ability helps build up good rapport with the community members, essential for their political participation at the decision-making level. (Table 3.8)

Table 3.8 Means, Standard Deviations, Maximum, and Minimum Variables for Analyzing Verbal Ability

variables	Ordinary Thai Citizens (N = 395)		Local Politicians and Community Leaders (N = 44)	
	Means	S.D.	Means	S.D.
Education has helped develop rhetorical ability in the following aspects:				
(1) Ability to give a persuasive political speech	5.60	2.57	6.23	2.51
(2) Expertise and advanced skills in making political speeches	5.31	2.63	5.82	2.63
(3) Greater opportunities to participate in political debates	4.65	2.78	4.75	3.13
(4) Feeling confident to discuss or give a political speech	4.91	2.83	5.30	2.99
(5) Broader information and perspectives on politics	5.52	2.58	5.84	3.13

3.6.5 Women's Educational Achievement: Social Networking (ACH4)

For most ordinary women in this study, having a social network would enable them to learn from each other and exchange information among themselves. The highest mean was found to be 5.93. A large number of them viewed that social networks provided them information about individuals and current events and updates with their own community; social networks provided them information about activities, problems, and problem solving. The lowest mean was that reflecting the women's perception of social networks as a means to support each other for their participation in politics ($M = 5.18$).

Women who were local politicians and community leaders opined that their social networks resulting from their educational attainment enabled them to have access to information on individuals and current events within the community. The mean of this category was the highest ($M=6.43$), followed by their belief that their social networks enabled them to exchange information among themselves. The lowest mean was that of their belief that their social networks would support them to actively engage in the political decision-making process ($M=5.89$).

The result of the analysis of the samples' opinion on the impacts of their social networks revealed that the ordinary women believed their social networks enabled them to exchange and share information among themselves, while women who were local politicians and community leaders opined that such the social networks would help them to learn about the individual persons and keep themselves updates on political events, a means to support their participation in the political decision-making process. Indeed, the women who hold political offices need to have a wide array of social networks. (Table 3.9)

Table 3.9 Means, Standard Deviations, Maximum, and Minimum Variables
for Analyzing Social Networking

variables	Ordinary Thai Citizens (N = 395)		Local Politicians and Community Leaders (N = 44)	
	Means	S.D.	Means	S.D.
Education has helped develop social networks in the following aspects:				
(1) Accessing information about people and current events in the community	5.91	2.45	6.43	2.73
(2) Working as a group to solve problems	5.55	2.60	5.93	2.77
(3) Learning from each other and exchanging information with each other	5.93	2.40	6.41	2.95
(4) Increasing contacts in participation in the political-decision-making process	5.24	2.64	5.91	3.10
(5) Supporting my engagement in the political decision-making process	5.18	2.61	5.89	2.98

3.6.6 Civic Attitude (ATT)

A civic attitude is a psychosocial construct, exhibiting the attitude of women on their political participation. In this research this construct is measured from three factors: 1) the women's citizenship behavior, 2) their political efficacy, and 3) their trust in politics. It was found that among the ordinary women, with regard to their citizenship behavior, voting as a means to protect their right and as a duty was cited as the most important aspect; the mean was the highest, as high as 8.90, followed by the statement that going to vote in an election is an obligation for every citizen and all citizens need to pay attention to politics as it involves everybody. The lowest mean in this category was found to be the item stating that not going to vote will result in a great damage (M=7.12).

Among the women holding political offices and community leaders, with regard to their citizenship behavior, their attitude under this category was that voting as a means to exercise and protect one's right was rated the highest (M=9.02), followed by the statements that going to vote in an election is an obligation for every

Thai citizen and all citizens need to pay attention to politics as it involves all of them. The lowest mean in this category was found to be the item stating that not going to vote will result in a great damage (M=7.59).

As far as their civic attitude under the category of political efficacy is concerned, the ordinary women opined that voting would make a difference in local politics, and the mean was the highest, as high as 7.47, followed by their conviction that various means exist for citizens to legally monitor their local political administration and their belief local politicians and community leaders had a slightly higher level of education than ordinary women; they could do as well as any other politicians. The lowest mean was found to be the statement that voting is equal to an exercise of one's right toward the administration of the state (M=3.93).

Among female politicians and community leaders, the highest mean was that of the statement that voting is equal to an exercise of one's right toward the administration of the state (M=8.02), followed by their conviction that voting could affect the administration of the local political administration and that various means exists for citizens to legally monitor their local political administration. The lowest mean was found to be the statement, I have adequate ability to help solve complex political problems (M=4.77).

As far as their civic attitude with respect to political trust was concerned, ordinary women opined that those who have entered politics did so because they wanted to help make their local community a better place. The mean in this aspect was the highest (M=6.28), followed by the belief that the present policy on the administration of the local community was effective and appropriate and the decisions made by the politicians were for the benefits of the people and the country. The lowest mean was found with reference to the item stating that local politicians would keep their election promises (M=4.50). The opinion of the women holding political offices and were community leaders and the ordinary women on political trust was similar. The highest mean was found under the item stating that those who have entered politics do so for the progress and development of the society (M=5.82), followed by the belief that the present local administrative policy is the right one and the belief that any decision made by politicians was for the highest benefit of the people and the country. The lowest mean reflects the samples' doubt of the

trustworthiness of the local politicians, that is, the local politicians would keep their election promises ($M=4.02$). (Table 3.10)

Table 3.10 Means, Standard Deviations, Maximum, and Minimum Variables for Analyzing Civic Attitudes

variables	Ordinary Thai Citizens (N = 395)		Local Politicians and Community Leaders (N = 44)	
	Mean s	S.D.	Means	S.D.
Citizenship Behavior				
(1) Everybody should pay attention to politics as it involves them.	8.47	1.87	8.75	1.67
(2) Casting one's vote is to protect one's right as well as to perform one's important civic duty.	8.90	1.66	9.02	2.05
(3) It's my duty to follow up and keep an eye on the behavior civil servants and local politicians.	7.04	2.41	7.95	1.71
(4) Voting is a civic duty for everybody, which can't be forced.	8.72	1.90	8.86	2.21
(5) When there are already a lot of voters, my vote will be obsolete.	7.12	3.54	2.59	3.70
Political Awareness				
(6) Voting affects the behavior of the elected members of my local administrative organizations.	7.47	2.43	7.84	2.18
(7) Voting is one way for me to have my say on the administration of the government.	3.93	2.16	8.02	2.15
(8) If I had a chance to do political work, I could do it as well as any other.	5.48	2.95	5.39	3.11
(9) Several legal ways exist for us to monitor the performance of our local administrative bodies.	6.42	2.40	6.52	2.76
(10) Nowadays, political problems are complex, and I am not capable enough to help solve them.	5.18	2.92	4.77	2.73
Political Trust				
(11) The policy of the government on provincial administration is a good one.	5.57	2.58	5.66	2.40

Table 3.10 (Continued)

variables	Ordinary Thai Citizens (N = 395)		Local Politicians and Community Leaders (N = 44)	
	Mean s	S.D.	Means	S.D.
(12) I believe that those who do political work have done so to help people.	6.28	2.80	5.82	2.84
(13) Any decision made by a politician is based on the highest benefit of the country and the public.	5.65	2.94	5.41	2.72
(14) I trust that my local politicians have performed their duties properly and honestly.	4.88	2.64	4.43	2.50
(15) Local politicians uphold their political promises.	4.50	2.76	4.02	2.65

3.6.7 Barriers to Women's Political Participation (OBS)

As far as ordinary women were concerned, external factors were found to be a greater barrier for them, compared with internal ones. Those external factors were: the lack of support for the women to get involved in politics, which yielded the highest mean (M=6.30), followed by the recognition of the society with respect to women in politics. The lowest mean was found to be the lack of support from fellow women, and the mean was as low as 4.37.

As for internal factors, the women's family obligation was found to be a factor that yielded the highest mean score (M=4.48). In other words, this factor made it difficult for them to work well outside the family, followed by their lack of political experience and their physical limitation, making it not easy for them to engage in political activities. The lowest mean was found to be their low level of self-confidence (M=2.92).

The women holding political offices and the community leaders and the ordinary women shared the same view when it came to their view on the external factors. Both groups agreed that external factors were a greater barrier for them than internal ones. The external factors that hindered their political participation were 1) the inadequacy of support for the political participation of women (M=6.25), followed by 2) the reluctance of society to accept women as politicians and the difference of social networks between men and women. The lowest means was found to be the factor related to the perceived roles between the two genders, that is, the

belief that makes women less credible when it comes to political matters (M=4.89). The internal factors that obstructed women from their political participation were the following: family obligations that hindered their political participation (M=4.41), followed by the physical limitation of women that does not support their new role and the women's perceived political efficacy. The lowest internal factor was found to be the women's lack of self-confidence, the mean of which was as low as 3.25. (Table 3.11)

Table 3.11 Means, Standard Deviations, Maximum, and Minimum Variables for Analyzing Barriers to Women's Political Participation

variables	Ordinary Thai Citizens (N = 395)		Local Politicians and Community Leaders (N = 44)	
	Mean s	S.D. .	Means	S.D.
External Factors				
(1) Beliefs about gender roles make women's work less credible.	4.99	3.00	4.89	3.02
(2) Women often lack support from other women.	4.37	3.06	5.30	3.09
(3) Men's networks exclude women.	5.51	2.72	7.75	2.58
(4) Compared to men, women often receive less recognition for their contribution to the society.	6.14	2.63	6.11	2.77
(5) The government has done well enough to support women's participation in the political decision-making process.	6.30	2.39	6.25	2.45
Internal Factors				
(6) Woman lack self-confidence.	2.92	2.92	3.25	2.81
(7) Women think they lack political skills.	2.98	2.89	3.39	3.00
(8) Women lack political knowledge and experience.	3.63	3.05	3.37	2.99
(9) Women's physiques do not allow them to fully perform their duties or tasks.	3.55	2.85	3.45	3.21
(10) Family burdens and responsibilities make it difficult for women to work outside their homes.	4.48	2.87	4.41	2.93

3.6.8 Women's Participation in Local Political Decision-Making Process

(PAR)

In this study on women's political participation, one question was asked to find out about their participation in many political-related activities. The score of 10 reflects the highest level of participation; the score of 0 is the lowest. The researcher checked the validity and reliability of the data, and only effective items were selected to measure this factor.

Women's participation in the political decision-making process was determined from 22 items, divided into three levels: 1) the level of the political spectators, 2) the level of the political supporters, and 3) the level of the gladiator activities. As far as the level of political spectators was concerned, the ordinary women said that they always went to vote in an election. The mean in this category was found to be as high as 7.67, followed by their conversations or discussions of political matters and their exchange of political perspectives with other members of their families. The lowest mean under this aspect was found to be their active encouragement of other community members to solve problems (M=3.10). Among local politicians and community leaders, the highest mean of their opinion was found to be their participation in an election (M=9.13), followed by their follow-up of political update and current political affairs and their exchange of political perspectives with their co-workers. The lowest mean was that of their active encouragement of other community members to solve problems (M = 4.80).

For the level of political supporters, ordinary women said they encouraged other people to go to vote in an election; the mean was the highest (M=5.39), followed by their persuasion of other people not to sell or buy votes and their discussions with their acquaintances on the negative consequences of not going to vote. The lowest mean was found to be on the aspect of their contact with politicians or leaders for the solving of community problems (M=1.09). The women holding political offices and those of the community leaders opined that they regularly made official contact with local administrative bodies (M=8.46), followed by their persuasion of others to vote and their contact with politicians to help solve their community problems. The lowest means was found to be their contact with the media to express their political views (M=4.09).

As for the ordinary women's opinion regarding gladiatorial activities, their most salient opinion was the support they gave to their favorite politicians or political groups (M=1.60), followed by their taking part in activities related to the monitoring and evaluation process of the local administrative bodies and contributing their time in political campaigns. The lowest mean was found to be their running for political offices (M=0.99). For the women holding political offices and those of the community leaders, their opinion regarding the gladiatorial activities were as follow. The highest mean was found to be their running for political offices (M=8.45), followed by their monitoring and following up of their local administrative bodies and their participation in political rallies or protests. The lowest mean was found to be their support for politicians or political groups (M=1.43). (Table 3.12)

Table 3.12 Means, Standard Deviations, Maximum, and Minimum of Variables for Analyzing Women's Participation in Local Political Decision-Making Process

variables	Ordinary Thai Citizens (N = 395)		Local Politicians and Community Leaders (N = 44)	
	Means	S.D.	Means	S.D.
Spectator Activities				
(1) I almost always follow what is on or the administrative matters of my local organizations.	5.18	2.37	6.25	2.31
(2) I have conversed or discussed political issues, local or national.	4.74	2.53	5.76	3.01
(3) I have exchanged my opinion on local political issues, with other members of my family.	4.67	2.48	5.70	2.63
(4) I have conversed or discussed political issues, local or national, with other people.	4.57	2.17	5.77	2.76
(5) I share a part in stimulating community members to solve problems in the community.	3.10	2.77	4.80	2.87
(6) I never miss my local elections.	7.67	4.23	9.13	2.68

Table 3.12 (Continued)

variables	Ordinary Thai Citizens (N = 395)		Local Politicians and Community Leaders (N = 44)	
	Means	S.D.	Means	S.D.
Transitional Activities				
(7) I have written a letter or make a contact with other media to inquire about political issue..	1.25	2.05	4.09	3.44
(7) I have contacted my local admin organizations on matters.	2.84	3.06	8.46	2.72
(8) I made a contact with a government officer.	1.90	2.62	5.25	2.58
(10) I made a contact with one of the political leaders/representatives.	1.09	2.11	6.48	2.63
(11) I have persuaded other people to see the significance of local politics and realize the importance of voting.	5.39	3.02	6.52	3.41
(12) I have persuaded the people I know to vote for a local politician that I have been supporting.	4.15	3.07	5.48	3.55
(13) I have urged other people not to sell their votes.	4.83	3.45	5.73	3.12
(14) I have talked to other people about the negative consequences of not voting in the local election.	4.67	3.14	5.11	3.22
(15) I have participate in a meeting on my local management of the public services.	2.44	2.93	5.05	2.94
(16) I have participate in a village-level meeting, forum or community meeting.	2.10	2.81	5.66	2.99
(17) I used to take part in a project planning or a community policy on public matters.	2.00	2.77	5.89	2.63
Gladiatorial Activities				
(18) I have involved in a follow-up investigation assessing members of some local administrative bodies.	1.43	2.37	5.18	3.16
(19) I have supported or helped a local politician or a political group that I like.	1.60	2.80	1.43	2.56
(20) I used to support a candidate campaigning for an election or participate.	1.12	2.32	2.10	2.95
(21) I have participated in a political rally.	1.09	3.12	2.84	2.47
(22) I have run for a local political office.	0.99	2.99	8.45	2.31

3.7 Methods of Data Analysis

3.7.1 Analysis of Quantitative Data

1) Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the details of the variables, and the characteristics of the samples. Three kinds of statistical techniques were used: (1) Percentage, (2) Mean, and (3) Standard deviation.

2) Analysis statistics

(1) One-way ANOVA was used to find the relationship between the samples' demographic data (including the socio-economic data) and their participation in local political decision-making process.

(2) Hierarchical regression analysis was employed to investigate the effect of each group of independent variables on the women's political; participation. This additional variable was included in the analysis to determine its effects. This analysis was under the assumptions that (1) the relation between the independent and dependent variables was a linear relationship, (2) the independent variables were free from or had insignificant relationship with one another (Multicollinearity problem), and (3) the independent variables must not significantly be able to vary according to the effects of the dependent variables.

(3) Path analysis was used to analyze the direct and indirect effects of the independent variables on the women's participation in the political decision-making process.

3.7.2 Analysis of Qualitative Data

The qualitative data was obtained from the interviews of the samples who were local politicians and community leaders. Content analysis was employed to analyze their different opinions. Their opinions were then categorized and presented.

CHAPTER 4

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WOMEN'S PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS AND THEIR PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL POLITICAL DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

This chapter presents the analysis result of the relationship between personal characteristics and women's participation in local political decision-making process. The study is from 395 women. Thai citizens in Chantaburi and Samutprakarn Provinces. Eight personal characteristic variables that were of significance include three demographic variables of age, martial status and number of children less than 6 years old child, two economical characteristic variables, income and occupation, and three social characteristic variables, education, political background and organization involvement. Regarding dependent variables the participation in the local political decision-making process can be classified into three levels: political observer participation, political supporter participation, and political competitor participation. ANOVA was used to analyze the relationship between women's personal characteristics and participation in the local political decision-making process at each level of participation.

4.1 The Relationship between Women's Personal Characteristics and Political Participation at the Political Observer Level

The study analyzed how women's characteristics concern the political participation at the political observer level. This basic level is about political behavior, paying attention to news and political activities, and discussing and exchanging ideas about politics, and how much they participate in the election. (Table 4.1)

Table 4.1 The Relationship between Women's Personal Characteristics and Political Participation at the Political Observer Level

Characteristics	N	Means	S.D.	F test
Age (AGE)				F = 3.044
19-25 years	111	28.63	11.43	Sig = 0.029
26-35 years	178	30.33	11.73	
36-45 years	83	29.02	12.15	
More than 45 years	23	36.39	10.56	
Total	395	29.93	11.76	
Marital Status (STA)				F = 0.221
Single/Divorced/Widowed/Separated	226	30.17	11.53	Sig = 0.638
Married and living with the spouse	169	29.61	12.10	
Total	395	29.93	11.76	
Number of Children younger than 6 years old (CHI)				F = 0.646
None	330	30.21	11.71	Sig = 0.525
1	62	28.29	11.04	
2	3	31.33	14.50	
Total	395	29.93	11.76	
Income (INC)				F = 0.417
None	59	29.61	10.77	Sig = 0.741
Less than 5,000 baht	73	30.45	12.60	
5,001-10,000 baht	167	29.29	12.01	
More than 10,000 baht	96	30.84	11.36	
Total	395	29.93	11.76	
Occupation (OCC)				F = 14.921
Civil servant/Public enterprise	57	35.40	11.33	Sig = 0.000
Private organization employee and other	338	29.01	11.60	
Total	395	29.93	11.76	
Education (EDU)				F = 0.666
Secondary school	48	29.10	13.26	Sig = 0.573
High school/Vocational certificate	152	29.12	11.16	
Undergraduate/Diploma	51	30.45	10.27	
Graduate and higher	144	30.88	12.38	
Total	395	29.93	11.76	

Table 4.1 (Continued)

Characteristics	N	Means	S.D.	F test
Political Background (BACK)				F = 4.995
Have	43	33.70	10.95	Sig = 0.026
None	252	29.47	11.79	
Total	395	29.93	11.76	
Relationship within an Organizations (ORG)				
Have	65	31.80	10.61	F = 1.967
None	330	29.56	11.96	Sig = 0.162
Total	395	29.93	11.76	

The analysis result found that three personal characteristic variables from a total of eight were statistically significant to political participation in political observer level: demographic variables, i.e., age, economical variable, i.e., occupation and social variables, i.e., political background.

Considering women's age as a variable, the average for every two women found that women older than 46 years participate in politics more than 19 – 25 year old women. On average, the politic participation score for older than 46 women was 36.39 points from a full score 60 points, while the average score of women 19 – 25 was 28.63 points. From the study, age is apparently related to the participation in political decision-making in all forms equally. Political participation consistently increases according to higher ages until the middle age only then gradually decreases according to higher age (Finkel, 2000: 18). Robert's study (Robert, 2003: 345) also supports that age is a demographic variable that affects participation in the political decision-making process. Older women are more enthusiastic in politics than younger because of more experience and greater gain from society.

Regarding occupation variables, the average score of women in government official/state enterprise was 35.40 points from a full score 60 points. Company employee, freelance and others received an average score at 29.01 points from 60. Therefore, the study found that women's occupation directly affects their political participation (Finkel, 2000: 43), especially working in a press office provides more motive, value and positive behavior in a democratic system (Paweena Inwasa, 2001: 16).

Chumpol Nimpanich's study (Chumpol Nimpanich, 1999: 21) found that a professional behaves in a variety of political activities and tends to be keen to participate in politics more than other people in other careers. At present, Thai law sets an election as a person's role. The person who does not participate in the election without proper notification will be deprived of the right as an official legislation.

Regarding political background variables, the average score of political participation for women with a political background was 33.70 points from 60 points, whereas the average score for women with no political background women was 24.97 points. Families who have attended or who have been political representatives tend to participate more than women with no political background (Cassel and Lo, 1997: 325-327)

4.2 The Relationship between Women's Personal Characteristics and Political Participation at the Political Supporter Level

The study investigated the extent to which connections with media, local administrative government, and government officials or political leaders had for problem solving or political opinions including persuading others to appreciate and participate in an election, electing their own supportive politicians or participating in plans, projects, and community activity meetings. (Table 4.2)

The analysis result found that only one personal characteristic variable from a total of eight variables related to the political participation at the political supporter level, i.e., political background, a social characteristic variable. The average score of regarding women with political background was 38.60 points from a full score 110 points while no political background average score was 31.91 points from 110 points. The study shows that having a political background encourages women to participate in politics. Most women politicians have close ties to politicians or come from a family of politicians (Panprapa Intaravittayanan, 1998: 11). Political intimation and familiarity create a positive relationship between general people and politicians. According to Kirkpatrick, the referred relationship enhances the people to be ready for new plans for political disciplinary training (Kirkpatrick, 1979: 188-290).

Table 4.2 The Relationship between Women's Personal Characteristics and Political Participation at the Political Supporter Level

Characteristics	N	Means	S.D.	F test
Age (AGE)				F = 0.986
19-25 years	111	29.96	20.28	Sig = 0.399
26-35 years	178	33.62	18.67	
36-45 years	83	33.63	20.24	
More than 45 years	23	34.70	22.65	
Total	395	32.65	19.71	
Marital Status (STA)				F = 0.022
Single/Divorced/Widowed/Separated	226	32.53	19.58	Sig = 0.883
Married and living with the spouse	169	19.84	19.53	
Total	395	32.65	19.71	
Number of Children younger than 6 years old (CHI)				F = 0.732
None	330	33.17	19.74	Sig = 0.482
1	62	29.87	19.19	
2	3	33.33	29.30	
Total	395	32.65	19.71	
Income (INC)				F = 0.199
None	59	32.24	20.64	Sig = 0.897
Less than 5,000 baht	73	32.10	19.59	
5,001-10,000 baht	167	32.11	21.19	
More than 10,000 baht	96	33.04	16.50	
Total	395	32.65	19.71	
Occupation (OCC)				F = 0.001
Civil servant/Public enterprise	57	32.74	18.78	Sig = 0.972
Private organization employee and other	338	32.64	19.88	
Total	395	32.65	19.71	
Education (EDU)				F = 2.064
Secondary school	48	38.96	24.39	Sig = 0.105
High school/Vocational certificate	152	32.21	19.23	
Undergraduate/Diploma	51	32.98	20.51	
Graduate and higher	144	30.90	17.90	
Total	395	32.65	19.71	

Table 4.2 (Continued)

Characteristics	N	Means	S.D.	F test
Political Background (BACK)				F = 4.440
Have	43	38.60	22.04	Sig = 0.036
None	252	31.91	19.31	
Total	395	32.65	19.71	
Relationship within an Organizations (ORG)				
Have	65	33.72	19.70	F = 0.229
None	330	32.44	19.73	Sig = 0.663
Total	395	32.65	19.71	

Seven variables of women's personal characteristics, which do not relate to political participation in political supporter level were age, marital status, number of children less than six years old, income, occupation, education and organization involvement. Because at the political supporter level, participant have to seriously pay attention to politics and attend a variety of political activities, not only the election; therefore, only a few women citizens participate at the political supporter level.

4.3 The Relationship between Women's Personal Characteristics and Political Participation at the Political Competitor Level

The political competitor level concerns how much or how little cooperating, pursuing and inspecting the administration of the local organization, supporting politicians or political groups, assisting campaigns for their own supportive candidate, attending to protest political administrations and being a candidate for local political election. (Table 4.3)

Table 4.3 The Relationship between Women's Personal Characteristics and Political Participation at the Political Competitor Level

Characteristics	N	Means	S.D.	F test
Age (AGE)				F = 0.253
19-25 years	111	6.15	10.23	Sig = 0.859
26-35 years	178	5.88	11.02	
36-45 years	83	7.17	12.81	
More than 45 years	23	5.91	13.75	
Total	395	6.23	11.35	
Marital Status (STA)				F = 0.025
Single/Divorced/Widowed/Separated	226	6.15	10.99	Sig = 0.867
Married and living with the spouse	169	6.33	11.84	
Total	395	6.22	11.35	
Number of Children younger than 6 years old (CHI)				F = 1.333
None	330	6.45	11.48	Sig = 0.265
1	62	4.69	9.92	
2	3	14.00	22.54	
Total	395	6.23	11.35	
Income (INC)				F = 1.299
None	59	6.92	11.67	Sig = 0.274
Less than 5,000 baht	73	6.25	10.56	
5,001-10,000 baht	167	7.08	12.86	
More than 10,000 baht	96	4.31	8.50	
Total	395	6.25	11.35	
Occupation (OCC)				F = 0.871
Civil servant/Public enterprise	57	4.93	11.01	Sig = 0.351
Private organization employee and other	338	6.45	11.41	
Total	395	6.23	11.35	
Education (EDU)				F = 1.533
Secondary school	48	8.83	14.41	Sig = 0.206
High school/Vocational certificate	152	6.74	11.16	
Undergraduate/Diploma	51	5.65	9.88	
Graduate and higher	144	5.03	10.80	
Total	395	6.23	11.35	

Table 4.3 (Continued)

Characteristics	N	Means	S.D.	F test
Political Background (BACK)				F = 0.024
Have	43	5.97	4.49	Sig = 0.878
None	252	6.26	11.57	
Total	395	6.23	11.35	
Relationship within an Organizations (ORG)				
Have	65	8.35	14.23	F = 0.272
None	330	5.81	10.67	Sig = 0.099
Total	395	6.23	11.35	

The analysis found that no personal characteristic variable from the eight variables related to political participation at the political competitor level because this level needs a high and intense level of participation. The obvious behavior shows which political side they want to attend. Only a very few women participate at this level according to the following details.

Women aged 36-45 years old at the political competitor level had the highest participation and received the highest average score, 5.88 points from a full score 50 points and women older than 46 years old received the lowest average score, that is, 5.91 points. Regarding marital status, the average score for women married, for women living together and for single, widowed, divorced, and separated women are similar, that is, 6.33 and 6.15, respectively. Regarding political participation and women with the number of children lower than six years old, women with two children received the highest average score, 14.00, and women with only one child lower than six years received the lowest average score, 4.69.

Economical characteristics of income and occupation formed a full score of 50 points, and women who earned 5,001-10,000 baht per month received the highest average score of 7.08, higher than women who earned 10,000 baht who received the lowest average score, 4.31. The average score of women who had careers as company employees, freelance and others was 6.45, while women who worked as government officials and in state enterprises received 4.93 points.

Regarding social characteristics in education, political background and organization involvement, from a full score 50 points, women with a secondary school education level received the highest average score, 8.83 points, while women who earned a Master's degree received the lowest average score, 5.03 points. At this level, the average score of women with no political background regarding participating in politics compared with women who had political background was 6.26 and 5.97, respectively. The average score of women involved in organizations was higher than women who were not involved in organizations, 8.35 and 5.81, respectively. This obviously shows that women have more opportunity in training while involved in organizations, so they can make decisions more efficiently (Clarke, 2003: 141-151). Women who are involved in organizations, occupy political positions, and have administrative opportunities have higher levels of political participation.

4.4 Conclusion

The relationship between women's personal characteristic variables and their participation in the local political decision-making process can be classified into three levels: political observer level, political supporter level and political competitor level. These three levels can be sorted from low to high level. Most women are at the low level or the political observer level and a few women are at the high level or political competitor level. Personal participation in the political decision-making process initiates from have experience as a political observer. It then gradually increases accumulating experience and political involvement behavior over time, and in different situations and societal types. People who progressively attend political activities enhance their hierarchical participation from low to high levels.

CHAPTER 5

THE RELATION OF WOMEN'S EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AND THEIR PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL POLITICAL DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

This chapter introduces an analysis of the relation between independent variables that affects women's participation in local political decision-making process by dividing the analysis into three parts. The first part analyzes the relation of women's participation in local political decision-making process and how it varies according to different qualities. To analyze the information from women at the public level in Chantaburi and Samutprakarn Pprovinces, a total of 395 people served as the target group. The second part analyzes the relation between independent variables with women's participation in local political decision-making process in the municipality. To analyze the information from women at the public level that live within the municipality, both in Chanthaburi and Samutprakarn Provinces, a total number of 219 people served as the target group. The third part analyzes the relation between independent variables with women's participation in local political decision-making process outside the municipality. To analyze the women at the public level that live outside the municipality both in Chanthaburi and Samutprakarn Provinces, a total of 176 people serve as the sample. Finally, the variables concerning women's educational achievement and their participation in local political decision-making process between women within municipality and outside the municipality was compared.

5.1 The Relation of Women's Educational Achievement and Their Participation in Local Political Decision-Making Process

The relation between the variables of educational achievement and women's participation in local political decision-making process was analyzed using data from the women of public level in Chanthaburi and Samutprakarn Provinces, a total number of 395 people, using Hierarchical regression analysis and path analysis for the rough statement result and the direct and indirect impact that affects women's participation in local political decision-making process.

The results among the variables are congruent with the conceptual framework and theories presented previously at a statistical significance. The researcher tested the hierarchical regression analysis by grouping the variables into four different data sets to be entered into the model which are dependent variables and independent variables of each model using the following equations (5.1) to (5.4):

$$\text{PAR} = a_0 + a_1\text{OBS} \quad \dots(5.1)$$

$$\text{PAR} = b_0 + b_1\text{OBS} + b_2\text{ATT} \quad \dots(5.2)$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{PAR} = & c_0 + c_1\text{OBS} + c_2\text{ATT} + c_3\text{ACH1} + c_4\text{ACH2} + c_5\text{ACH3} \\ & + c_6\text{ACH4} \quad \dots(5.3) \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{PAR} = & d_0 + d_1\text{OBS} + d_2\text{ATT} + d_3\text{ACH1} + d_4\text{ACH2} + d_5\text{ACH3} \\ & + d_6\text{ACH4} + d_7\text{AGE} + d_8\text{STA} + d_9\text{CHI} + d_{10}\text{INC} \\ & + d_{11}\text{OCC} + d_{12}\text{EDU} + d_{13}\text{BACK} + d_{14}\text{ORG} \quad \dots(5.4) \end{aligned}$$

Where

PAR = Women's Participation in Local Political Decision-Making Process

OBS = Barriers to Women's Political Participation

ATT = Civic Attitudes

ACH1 = Access to Information

ACH2 = Learning Capacity

ACH3 = Verbal Ability

ACH4 = Social Networking

AGE	=	Age
STA	=	Marital Status
CHI	=	Number of Children under 6 Years Old,
INC	=	Income per Month
OCC	=	Occupation
EDU	=	Education
BACK	=	Political Background
ORG	=	Relationship within an Organization
a_0, b_0, c_0, d_0	=	Constant
$a_1, b_1, b_2, c_1, \dots, c_6, d_1, \dots, d_{14}$	=	Regression Coefficients

The different analysis groups that affect women's participation in local political decision-making process considers the basic information of independent variables of all four groups of different variables using hierarchical regression analysis with the aim to study the influence of each independent variable at what level and when another set of variables is added. The limit should be the relation between the independent variables and remaining variables in linear relation, multicollinearity and fluctuation of independent and other variables.

5.1.1 Bivariate Correlation among Variables in Analysis

From the basic information of independent variables of all four groups, a total of 14 variables and 1 remaining variable (Table 5.1), it was found that the women at the educational public level had an average age of 31 years, the least age 19 years, and the highest age 67 years. Mostly they were in the status of single, widowed, divorced, or separated, had children below six years of age: a low average of 0.16. The average monthly income of 6,998 baht was determined from women with no income and women with the highest monthly income of 60,000 baht. They comprised private employees, independent occupation and so on, or obtained vocational degree/diploma. A few women had family members elected as political representatives, an average of only 0.31 similar to being a member of an organization, an average of only 0.37.

Regarding women's educational achievement, variables included accessing news, capability in learning, capability in using the language and in the society

network system. Most of the model women group think that women's educational achievement has the capability to access news information the most, second was the capability in learning, followed by having social network and having the capability in using the language.

The women at public level that had the civic attitudes, had an average rate of 99.61 from a total score of 150, the lowest score was 33 and the highest 147. Civic attitudes have an importance influence on participation in the local political decision-making process and if women have a highly positive attitude towards being a citizen it will also affect their participation greater.

The women at public level think that the obstacles that hinder political participation of women are both external and internal obstacles of women themselves, with the ratio of nearly half of the women an average of 44.89 score from a total 100 since they had many different opinions, with the lowest score of 0. Some women see that there are no obstacles at all while those with the highest score of 95 have lots of obstacles.

When considering the relation between independent variables, it was found that each independent variable had no multicollinearity, no co-relation higher than 0.80. It was found that the relation between independent variables and the women's participation in the local political decision-making process had a significance valued from 0.004 to 0.734. The women's educational achievement and the capability of using the language and the educational achievement in social network had the highest score at 0.734, having a significance of 0.01 and educational achievement and the capability of using the language, educational achievement and the ability to access the news information had the lowest significance of 0.004. The obstacles which hindered the participation of women in politics with the number of children below 6 years that have not started schooling had the least significance at -0.004.

When considering the relation between the independent variables and other variable, it was found that 7 out of 14 independent variables held significance to the women's participation in local political decision-making process. They include: the obstacles that hindered the participation of women in the politics, the civic attitudes, the educational achievement of women in reaching the news information, the educational achievement in the ability of learning, the educational achievement of

using the language and social network and age, with the value of 0.001 to 0.425. The educational achievement in accessing news information and women's participation in the local political decision-making process are highest at 0.425 and had significance at the level of 0.01. Marital status and participation in the local political decision-making process had the lowest score, 0.001 as shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Bivariate Correlation Matrix between Various Variables Used in the Analysis

Variables	OBS	ATT	ACH1	ACH2	ACH3	ACH4	AGE	STA	CHI	INC	OCC	EDU	BACK	ORG	PAR
OBS	1.000	.154**	.055	-.025	-.050	-.002	-.175**	.070	-.004	-.075	.040	-.040	-.262**	-0.023	.178**
ATT		1.000	.308**	.422**	.326**	.445**	-.052	.018	.012	-.024	.080	.150**	-.037	.197**	.138**
ACH1			1.000	.425**	.376**	.431**	-.082	.060	.016	-.073	-.061	-.051	-.180**	.054	.425**
ACH2				1.000	.577**	.568**	.074	-.023	.059	.164**	.057	.174**	-.023	.111*	.234**
ACH3					1.000	.734**	.063	-.021	.004	.141**	-.076	.004	.127*	.017	.206**
ACH4						1.000	.042	.003	-.029	.144**	.006	.089	.080	.105*	.268**
AGE							1.000	-.368**	-.033	.468**	.276**	.035	.180**	.105*	.102*
STA								1.000	.463**	-.194**	-.009	.142**	-.072	-.099	.001
CHI									1.000	.056	-.064	-.080	.023	.005	-.050
INC										1.000	.343**	.368**	.233**	-.031	.006
OCC											1.000	.358**	.051	.031	.048
EDU												1.000	.087	-.010	-.066
BACK													1.000	-.108*	-.090
ORG														1.000	.061
PAR															1.000
\bar{X}	44.87	99.61	62.36	39.92	25.99	27.82	31.21	0.57	0.16	8,466.13	0.14	13.36	0.89	0.16	68.81
S.D.	20.87	17.60	19.46	9.02	12.02	11.11	8.87	0.49	0.38	6,998.88	0.35	2.39	0.31	0.37	36.80
MIN	0	33	13	11	0	0	19	0	0	6	0	9	0	0	8
MAX	95	147	115	58	50	50	67	1	2	60,000	1	18	1	1	197

Note: * with a significant level of less than 0.05
 ** with a significant level of less than 0.01

5.1.2 Women's Educational Achievement and Their Participation in the Thai Local Political Decision-Making Process

From the analysis of women at public level, the independent variables were divided into 4 groups. First, the obstacles that hindered the women's political participation (OBS), second, civic attitudes (ATT), third, educational achievement comprising Access to Information (ACH1), Learning Capacity (ACH2), Verbal Ability (ACH3) and Social Networking (ACH4) and fourth, population characteristics, economic and society, consisting of age (AGE), marital status (STU), number of children below six years old (CHI), monthly income (INC), occupation (OCC), number of years of education (EDU), political background (BACK) and involvement within an organizations (ORG).

The model analysis includes: Model 1, independent variables like the obstacles that hinder women's participation in politics, Model 2, civic attitudes, Model 3, women's educational achievement in accessing news information, educational achievement in the ability in learning, in using language and having social network, and Model 4, age, marital status, number of children below six years of age, monthly income, occupation, number of years of education, political background and relationship within an organizations.

Model 1. From the analysis it was found that the obstacle which hindered women in taking part in politics has a significance of 0.001 to explain the variable at the percentage of 3.2.

Model 2. It was found that civic attitudes can explain the increasing alterations of participation in the local political decision-making process at the percentage of 11.8 with a significance of 0.001. The first important variable point is obstacles that hinder women's political participation; it is still significant at this step. The increased variable civic attitudes had a positive significance. It can be seen that civic attitudes provide good support towards the obstacles that hinder the participation in the local political decision-making process.

Model 3. Regarding educational achievement in receiving news information, capability in learning, capability in using the language and having social network it was found that, the variables of educational achievement can explain the alterations of women's participation in the local political decision-making process with the

percentage of 23.7 and a statistical significance at the level of 0.001. Considering educational achievement only access to information, obstacles that hindered women's political participation and civic attitudes, were important in this step. The variable of educational achievement in accessing news information, had a connection with women's participation in the local political decision-making process with a positive significance.

Model 4. By adding the variable characteristics of population, economical and social variable were age, marital status, number of children below six years, monthly income, occupation, number of years of education, political background and the involvement in the organization. It can be explained by the fact that the variable of women's participation in the local political decision-making process has increased by the percentage of 27.5 with a statistical significance at the level of 0.001 with the variable significance from step one to step three. In this step there is still significance. With the variables increased of characteristics of population, economical and social, only one variable, age, had a positive significance.

Regarding the result of the research regarding the variables of the women's educational achievement and her participation in the local political decision-making process of all 4 models, it can be concluded that the significant variables are obstacles that hindered women's political participation, civic attitudes, women's educational achievement in reaching the news information and age. These variables can explain the alterations of participation in the local political decision-making process up to 27.4 percent as shown in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Women's Educational Achievement and Their Participation in the Thai Local Political Decision-Making Process

Variables	Hierarchical			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Barriers to Women's Political Participation (OBS)	0.326*** (3.596)	0.242** (2.762)	0.244*** (2.945)	0.276*** (3.219)
Civic Attitudes (ATT)		0.622*** (6.139)	0.359*** (3.298)	0.407*** (3.658)
Educational Achievement				
Access to Information (ACH1)			0.658*** (6.821)	0.671*** (6.783)
Learning Capacity (ACH2)			-0.035 (-0.146)	-0.016 (-0.065)
Verbal Ability (ACH3)			-0.039 (-0.185)	-0.069 (-0.324)
Social Networking (ACH4)			0.194 (0.825)	0.175 (0.745)
Demographic, Socio and economic Factors				
Age (AGE)				0.713*** (3.034)
Marital (STA)				1.282 (0.310)
No. of Children under 6 years old (CHI)				-4.597 (-0.918)
Income per Month (INC)				0.000 (-0.114)
Occupation (OCC)				3.433 (0.653)
Education (EDU)				-1.477 (-1.845)
Political Background (BACK)				-0.328 (-0.058)
Relationship within an Organizations (ORG)				-1.585 (-0.349)
Constant	54.184*** (12.154)	-3.968 (0.385)	-21.907* (-2.048)	-30.469 (-1.738)
R²	0.032	0.118	0.237	0.275
SEE	36.252	34.643	32.385	31.900
F	12.932	26.254	20.109	10.203
Sig. F	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

Note: * with a significant level of less than 0.05
 ** with a significant level of less than 0.01
 *** with a significant level of less than 0.001

The research shows that although not all the variables of each group had a significant influence on women's participation in the local political decision-making process, the following variable had an effect in participation in the local political decision-making process whether it is the variable in obstacles that hindered the women's political participation, women's educational achievement, civic attitudes or characteristics of population, economical and social. The obstacles that hindered women's political participation have statistical significance for all four models. Since women who participate in the local political decision-making process have to pass through the obstacles of custom, culture, tradition, and social values along with the obstacles within the women themselves, so these obstacles do not create problems in their working or participation in the local political decision-making process.

Regarding the civic attitudes, which always held significance from model 2 to model 4, it can be seen that the good attitudes of women towards politics, regardless of the attitude towards duty of being the citizen, the feeling of political effectiveness or the trust in politics, have connection and support each other. The women who realize that they have the ability to influence political decision-making procedures realize their ability and believe that if they reach the target by their political participating procedures they will be able to participate more in the local political decision-making process.

As for the variables in the group concerning educational success, it was found that the women's educational achievement in accessing news information was significant for equations in models 3 and 4. The rest of the variables, learning capacity, the ability in using language, and having social network had no significance in model 3 and 4. Educational achievement in accessing news information helps women to take interest in political administration. Modern technology and communication systems motivate women to get political knowledge. The woman who is already working within the society can make decisions correctly whether or not to participate in the local political decision-making process and in which character.

In order to understand clearly, all the variables in the group were analyzed by route analysis technique, which will investigate independent variable relationships clearly.

5.1.3 Direct and Indirect Effects Towards Women's Participation in the Local Political Decision-Making Process

To analyze the data from women of public level who live in municipality and rural areas in Chanthaburi and in Samutprakarn Provinces, a total of 395 served as the sample concerning educational achievement along with women's participation in the local political decision-making process. Part analyzes was used to consider the direct and indirect relations that affect women's participation in the local political decision-making process.

Women's Educational Achievement and Their Participation in Thai Central Region Local Political Decision-Making Process, as shown in Figure 5.1, is divided under three headings: 1) Barriers to women's political participation, 2) Civic Attitudes, and 3) Women's Participation in the Local Political Decision-Making Process. This figure is presented below once again in Figure 5.1.

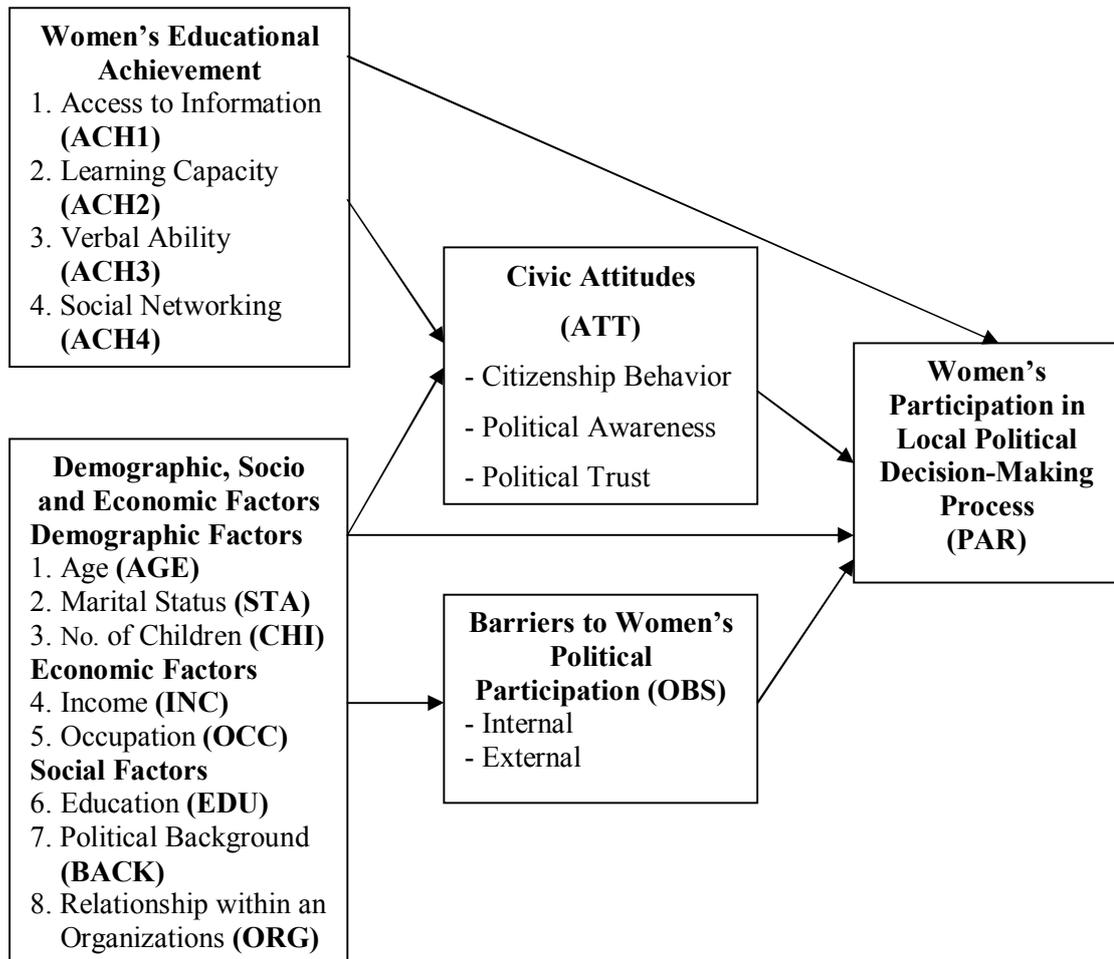


Figure 5.1 Conceptual Framework of Women's Educational Achievement and Their Participation in the Thai Central Region Local Political Decision-Making Process

From Figure 5.1: The relationship between independent variables and women's participation in local political decision-making process are as follow:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{PAR} = & a_1\text{OBS} + a_2\text{ATT} + a_3\text{ACH1} + a_4\text{ACH2} + a_5\text{ACH3} + a_6\text{ACH4} \\ & + a_7\text{AGE} + a_8\text{STA} + a_9\text{CHI} + a_{10}\text{INC} + a_{11}\text{OCC} + a_{12}\text{EDU} \\ & + a_{13}\text{BACK} + a_{14}\text{ORG} \end{aligned} \quad \dots(5.5)$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{ATT} = & b_1\text{ACH1} + b_2\text{ACH2} + b_3\text{ACH3} + b_4\text{ACH4} + b_5\text{AGE} + b_6\text{STA} \\ & + b_7\text{CHI} + b_8\text{INC} + b_9\text{OCC} + b_{10}\text{EDU} + b_{11}\text{BACK} + b_{12}\text{ORG} \end{aligned} \quad \dots(5.6)$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{OBS} = & c_1\text{AGE} + c_2\text{STA} + c_3\text{CHI} + c_4\text{INC} + c_5\text{OCC} + c_6\text{EDU} \\ & + c_7\text{BACK} + c_8\text{ORG} \end{aligned} \quad \dots(5.7)$$

Where

PAR = Women's Participation in Local Political Decision-Making Process

OBS = Barriers to Women's Political Participation

ATT = Civic Attitudes

ACH1 = Access to Information

ACH2 = Learning Capacity

ACH3 = Verbal Ability

ACH4 = Social Networking

AGE = Age

STA = Marital Status

CHI = No. of Children under 6 Years Old,

INC = Income per Month

OCC = Occupation

EDU = Education

BACK = Political Background

ORG = Relationship within an Organizations

$a_1, \dots, a_{14}, b_1, \dots, b_{12}, c_1, \dots, c_8$ = Standardized Regression Coefficients

The result of part analysis between independent variables and women's participation in local political decision-making process is shown in table 5.3 and figure 5.2.

Table 5.3 Regression Results from Path Analysis of Women's Educational Achievement and Their Participation in Local Political Decision-Making Process

Equation	Dependent variables	Independent variables	Part Coefficient	R ²	SEE	F					
1)	PAR	OBS	0.151***	0.275	31.900	10.303					
		ATT	0.195***								
		ACH1	0.355***								
		ACH2	-0.004								
		ACH3	-0.022								
		ACH4	0.053								
		AGE	0.172**								
		STA	0.017								
		CHI	-0.047								
		INC	-0.007								
		OCC	0.033								
		EDU	-0.096								
		BACK	-0.003								
		ORG	-0.016								
2)	ATT	ACH1	0.088	0.100	19.308	5.358					
		ACH2	0.216***								
		ACH3	-0.038								
		ACH4	0.310***								
		AGE	-0.058								
		STA	-0.029								
		CHI	0.014								
		INC	-0.142**								
		OCC	0.087								
		EDU	0.121*								
		BACK	0.005								
		ORG	0.135**								
		3)	OBS				AGE	-0.181	0.100	19.308	5.358
							STA	0.003			
CHI	-0.006										
INC	0.056										
OCC	0.110*										
EDU	-0.074										
BACK	-0.245***										
ORG	-0.033										

Note: * with a significant level of less than 0.05
 ** with a significant level of less than 0.01
 *** with a significant level of less than 0.001

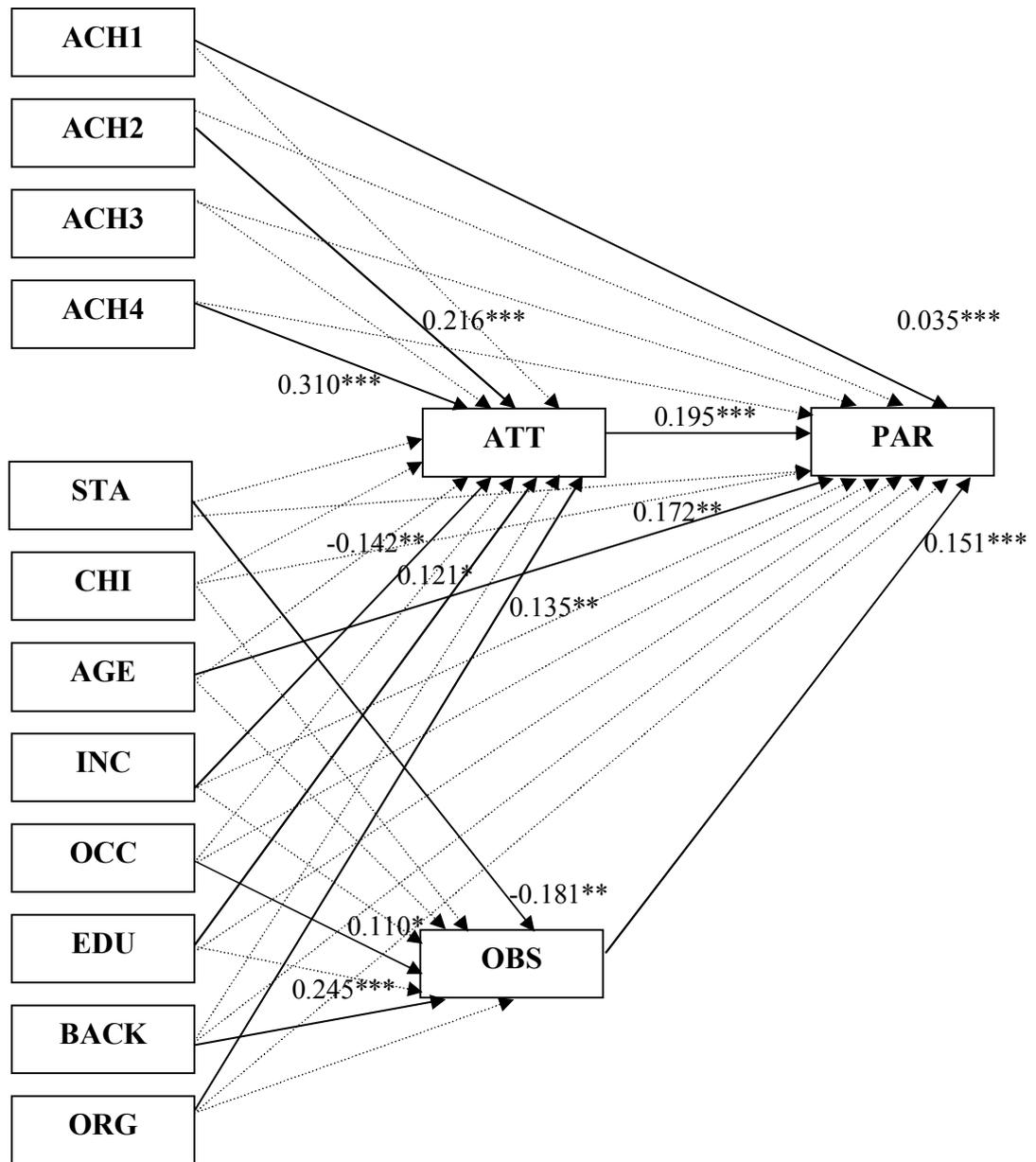


Figure 5.2 Model of the Result of the Analysis of Women's Educational Achievement and Their Participation in the Thai Central Region Local Political Decision-Making Process

5.1.3.1 Results on Women's Educational Achievement and Their Participation in the Thai Central Region Local Political Decision-Making Process

Regression analyses of women's educational achievement and their participation in local political decision-making process are as follow:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{PAR} = & 0.151 \text{ OBS}^{***} + 0.195 \text{ ATT}^{***} + 0.355 \text{ ACH1}^{***} - 0.004 \text{ ACH2} \\
 & - 0.022 \text{ ACH3} + 0.053 \text{ ACH4} + 0.172 \text{ AGE}^{**} + 0.017 \text{ STA} \\
 & - 0.047 \text{ CHI} - 0.007 \text{ INC} + 0.033 \text{ OCC} - 0.096 \text{ EDU} \\
 & - 0.003 \text{ BACK} - 0.016 \text{ ORG} \quad \dots(5.8) \\
 R^2 = & 0.275, \text{ SEE} = 31.900, F = 10.303, \text{ Sig.} = 0.000
 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{ATT} = & 0.188 \text{ ACH1} + 0.216 \text{ ACH2}^{***} - 0.038 \text{ ACH3} + 0.310 \text{ ACH4}^{***} \\
 & - 0.058 \text{ AGE} - 0.029 \text{ STA} + 0.014 \text{ CHI} - 0.142 \text{ INC}^{**} + 0.087 \text{ OCC} \\
 & + 0.121 \text{ EDU}^* + 0.005 \text{ BACK} + 0.135 \text{ ORG}^{**} \quad \dots(5.9) \\
 R^2 = & 0.301, \text{ SEE} = 14.939, F = 13.734, \text{ Sig.} = 0.000
 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{OBS} = & -0.181 \text{ AGE}^{**} + 0.003 \text{ STA} - 0.006 \text{ CHI} + 0.056 \text{ INC} \\
 & + 0.110 \text{ OCC}^* - 0.074 \text{ EDU} - 0.245 \text{ BACK}^{***} - 0.033 \text{ ORG} \quad \dots(5.10) \\
 R^2 = & 0.100, \text{ SEE} = 19.308, F = 5.358, \text{ Sig.} = 0.000
 \end{aligned}$$

The analysis from equation (5.8), all the independent variables can explain that women's participation in the local political decision-making process was 27.5percent and held significance with only 4 out of 14 variables. It showed relation towards the women's participation in the local political decision-making process with significance and had a positive relation to all variables: obstacles which hindered women's participating in politic, civic attitudes, women's educational achievement in accessing news information and age.

This means when women have more obstacles that hinder taking part in politics; it will motivate the women to fight against them. In addition, civic attitudes become clearer. When women have good attitudes, have the sense of capability, create more trust in politics, it will motivate the women to enter politics more.

The equation (5.9), of the following variables held 30.1percent significance, and only 5 of 12 variables were significant, and 4 had a positive relation: women's educational achievement, the educational achievement in society network, number of years of education and involvement with the organization. One negative variable was the income of the women.

Regarding equation (5.10), the variations show that obstacles that hindered the women's participation was 10.0percent with significance, and only 2 of 8 variables held significance and 2 variables had negative relations: age and political background.

5.1.3.2 The Model after Path Analysis

When new research is conducted especially regarding significant variables, it can make active variables become inactive, as in the case of pressed variables. Thus, the original variables were used. Controlling the many variables will be useful and more correctly identify real conditions. (Figure 5.3)

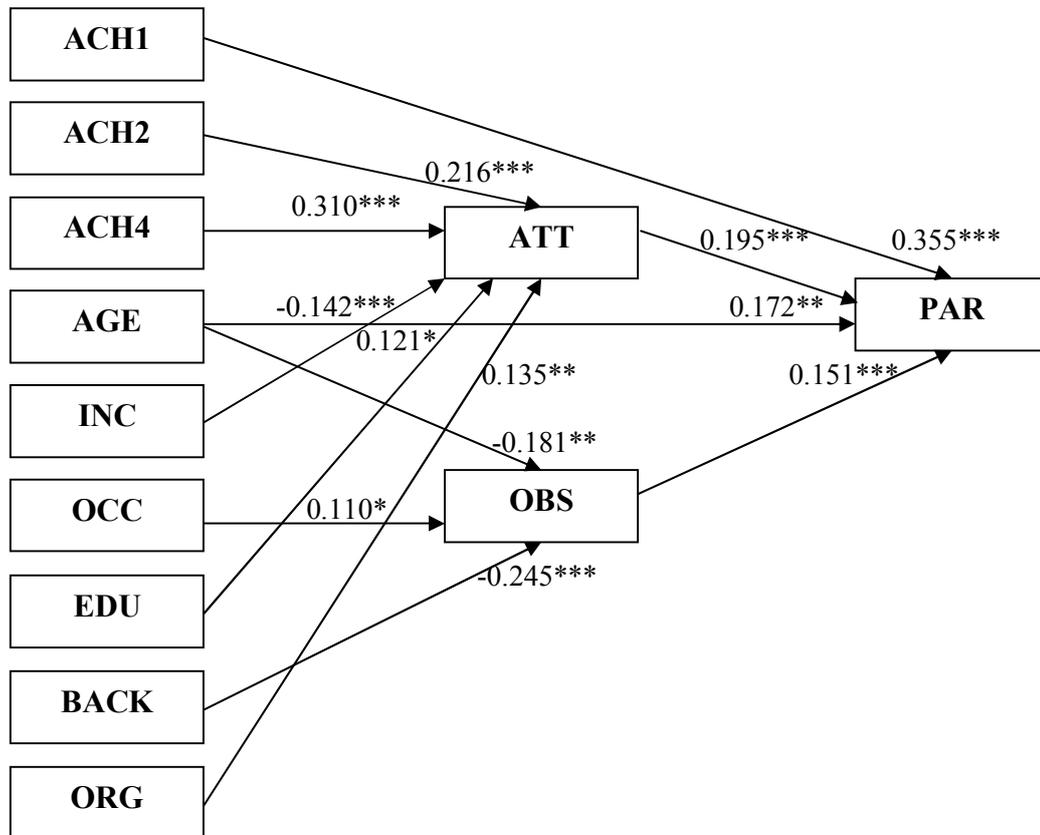


Figure 5.3 Final Model of Women's Educational Achievement and Their Participation in the Thai Central Region Local Political Decision-Making Process

5.1.3.3 Causal Relationships of Women's Educational Achievement and Their Participation in the Thai Central Region Local Political Decision-Making Process

The result of the relation path shows the direct and indirect effects of each independent variables that effect women's participation in local political decision-making process. As shown in Table 5.4, women's educational achievement in accessing news information has a greater cause in the participation in the local political decision-making process, with both direct and indirect effects. In the direct way, the educational achievement makes it possible for women to receive news information more. Obtaining education, allows the women able to develop their talent in receiving political news, political data from different kinds of media like radio,

television, brochures and also the latest technologies to obtain quick, quality information. This can affect decision to participate political by depending on the news information more, since more ways can connect women and political systems, increasing the women's participation in local political decision-making process. At present, the latest communication technologies are not limited to the province and big centers of the country, therefore, political news information is passed on quickly and effectively to other cities. When the public receives the up to date news information, on one side it motivates women to have an interest in joining local political administration. The study of Orathai Kokpol and Soparat Satuwong (1996: 65), found out that highly educated or well-educated women get advantages in receiving quality news because they have wide knowledge and more understanding and do not believe in anything easily. Generally, the educated person will access mass media more than the less educated and will use the print media more than other media.

Regarding the indirect effect it was found that the women's educational achievement regarding receiving news information, had to pass through the civic attitudes first, then only they will it have an impact on women's participation in the local political decision-making process. As the women support the roles and status of women more, they will have greater opportunities in politics than women who have lesser attitudes towards supporting the roles and status of women (Prasit Santikarn, 2001: 84) because civic attitudes consist of the sense of the duty of the citizen, political effectiveness, and political confidence, and women's participation in the local political decision-making process will have more connection and support each other. This means that if a person has the feeling of high capability in the political field, then the political participation will also be at a high level. If women have civic attitudes, it is believed that women are also capable in politics no less than men; it will affect women to make political decisions procedure more than the women who have lower attitude. Therefore, civic attitude is an important part that affects women's participation in the local political decision-making process more or less.

Variables that affect women's participation in the local political decision-making process on the base of reasons is secondary to women's educational achievement in accessing news information, including civic attitudes with a direct positive effect to the participation in the local political decision-making process.

Other than these, it was found that obstacles that hindered women in participating in politics has a direct impact to participation in the local political decision-making process, including the variables: age, income, occupation, number of years of education, political background and concern with organization, having both direct and indirect impact to participation in the local political decision-making process.

(Table 5.4)

Table 5.4 Relationship between Independent Variables and Women's Participation in Local Political Decision-Making Process, Total Sample

Independent variables	Type of Causal Relationship		
	Direct	Indirect	Total
Barriers to Women's Political Participation (OBS)	0.151	-	0.151
Civic Attitudes (ATT)	0.195	-	0.195
Educational Achievement			
Access to Information (ACH1)	0.355	-	0.355
Learning Capacity (ACH2)	-	0.042	0.042
Social Networking (ACH4)	-	0.060	0.060
Demographic, Socio and Economic Factors			
Age (AGE)	0.172	-0.027	-0.145
Income (INC)	-	-0.028	-0.028
Occupation (OCC)	-	0.017	0.017
Education (EDU)	-	0.024	0.024
Political Background (BACK)	-	-0.037	-0.037
Relationship within an Organizations (ORG)	-	-0.026	-0.026

5.2 Direct and Indirect Effects Towards Women's Participation in Local Political Decision-Making Process in the Municipality

The independent variables and variables concerning women's educational achievement and their participation in the local political decision-making process in the municipality were analyzed. To analyze the data from women of public level who live in the municipalities both in Chanthaburi and in Samutprakarn Province, a total of 219 people served as the sample. In addition, women within municipal and outside municipal areas, a total of 395 people served to analyze with the technique of part analysis to consider the direct and indirect relations that affect women's participation in the local political decision-making process at the municipality level.

The direct and indirect effects towards women's participation in local political decision-making process in the municipality are as follow:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{IPAR} = & a_1\text{IOBS} + a_2\text{IATT} + a_3\text{IACH1} + a_4\text{IACH2} + a_5\text{IACH3} + a_6\text{IACH4} \\ & + a_7\text{IAGE} + a_8\text{ISTA} + a_9\text{ICHI} + a_{10}\text{IINC} + a_{11}\text{IOCC} + a_{12}\text{IEDU} \\ & + a_{13}\text{IBACK} + a_{14}\text{IORG} \end{aligned} \quad \dots(5.11)$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{IATT} = & b_1\text{IACH1} + b_2\text{IACH2} + b_3\text{IACH3} + b_4\text{IACH4} + b_5\text{IAGE} + b_6\text{ISTA} \\ & + b_7\text{ICHI} + b_8\text{IINC} + b_9\text{IOCC} + b_{10}\text{IEDU} + b_{11}\text{IBACK} + b_{12}\text{IORG} \end{aligned} \quad \dots(5.12)$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{IOBS} = & c_1\text{IAGE} + c_2\text{ISTA} + c_3\text{ICHI} + c_4\text{IINC} + c_5\text{IOCC} + c_6\text{IEDU} \\ & + c_7\text{IBACK} + c_8\text{IORG} \end{aligned} \quad \dots(5.13)$$

Where

IPAR	=	Women's Participation in Local Political Decision-Making Process in the Municipality
IOBS	=	Barriers to Women's Political Participation
IATT	=	Civic Attitudes
IACH1	=	Access to Information
IACH2	=	Learning Capacity
IACH3	=	Verbal Ability
IACH4	=	Social Networking
IAGE	=	Age

ISTA	=	Marital Status
ICHI	=	No. of Children Under 6 Years Old,
IINC	=	Income per Month
IOCC	=	Occupation
IEDU	=	Education
IBACK	=	Political Background
IORG	=	Relationship within an Organizations
$a_1, \dots, a_{14}, b_1, \dots, b_{12}, c_1, \dots, c_8$	=	Standardized Regression Coefficients

The result of part analysis between independent variables and the women's participation in local political decision-making process in the municipality, as shown in Table 5.5 and Figure 5.4

Table 5.5 Regression Results from Path Analysis of Women's Educational Achievement and Their Participation in the Thai Central Region Local Political Decision-Making Process in the Municipality

Equation	Dependent variables	Independent variables	Part Coefficient	R ²	SEE	F					
1)	IPAR	IOBS	0.170**	0.290	30.988	5.951					
		IATT	0.239***								
		IACH1	0.382***								
		IACH2	-0.075								
		IACH3	-0.115								
		IACH4	0.121								
		IAGE	0.086								
		ISTA	-0.042								
		ICHI	-0.049								
		IINC	0.041								
		IOCC	0.005								
		IEDU	-0.100								
		IBACK	-0.007								
		IORG	0.028								
2)	IATT	IACH1	0.005	0.309	14.889	7.677					
		IACH2	0.299***								
		IACH3	-0.122								
		IACH4	0.325***								
		IAGE	-0.040								
		ISTA	-0.023								
		ICHI	-0.025								
		IINC	-0.086								
		IOCC	0.016								
		IEDU	0.166*								
		IBACK	-0.089								
		IORG	0.117*								
		3)	IOBS				IAGE	-0.245**	0.145	17.338	4.456
							ISTA	-0.037			
ICHI	-0.048										
IINC	0.089										
IOCC	0.033										
IEDU	-0.095										
IBACK	-0.287***										
IORG	-0.020										

Note: * with a significant level of less than 0.05
 ** with a significant level of less than 0.01
 *** with a significant level of less than 0.001

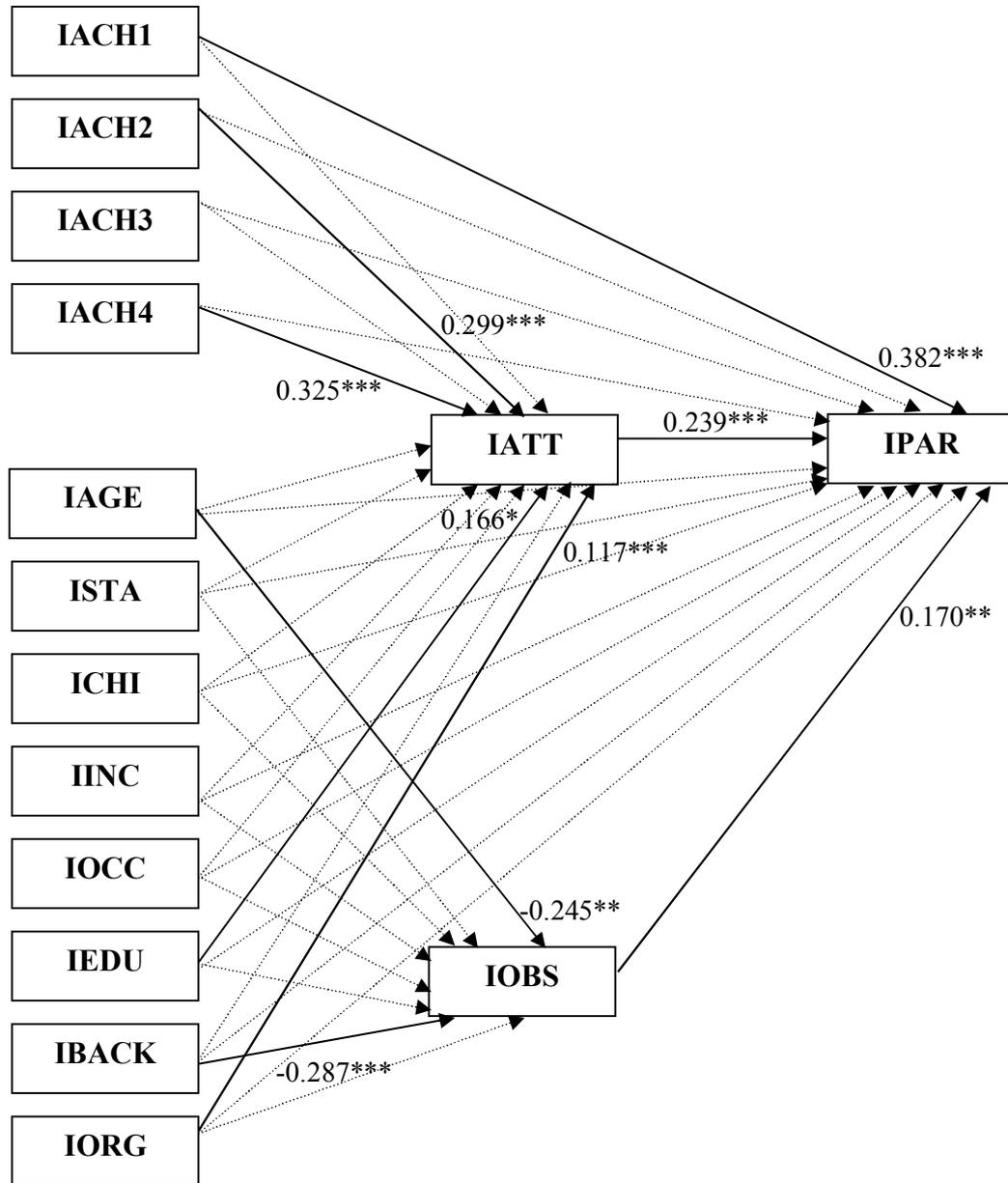


Figure 5.4 Model of the Results of Analysis of Women's Educational Achievement and Their Participation in the Thai Central Region Local Political Decision-Making Process in the Municipality

5.2.1 Results of Women's Educational Achievement and Their Participation in the Thai Central Region Local Political Decision-Making Process at Local Level in the Municipality

Regression analyses of women's educational achievement and their participation in the Thai central region local political decision-making process at local level in the municipality are as follow:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{IPAR} = & 0.170 \text{ IOBS}^{**} + 0.239 \text{ IATT}^{***} + 0.382 \text{ IACH1}^{***} - 0.075 \text{ IACH2} \\ & - 0.115 \text{ IACH3} + 0.121 \text{ IACH4} + 0.086 \text{ IAGE} - 0.042 \text{ ISTA} \\ & - 0.049 \text{ ICHI} + 0.041 \text{ IINC} + 0.005 \text{ IOCC} - 0.106 \text{ IEDU} \\ & - 0.007 \text{ IBACK} + 0.028 \text{ IORG} \end{aligned} \quad \dots(5.14)$$

$$R^2 = 0.290, \text{ SEE} = 30.988, F = 5.591, \text{ Sig.} = 0.000$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{IATT} = & 0.005 \text{ IACH1} + 0.299 \text{ IACH2}^{***} - 0.122 \text{ IACH3} + 0.325 \text{ IACH4}^{***} \\ & - 0.040 \text{ IAGE} - 0.023 \text{ ISTA} + 0.025 \text{ ICHI} - 0.086 \text{ IINC}^{**} + 0.116 \text{ IOCC} \\ & + 0.166 \text{ IEDU}^* - 0.089 \text{ IBACK} + 0.117 \text{ IORG}^* \end{aligned} \quad \dots(5.15)$$

$$R^2 = 0.309, \text{ SEE} = 14.889, F = 7.677, \text{ Sig.} = 0.000$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{IOBS} = & -0.245 \text{ IAGE}^{**} - 0.037 \text{ ISTA} - 0.048 \text{ ICHI} + 0.089 \text{ IINC} \\ & + 0.033 \text{ IOCC} - 0.095 \text{ IEDU} - 0.287 \text{ IBACK}^{***} - 0.020 \text{ IORG} \end{aligned} \quad \dots(5.16)$$

$$R^2 = 0.145, \text{ SEE} = 17.338, F = 4.456, \text{ Sig.} = 0.000$$

From analyzing the results of equation (5.14), all 14 independent variables can explain the alterations of the other variables. Women's participation in local political decision-making process in the municipality received a score of 29.0percent with significance. Only 3 of 14 variables had a reason based connection towards women's participation in the local political decision-making process with significance. These included: obstacles that hindered the women's participating in politics, civic attitudes, and educational achievement in accessing information. All had positive connections towards women's participation in local political decision-making process in the municipality.

The analysis of the results of equation 5.15, helps explain the alterations of the variable, civic attitude, at 30.9percent, with significance with four variables demonstrating a reason-based connection towards civic attitudes with significance. These include: educational achievement in learning capability, educational achievement in social networking, education, and relationship within an organization. They all showed positive connection towards the civic attitudes of women living in the municipality.

Equation (5.16), helps explain the alterations of other variables and the obstacles that hinder women from participating in politics at 14.5percent with significance. Only two variables were identified: age and political background. They demonstrated a negative connection towards the obstacles that hindered the women's participating in politics living in the municipality.

5.2.2 The Model after the Path Analysis

The result from the foundation equation as shown in Figure 5.5 represents only the significant path not taken in new statistical analysis because it will make active variables become inactive.

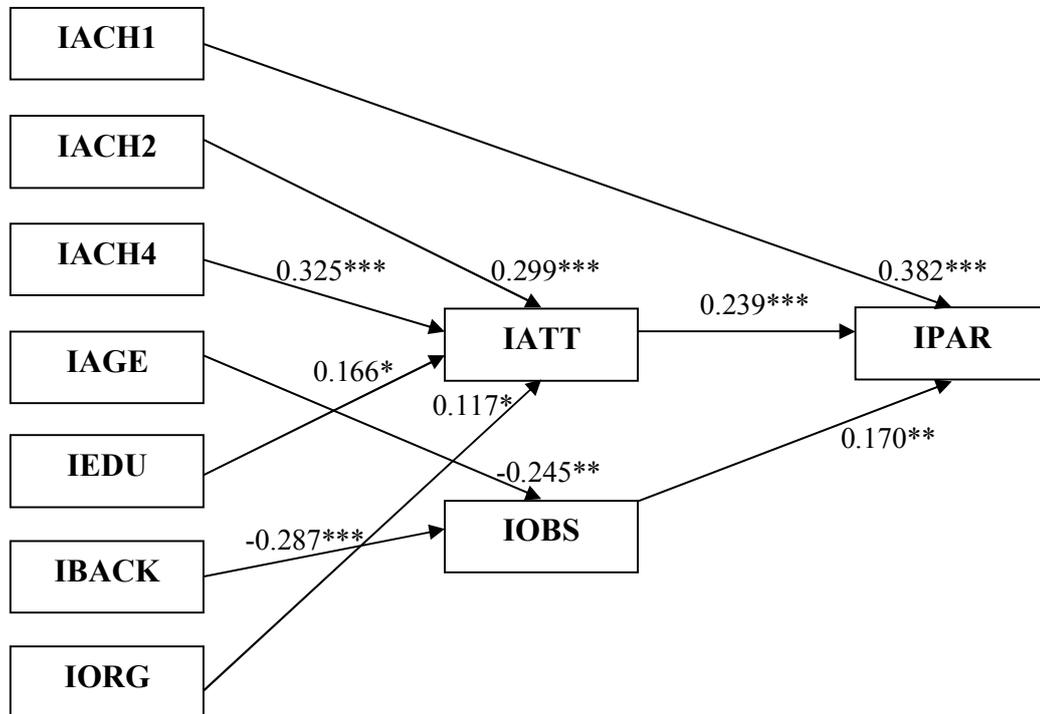


Figure 5.5 Final Model of Women's Educational Achievement and Their Participation in the Thai Central Region Local Political Decision-Making Process in the Municipality

5.2.3 Causal Relationships of Women's Educational Achievement and Their Participation in Local Political Decision-Making Process in the Municipality

Table 5.6 shows that the educational achievement in accessing information has an affect on women's participation in the local political decision-making process in the municipality. If women's educational achievements give them more chance to access the news information, it will affect their decision in taking part in politics more, and the variable that have the most effect is civic attitudes and the obstacles which hinder women's political participating has a direct positive effect towards participation in the local political decision-making process in the municipality.

The variables of number of years of education, involvement in the organization, educational achievement in social networking and in learning ability

have indirect positive effects towards participation in the local political decision-making process in the municipality from more to less, respectively. It can be seen that women entering politics more is the result of Thai women getting higher educational support which supports Paweena Inwasa's study (Paweena Inwasa, 2001: 16) that supports to the educational level are social factors which affect the participation in the local political decision-making process

Age and political background variables have indirect negative effects towards participation in the local political decision-making process in the municipality. It is seen that the target group of women with the average age of 31 years, who are the workingwomen group, may get influence from the modern way of thinking concerning the rights and roles of women in the past. It makes women understand the importance of women's rights and enter political decision procedures more than women at other age groups. It correlates with the report of the study of Finkel (2000: 18) who found that age has a relation towards taking part in political decision-making in all spheres equally and that political participation will continually increase with age until the highest point in middle age, and after that it will slowly decrease as the age grows higher. (Table 5.6)

Table 5.6 Relationship between Independent Variables and Women's Participation in Local Political Decision-Making Process in the Municipality

Independent variables	Type of Causal Relationship		
	Direct	Indirect	Total
Barriers to Women's Political Participation (OBS)	0.170	-	0.170
Civic Attitudes (ATT)	0.239	-	0.239
Educational Achievement			
Access to Information (ACH1)	0.382	-	0.382
Learning Capacity (ACH2)	-	0.071	0.071
Social Networking (ACH4)	-	0.078	0.078
Demographic, Socio and Economic Factors			
Age (AGE)	-	-0.042	-0.042
Education (EDU)	-	0.040	0.140
Political Background (BACK)	-	-0.049	-0.049
Relationship within an Organizations (ORG)	-	0.028	0.028

5.3 Direct and Indirect Effect Towards the Women's Participation in Local Political Decision-Making Process Outside the Municipality

The independent variables and other variables, to show the relation between variables concerning women's educational achievement and their participation in the local political decision-making process outside the municipality were analyzed. To analyze the data from women of public level who live outside the municipality both in Chanthaburi and in Samutprakarn Provinces, a total of 176 people served as the sample. In addition, data from women of public levels in Chanthaburi and Samutprakarn Provinces, including women within municipal and outside municipal areas, a total of 395 people were examined. The technique of part analysis was employed to consider the direct and indirect relations that affect women's participation in the local political decision-making process at local levels outside the municipality.

The direct and indirect effects towards women's participation in local political decision-making process outside the municipality are as follow:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{OPAR} = & a_1\text{OOBS} + a_2\text{OATT} + a_3\text{OACH1} + a_4\text{OACH2} + a_5\text{OACH3} \\ & + a_6\text{OACH4} + a_7\text{OAGE} + a_8\text{OSTA} + a_9\text{OCHI} + a_{10}\text{OINC} \\ & + a_{11}\text{OOC} + a_{12}\text{OEDU} + a_{13}\text{OBACK} + a_{14}\text{OORG} \end{aligned} \quad \dots(5.14)$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{OATT} = & b_1\text{OACH1} + b_2\text{OACH2} + b_3\text{OACH3} + b_4\text{OACH4} + b_5\text{OAGE} \\ & + b_6\text{OSTA} + b_7\text{OCHI} + b_8\text{OINC} + b_9\text{OIOC} + b_{10}\text{OEDU} \\ & + b_{11}\text{OBACK} + b_{12}\text{OORG} \end{aligned} \quad \dots(5.15)$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{OOBS} = & c_1\text{OAGE} + c_2\text{OSTA} + c_3\text{OCHI} + c_4\text{OINC} + c_5\text{OOC} + c_6\text{OEDU} \\ & + c_7\text{OBACK} + c_8\text{OORG} \end{aligned} \quad \dots(5.13)$$

Where OPAR = Women's Participation in Local Political Decision-Making Process Outside the Municipality.

OOBS = Barriers to Women's Political Participation

OATT = Civic Attitudes

OACH1 = Access to Information

OACH2 = Learning Capacity

OACH3 = Verbal Ability

OACH4 = Social Networking

OAGE = Age

OSTA = Marital Status

OCHI = No. of Children Under 6 Years Old,

OINC = Income per Month

OOC = Occupation

OEDU = Education

OBACK = Political Background

OORG = Relationship within an Organizations

$a_1, \dots, a_{14}, b_1, \dots, b_{12}, c_1, \dots, c_8$ = Standardized Regression Coefficients

The result of part analysis between independent variables and women's participation in local political decision-making process outside the Municipality are shown in Table 5.7 and Figure 5.6

Table 5.7 Regression Results from Path analysis of Women's Educational Achievement and Their Participation in Local Political Decision-Making Process Outside the Municipality

Equation	Dependent variables	Independent variables	Part Coefficient	R ²	SEE	F
1)	OPAR	OOBS	0.021*	0.303	33.248	5.006
		OATT	0.158*			
		OACH1	0.325***			
		OACH2	0.062			
		OACH3	0.091			
		OACH4	-0.016			
		OAGE	0.280**			
		OSTA	0.082			
		OCHI	-0.041			
		OINC	-0.084			
		OCC	0.059			
		OEDU	-0.090			
		OBACK	-0.003			
2)	OATT	OACH1	0.166*	0.374	14.538	8.123
		OACH2	0.153			
		OACH3	0.012			
		OACH4	0.320***			
		OAGE	-0.021			
		OISTA	-0.023			
		OCHI	0.079			
		OINC	-0.253**			
		OIOCC	0.088			
		OEDU	0.041			
		OBACK	0.111			
		OORG	0.153*			
		3)	OOBS				OAGE	-0.122	0.068	21.733	1.512
OSTA	0.033					
OCHI	0.044					
OINC	0.070					
OCC	0.114					
OEDU	-0.050					
OBACK	-0.210**					
OORG	-0.047					

Note: * with a significant level of less than 0.05
 ** with a significant level of less than 0.01
 *** with a significant level of less than 0.001

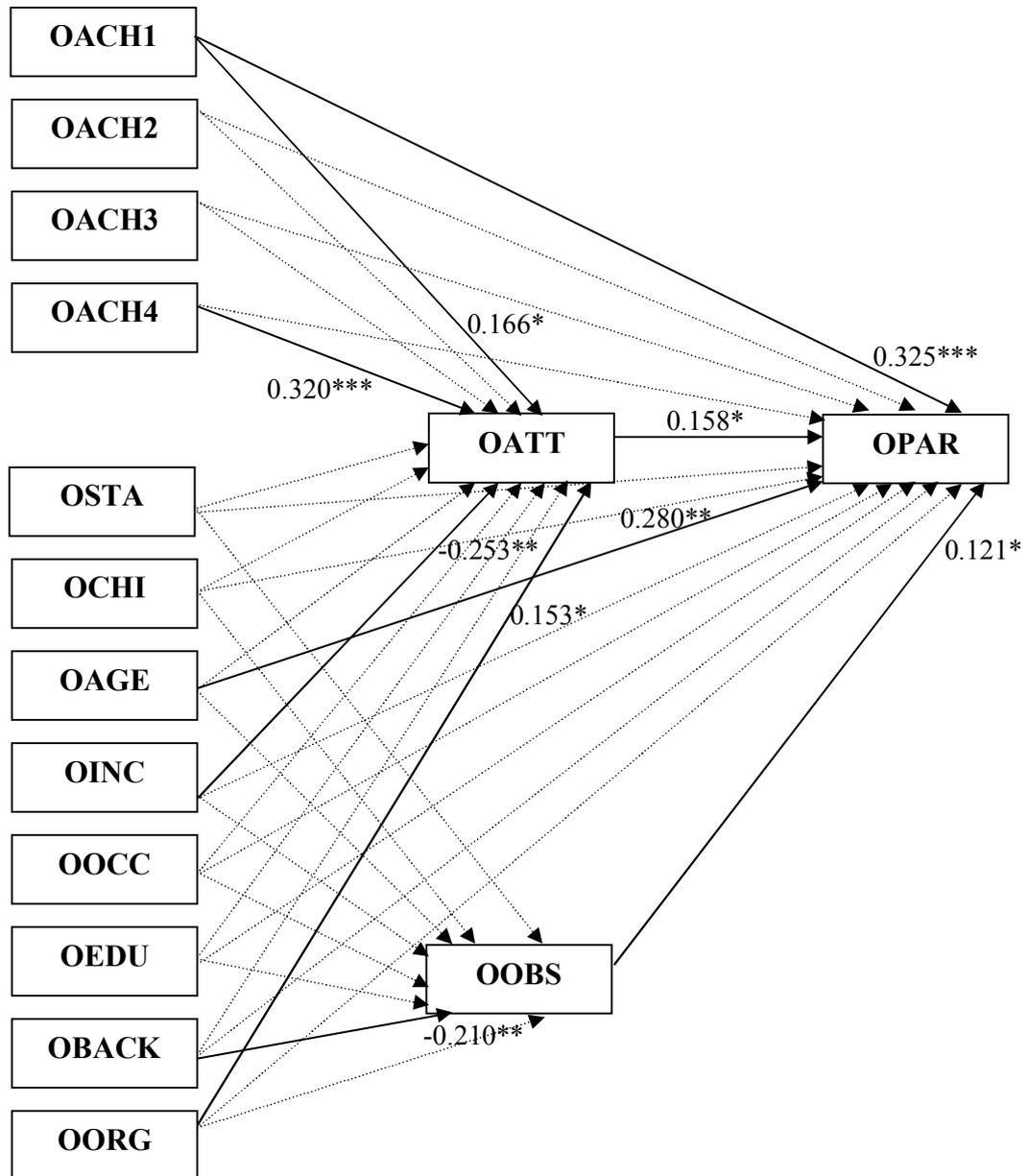


Figure 5.6 Model of the Result of the Analysis of Women's Educational Achievement and Their Participation in the Thai Central Region Local Political Decision-Making Process Outside the Municipality

5.3.1 Results on Women's Educational Achievement and Their Participation in the Thai Central Region Local Political Decision-Making Process Outside the Municipality

Regression analyses of women's educational achievement and their participation in the Thai central region local political decision-making process outside the municipality are as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{OPAR} = & 0.021 \text{ OOBS}^* + 0.158 \text{ OATT}^* + 0.325 \text{ OACH1}^{***} + 0.062 \text{ OACH2} \\ & + 0.091 \text{ OACH3} - 0.016 \text{ OACH4} + 0.280 \text{ OAGE}^{**} + 0.082 \text{ OSTA} \\ & - 0.041 \text{ OCHI} - 0.084 \text{ OINC} + 0.059 \text{ OOCC} - 0.090 \text{ OEDU} \\ & - 0.003 \text{ OBACK} - 0.087 \text{ OORG} \quad \dots(5.20) \end{aligned}$$

$$R^2 = 0.303, \text{ SEE} = 33.248, F = 5.006, \text{ Sig.} = 0.000$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{OATT} = & 0.166 \text{ OACH1}^* + 0.153 \text{ OACH2} + 0.012 \text{ OACH3} + 0.320 \text{ OACH4}^{***} \\ & - 0.021 \text{ OAGE} - 0.023 \text{ OSTA} + 0.079 \text{ OCHI} - 0.253 \text{ OINC}^{**} \\ & + 0.088 \text{ OIOCC} + 0.041 \text{ OEDU} + 0.111 \text{ OBACK} + 0.153 \text{ OORG} \quad \dots(5.21) \end{aligned}$$

$$R^2 = 0.374, \text{ SEE} = 14.538, F = 8.123, \text{ Sig.} = 0.000$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{OOBS} = & - 0.122 \text{ OAGE} + 0.033 \text{ OSTA} + 0.044 \text{ OCHI} + 0.070 \text{ OINC} \\ & + 0.114 \text{ OOCC} - 0.050 \text{ OEDU} - 0.210 \text{ OBACK}^{**} - 0.047 \text{ OORG} \quad \dots(5.22) \end{aligned}$$

$$R^2 = 0.068, \text{ SEE} = 21.733, F = 1.512, \text{ Sig.} = 0.156$$

From the analysis of the results of equation (5.20), all the independent variables can explain the changes of other variables, namely, women's participation in the local political decision-making process outside the municipality at 30.3 percent with significance. Only 4 of 14 variables affect women's participation in the local political decision-making process. Those that showed significance include: obstacles that hindered the participating of women in politics, civic attitudes, women's educational achievement in accessing news and age. All have a positive connection.

Regarding the results of equation 5.21, the variable civic attitudes held 37.4 percent with significance. Only four variables showed significance with civic attitudes including: women's educational achievement in accessing news, having social networking and involvement in an organization, which held positive relations towards the civic attitudes, and the income variable, which held a negative relation.

The analysis of the results of equation 5.22, explain the obstacles that hindered the women participating in politics. Only 6.8 percent held significance, political background, which expressed a negative relation.

5.3.2 The Model after the Path Analysis

The result shown in Figure 5.7 represents only the significant path so that the many variables will be more useful and coordinate better with the real conditions.

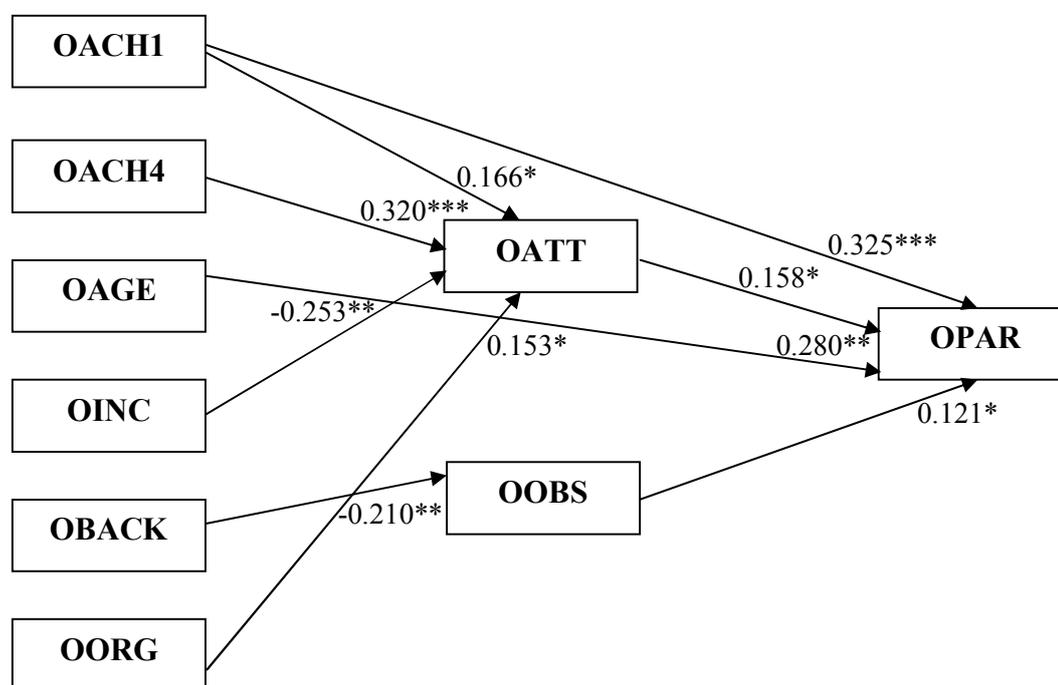


Figure 5.7 Final Model of Women's Educational Achievement and Their Participation in the Thai Central Region Local Political Decision-Making Process Outside the Municipality

Table 5.8 Relationship between Independent Variables and the Women's Participation in the Local Political Decision-Making Process Outside the Municipality

Independent variables	Type of Causal Relationship		
	Direct	Indirect	Total
Barriers to Women's Political Participation (OBS)	0.121	-	0.121
Civic Attitudes (ATT)	0.158	-	0.158
Educational Achievement			
Access to Information (ACH1)	0.325	0.026	0.351
Social Networking (ACH4)	-	0.051	0.051
Demographic, Socio and Economic Factors			
Age (AGE)	0.280	-	0.280
Income (INC)	-	-0.040	-0.040
Political Background (BACK)	-	-0.025	0.025
Relationship within an Organizations (ORG)	-	0.024	0.024

5.3.3 Causal Relationships of Women's Educational Achievement and Their Participation in the Thai Central Region Local Political Decision-Making Process Outside the Municipality

The report of path analysis shows the direct and indirect effects towards each independent variable regarding women's participation in the local political decision-making process outside the municipality. Table 5.8 shows that the educational achievement access to information has an affect towards the participation in local political decision-making outside the municipality with direct and indirect positive result. Secondary to educational achievement in accessing news is the age of the women, which has a direct positive effect towards participation in the local political decision-making process. Moreover it was found that civic attitudes and the obstacles that hindered the women's participating in politics showed direct positive effects towards women's participation in the local political decision-making process outside the municipality.

The variables that had indirect positive effects to women's participation in the local political decision-making process outside the municipal area include: age,

educational achievement in social networking and involvement in the organization. As for the income variable and political background, they exhibited indirect negative effects towards women's participation in the local political decision-making process outside the municipality.

5.3.4 The Relation Comparison of Women's Educational Achievement and Their Participation in Local Political Decision-Making Process Inside and Outside the Municipality

The analysis of women's educational achievement and their participation in the local political decision-making process inside and outside the municipality revealed that the variables that had direct effect towards the political decision procedures were mostly women who lived outside the municipality, obstacles that hindered women's participation in politics, civic attitudes, and educational achievement in accessing news, which had direct positive relations with participation in the local political decision-making process. When these three variables increased their values, it affected women's participation in the local political decision-making process more. Similarly, women outside the municipality area have the thinking which matches women living inside the municipality that the obstacles that hindered the women's participation in politics, civic attitudes, educational achievement in access to information and age of women have direct positive effects towards their participation in the local political decision-making process.

Variables that have indirect effects towards participation in the local political decision-making process are the women living in the municipal area and the variables of: educational achievement in learning, educational achievement in social networking, number of years of education, involvement in organizations. These showed positive effects while the variables of age and political background had negative effects towards participation in the local political decision-making process. More educational achievement in learning capacity, educational achievement in social networking, number of years of education and involvement in organizations will increase participation in the local political decision-making process and on the other hand, age and political background will affect participation in the local political decision-making process to a lesser extent. In the same way, women living outside the

municipality have similar ideas that educational achievement in accessing news information, educational achievement in social networking and involvement with organizations have positive effects and the variables of income and political background have the negative effects towards participation in the local political decision-making process as shown in Table 5.9.

Table 5.9 Comparison of Relationship of Women's Educational Achievement and Their Participation in the Local Political Decision-Making Process Inside and Outside the Municipality

Relationship	Participation in Local Political	
	Inside Municipality	Outside Municipality
Direct relationship		
Barriers to Women's Political Participation	0.070	0.121
Civic Attitudes	0.239	0.158
Educational Achievement in Access to Information	0.382	0.325
Age	-	0.280
Indirect relationship		
Access to Information	-	0.026
Learning Capacity	0.071	-
Social Networking	0.078	0.051
Age	-0.042	-
Education	0.040	-
Income	-	-0.040
Political Background	-0.049	-0.025
Relationship within an Organizations	0.028	0.024

The result of the comparison of women's educational achievement and their participation in the local political decision-making process inside and outside municipality, include altogether eight variables. Women living inside the municipality have similar ideas with women living outside the municipality regarding: educational achievement in access to information, educational achievement in social networking

and involvement with organizations, which have indirect, positive effects towards participation in the local political decision-making process. Women living inside the municipality have different points of view from women living outside the municipality in some matters. Women living inside the municipality have the viewpoint that educational achievement in the capability of learning, and number of years of education have an indirect positive effect and that age, and political background have indirect negative effects towards women's participation in the local political decision-making process

5.4 Conclusion

The relation of the variables that are statistically significant with women's educational achievement and have positive associations with participation in the local political decision-making process include: obstacles that hindered the women's participation in politics, civic attitudes, educational achievement in accessing news, educational achievement in learning capacity, educational achievement in social networking, numbers of years of education and involvement in the organization. Variables that exhibited negative associations include: age, income, and involvement in the organization. Furthermore, the opinion of women living inside and outside the municipality differ regarding educational achievement in accessing news, educational achievement in the capability of learning, age, number of years of education and income.

CHAPTER 6

OBSTACLES HINDERING WOMEN FROM PARTICIPATION IN THE POLITICAL DECISION-MAKING PROSSESS

The opportunity for women to participate in all kinds of matters including political affairs has improved a great deal in the modern era, but inequality among men and women is still the norm in all fields that affect women's lives directly. This inequality is reflected in our society as well as in their personal lives and in politics both at the Central Thai level and at local levels. The problems and obstacles keeping women from taking part in politics stem from popularity, customs and the structure of the society that generally does not support women. In this study, the obstacles that hinder the participation by women in the political decision-making process can be broken down into women's own external and internal factors. The external factors that hinder women from participating in politics include culture, customs, traditions, codes of conduct and social values, which often involve process collecting and training, determining and limiting the choice of political roles including the belief, that men are more suited for the use the power and suggesting that politics is solely a matter for men. These hinder women from participating in the political decision-making process. Besides this, support from political parties remains a major factor and the lack of support from government and private sectors also negatively affect women from taking roles politics. Internal factors that hinder women from taking part in politics include readiness of the family, the courage to express oneself in politics and physical conditions of women which in conjunction, cause women to estimate their self worth as low. These elements affect women at different stages in society, systemized according to the special suitability among lifestyle, family and social condition. Most women are required to play mother, wife or daughter roles, which entail different ways of life and conflict with the leader roles demanding knowledge, experience, time and the support of many others ways. All these factors conspire to hinder women from participating in political decisions.

Although at present, a number of women can participate in political decisions, especially at the local level, this represents and can be used as the base level of women participating in politics. These women have to face many problems and obstacles but they never give up and continue their struggle. Interviews with women participating in politics at local district levels and women community leaders in Chanthaburi were conducted with five members, namely, a member of the Parliament Administrative Body of Chanthaburi Province, a member of the municipality of Chanthaburi Province, a member of the Parliament Administration Body of Klong Kud District, a member of the Parliament Administration Body of Khao Vua District and community leaders of Khao Vua District. Regarding SamutPrakan Province, interviews were conducted with a member of the Parliament Administrative Body of SamutPrakan, a member of the municipality of SamutPrakan Province, a member of the municipality of Samrong Nua District, a member of the Parliamentary Administration of Bang Chalong District and community leaders in Bang Chalong District. The most interesting points describing obstacles that hinder women from participating in political decisions are as follows.

6.1 Obstacles that Hinder Women from Participating in the Political Decision-Making Process

Many opinions concerning women being hindered from participating in the political decision-making process were gathered by people with different perspectives. Members of the Parliament Administrative Body of Chanthaburi and members of the Parliament Administrative Body of Samutprakran have the main duty to make laws for the province. These include: verifying and controlling the administration organ of the province, checking the usage of money in all sorts of projects; and giving ideas to develop the province and the annual budget. This group of women believe that very few women are taking part in politics compared with men due to the culture, customs, traditions and social values of Thailand. Still, because of the need for women to take on a greater part in politics, they should strengthen and give more knowledge to women by encouraging the women to obtain a high level of

education. It can be seen that at present, women have started doing more work for the community because they are higher educated.

As for the opinion of the municipality member, the member of the district administration and the leaders of the community have another point of view differ from the member of provincial administration because their responsibility in performing their duty is closer to the public by providing services and of their ups and downs and providing service to the local public. These women have the idea that by participating in the political decision-making process they have to face negative sexual attitudes working at the same place with men who refuse to accept the women working for the community as equals due to the fact that women have family limitations. As Thai society has the influence on women's value and expects that women should take responsibility for the family before taking responsibility of the community, so family duties makes women less likely to take on leadership roles than men especially risky or work at high levels of decision-making. Some men have no trust in women to become leaders or co workers.

This study categorizes the obstacles that hinder woman from participating in the political decision-making process into external and internal problems as follows.

6.1.1 External Factors

6.1.1.1 Cultural, Customs, Tradition and Social Value of Thailand

External factors that hinder the participation of women in the political decision-making process comes from culture, customs, traditions and social values of Thailand; the social regulations for women's roles since the past, which have been accepted and carried on from generation to generation and regarded as a great obstacle. In the past, the roles of the men and women were completely separated. Women had important roles for the family, and looked after the livelihood of the member of the family, different from men who had important roles outside the home. This difference created a special image for women. Societal expectations for men and women are different, nearly the opposite from generation to generation. Women are taught and trained to think that they are inferior to men. The result is most women and nearly all men think and believe that men are to be leaders and women are to be followers. That is why they look at the political arena like a kingdom of men and to

step into that kingdom is not easy for women even to participate in central or local political decisions. This is exemplified by the comment given by a woman member of the Parliament Administration Body of Chanthaburi, she reveals that...

At present, less women are taking part in politics because of cultural norms customs, and social values of Thai people. Women have the responsibility to look after the family. Although the constitution has laid down that women and men have equal rights, but in practice the roles and rights of men are much higher than women due to Thai social and traditional values established over a long time. Although at present women's rights are promoted quite a lot, yet men and women are still attached to the former model. Especially when women themselves are still attached to the former model, encouraging women to enter politics does not go far.

In the matter of culture norms, customs and traditions, a female member of the municipality of Chanthaburi gave the opinion that...

Culture, customs and traditions and social values of Thai society refuse to admit and give the chance to women as much as it ought to. Saying that women's roles, rights and duties are to be a housewife, look after the family; a good mother must look after her children, and a good wife must look after her husband. Men have to be leaders; women are followers and Thai society does not accept the strong woman because she has too much confidence in herself.

Nevertheless, women working in the politics field reflect the uncomfortability in many areas, especially problems due to gender restrictive attitudes. As a female shows her emotion while working with males and feels men have gender bias which leads a few men not to accept or trust women colleagues as when a woman proposes any scheme, men do not really accept it. They look at women as if they do not have any idea how to work or say that women are not able to

do anything and still think that women should be at home and are followers. For example, some women members of the district administration had applied to be candidates of the regional administration but were not accepted. The male member gave the reason that he did not feel convenient in working together because of the difficulties involved in going anywhere together. This is echoed by the viewpoint that a female member of Klong Kud District Amphur Tha Mai Chanthaburi Province gave that...

I tried to do the work according to the rules and regulations as a District Administration Member of Parliament but if I ask the men to do their work quickly too much, I will be blamed as fussy, but I think mostly male members of the District Administration do not want women to have more power because many members are old and narrow-minded, so they think women should be the followers.

As mentioned earlier, participating in politics by women has not obtained much importance yet by using the excuses regarding gender matters and suitability of decision-making. The following viewpoint of a female leader in Tambon Bang Chalong, Amphur Bangplee Samutprakarn Province relates her experience, she revealed that...

I had faced the problem of gender bias during the election for new habitation leader. One leader, who I respected and has influence on the thinking of the villagers mentioned that, 'it's unfortunate that I am a woman, if I would have been a man, he would support me to be the head of the village and will surely get the chance to become village chief. I was surprised by his words as he was the one who encouraged me to apply for the village head man at that time, but because of only this one sentence, I could feel the deep bias towards women, which does not permit a woman to become the leader in the community. The key point is that the person is only a woman.

A woman community leader in Tambon Bang Chalong, Amphur Bangplee, Samutprakarn Province gave the opinion that, men think that women are weak, moody, and should not hold any important position, she revealed that...

I think that in all the occupations, that men have to consider, they do not want women, because the first thing is that men or women themselves have the old style of thinking that women are weak, moody. This bias, when, a woman, is being considered for an important position, often is viewed as her weak point, a valid reason for not letting the woman hold the position, but they don't see that on the other hand, that women have responsibility and are more sensitive and cautious than men.

Other than this, in the working environment of women, prejudiced social values about the gender roles still dominate. This kind of bias encourages the thinking that men are to be leaders and women are to be followers or in other words, men are the forefeet and women are the hindfeet. This promotes feelings and attitudes that women are less capable than men in occupations outside the home, regardless of their ability in making reliable decisions, creating ideas or becoming a leader at the administration management level. This underlying bias is exemplified by the opinion of a female member of Administration body of Samutprakarn Province who said that...

According my experience, working women always have problems, since our society has divided gender roles, like the role of the leader is mostly kept for men, which is the social value and general gender role which has limited women for a long time. When they have a woman leader, problems occur, which I have also faced myself. We have to agree that our culture is like that. For a woman to become a leader is not easy, starting with the staff who expect the leader to be a man. The woman has to make the staff or the colleagues and the

higher level accept her ability without paying attention to the gender matter. The society should understand that whether it is a woman or a man, both have the qualities to do this kind of work.

In this case, if we analyze with our cultural bias, the traditional culture of Thailand has divided the roles of men and women. Women have their household duties, taking care of the children and serving the members in the family, while men are working outside. Therefore the society does not accept women to show their capabilities and destroys their potential. If women want to be accepted from the society as equal to men, as mentioned above, women have to show their ability and work very hard, but still get obstructed because society does not trust and has no confidence in women. The truth that confirms to this point of view, can be seen from the problem that a female member of the Municipality of the Samutprakarn Province, who has tried to solve the problem and is was accepted as follow...

I try to practice myself to get practical knowledge and to debate in the meeting because of my little knowledge as I have never done the work in this field before. I tried to make the male municipality members accept my idea and vision. The work of the female municipality members became better and better and we had to prove ourselves a lot. We tried to explain our ideas with reasons and principles, which made the men to listen, made the members understand and show the result of our responsible job. We tried to take a greater part in the work, and solve problems with sense not temper.

Encouraging women to have further education will make women have higher capabilities and be able to solve more problems of the community, which will make them gain more acceptance from villagers. Education is necessary; because it cannot be denied that Thai society respects an individual with a high educational background, but surely, having a strong educational background is not enough. Women should have the knowledge of working in the community, which is gained by direct

experience, that is, the procedures that will make women have closer relationships with the community which will make the women be prepared and have more confidence in presenting herself as a competitor in the political field, as the suggestion given by a female administration member of Chanthaburi Province, she revealed that...

In the past, women had many roles, but working roles in the community were fewer compared with men. I think if we want woman to take more interest in working in the local area, we should give them strength and more knowledge than this especially in promoting higher education for them. As seen in the past, mostly women lack confidence while working with men by thinking that they have less knowledge and still remain in the role of a follower, which causes them to think that they have fewer capabilities than men. But at present, a few women try to work with the community more since women have more knowledge.

As for the work, the information giver found out that the problem in her work comes from both genders, because of the doubt concerning the benefits, but she tries to be careful by working openly and let the community join with her as evidenced by the opinion given by two female members of Khao Vua Subdistrict Administration, Amphur Thamai, Chanthaburi Province, they revealed that...

Before joining the work, we have the experience of working with the village chief, that made a few men look to see what we could do, or if we would be troublemakers. The organization has quite a large amount of funding for public utility, which most villagers do not take an interest in. Being women, who got the chance to work in the organization, we are interested to see this part also. Some men think that we consider the matter too seriously, are too fussy and inquisitive.

Working alongside women mostly is no problem, but working with men still encounters deep resistance; men still do not accept women working for the community as it should be. I use the achievement and determination to prove, especially the achievement in increasing the family income in the community. When a woman is a wife who can work and get income for the family, the acceptance for that woman increases. Women have to work hard and have patience.

In presenting oneself for working in the political field, a woman herself is considered part of the problem. The number of the women who understand politics and administration are less comparing to men. The important point is women do not support the women themselves, unless another factor makes them choose a woman such as to think that there should be at least one woman or should have a woman on the men's team. To work in the political field, women should have prestige and long term achievement to be really accepted by the community. For doing this, they should be prepared for fighting against the obstacles mentioned previously. Only then will they succeed as the opinion given by a female member of Chanthaburi Municipality, she explained that...

The reason that women do not have the courage to apply for the election is because they are scared that they will not be accepted, although women at present have capabilities equal to men, and have enough strength to work in the political field. As such, women should change by trying to show their achievements to be accepted as having the capability. It may be tiresome because they have to try twice as hard as men, but have to try to prove that women can be capable.

These viewpoints expressed in the interviews with women show that gender bias exists among some group of men who don't accept or trust women and even among some groups of women. However, some social values that still act upon

women, make them lose opportunities in education, in skill practice to increase their ability in work, in taking part in the society. Equality does not mean we have to change everybody to be equal or to be the same, but women should be given basic justice by not letting these natural differences interfere and by determining their lifestyles and values differ from men. To open the gate of education and the chance to choose the career according to ones' interest and abilities will give women the chance to improve themselves, and have the power to choose their lifestyle. Also, blocking women from going into their desired profession will be harmful to the quality of work as evidenced by the opinion female member of the Province Administration Council, she revealed that...

I think women working in the political field have more sensibilities than men. Women will try to work according to the regulation. I think men sometimes do not do the work logically. When asking for votes to do something they mostly use the raising of hands to decide. However, in my way of thinking, the majority is not always correct. In fact, I think when women work alongside men, they mostly do it for the sake of the men.

The problem of women working in politics reveals many uncomfortable feelings, especially gender problems when women are not accepted or trusted by their male coworkers. When women introduce any new project, men will disagree and they look as if women have no knowledge about the work and they are often insulted implying that women can do nothing. Still the old thinking that women must stay at home, and should always be followers is still prevalent, as demonstrated by the following opinion given by a female member of the Tambon Tha Chalong Amphur Bang Plee, Samutprakarn Provincial Administration, she states that...

Everybody has problems in the workplace. Mistakes made in the beginning may help to gain experience if kept as an example. When they fail, they should improve. In the office they must use reason, at

home, it doesn't matter if they use their temper. In the office, three women were talking about their male colleagues did not want a woman to become head because mostly men are seniors. Their minds are not open wide yet.

The example from the data giver above shows the dominating manner of relations between men and women (gender relations) that overlap due to their responsibilities. To control and reach different recourses, the power of decisions made by and between men and women is different. While men will focus on infrastructures like streets and construction materials, women give more importance to matters like the health of the community people, child issues, and developing occupational and labor skills. Sometimes women's ideas are rejected by men in the project presented at meetings for these reasons, as indicated by the opinion given by a female member of the Provincial Administration Council of Tambon Samrong Nua ,Amphur Muang, Samuthprakarn Province, she revealed that...

Women should come out for work because they are soft in the work. They can compromise the work well, be sincere in the work; they can use beautiful conversation more than men. Men who come to work in the political field should be hardened but should have good feeling within them, and admit when they are wrong. I say this because I have seen an example. A contractor brought plants at a width of 50 cm. but dug the hole at a width of 40 cm.; this is not correct. The work should be done according to how it is fixed.

The interview covered the obstacles women are facing in local politics; especially those women who strive to become a member at the local political level. The information giver thinks that he has capability. He has knowledge and understanding of the local politics because he has earned a Bachelor's degree. To be elected at the local political level, women do not depend solely on education but on their capability of working with the community and have results that are accepted and that show that she is capable of serving as a leader of the group. However, other

factors are more important like to have family or a number of votes in politics. Some women, knowledgeable and talented and well-educated, might not be interested in a political career as they think that it is a waste of time and difficult; it would be better to have another type of work to earn their living. This can be seen in the opinion given by a member of the Administration Council, Tambon Klong Kud Amphur Thamai Chanthaburi Province, she revealed that...

I decided to apply for election because I wanted to develop the village, for the children, women youths and concerning livelihood. When I applied for election, two men also applied; I was the only woman. The village people who do not like women leaders will choose the men nominees because they do not know why to choose the woman. That makes some women, who have knowledge and talent and are well educated, think not to come into politics because they think it wastes time and is difficult, it would be better to do something else to earn their living.

The conclusion is that important external factors that hinder women from participating in politics and affect the women directly are culture norms, customs, traditions and social values of Thai society, which fix the role for women in society and separate the roles for men and women. It includes the viewpoint that men should be leaders and women should be only followers. This attitude still pervades Thai society especially when women work in the political field. Accepting or giving help in the women's work is less than men's. Actually, women should get basic justice and not let the differences in thinking become the determination for women participating in the political field.

6.1.1.2 Support from the Political Party

To get support from the political party, especially at the local level is important to push and extend political votes. Political parties play an important role in supporting or not supporting the women to take part in participating in political decision. If political party support women by persuading women to take an interest in politics to serve as a candidate for local and national levels and also support campaign

spending increasing confidence in women to participate more in politics. The opinion of a female member of the Provincial Administration Council Chanthaburi, she said that...

A woman will take part in an election if a political party give confidence, importance and support. It will effect their base for taking part in politics, having votes, having confidence and courage to decide in matters equally with, men but it should not be open which will create group division.”

In spite of this, a woman leader in Tambon Bang Chalong Amphur Bang Plea Samutprakan Province gave the idea that...

At present, the social value of the political party does not give enough importance to woman yet, as can be seen while working for the community. When letting the woman take part in any activity, they will give only the easy and light work.

The conclusion is that a political party has an important role for women to take part in politics. If a political party wanted to reform the culture of the party to let women have a proportional number of representatives at the decision-making level, it would increase the number of women at the base of politics. Especially keeping women in positions they can win and providing enough capital for the candidates will allow women to participate in decision-making procedures successfully.

6.1.1.3 Support from Government Divisions and Public Organizations

Support from government divisions and public organizations by creating objectives and encouraging women will allow women to participate more in decision-making procedures. Adjusting the structure of politics and government system by giving more chances to women to enter into politics, establishing an organization to develop women’s qualities, canceling all restrictive rules and regulations would

encourage women to enter politics. To promote a suitable ratio between men and women in governing at the local community level could be done by organizing trainings on self-development for women. All these points are factors that would encourage more participation from women in politics. An interview from a female Member of Parliament of Samutprakarn Province gave the opinion that...

At present, by receiving support from the government and public divisions, women are participating more in politics, as can be seen by the many women in Samutprakarn Province who are: Committee Chairs of Provincial Women's Development, the District President, District President of the Women's Support Association, Youth, Women, Children and Aged People Committee. They have worked in promoting women's units to join with subdistrict management organizations, and are political representatives at the community level. They are the head chiefs of different villages like volunteers in development villages, support volunteers and also the women who become village chiefs.

It can be concluded that when women get support from government and private organizations, they have more opportunity to participate in politics. The government and private organizations should increase more activities that encouraging the role of women in politics by promoting and giving knowledge, arranging seminar trainings to give knowledge about politics, exchanging ideas and also promote on the financial support, leading to women's participation in politics with quality and effectiveness.

6.1.2 Internal Factors

6.1.2.1 The Family Readiness

The limited roles of women, inherited from past generations, is a major obstacle to women's participation in politics. The responsibilities and commitment that women have towards their families, whether in the role of a wife, mother or daughter, make women unable to put her full time in volunteering to work and

develop the community. Taking care of the home and family the socially fixed duty of women, makes women unable to put their full effort in mixing with community work, especially if those responsibilities are not shared by men. The husband often gives the major opinion that effects the decision of his wife and gives suggestions before the woman decides to enter politics. Most women see their family is the priority and have to perform family duties before helping the community. If the family is not taken care of, problems can affect the job and family problems can follow. Therefore, the best way is to consult with the family before making any decision specially decisions about a political career. If the family does not agree, then she will not apply for the election. A discussion was held with a group of women about if deciding on running for election whether they would give priority to their family. The opinions given by women administration member of Tambol Khao Wuow, Amphur Thamai, Chanthaburi District, she included that...

I consulted with my husband, he said that if no villager applied, then I should give a try; if my husband does not agree, I will not go, I have to ask his opinion first. I think family is important, if the family is not taken care of, it will be difficult to work with the villagers.

The matter of consulting the family about whether it would be suitable to run for the election was discussed. It was found that at first, most husbands did not agree because of many reasons like being ashamed if the wife is not elected. The political position can cause problems and affect the family, if no one is able to help taking care of the household etc. However, when husbands listened to the reasons and explanations from the wife, they might agree, having the opinion that politics can affect women. According to the opinion given by a female Administration Organization Committee Member of Tambol Bangchalong Amphur Bangplee, Samutprakarn Province, she revealed that...

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Before applying for the position, I consulted with my family. My husband was afraid that there would be frequent meetings, it could affect the work and he would be ashamed if I lost the election.

Other than this, when considering the housework and other family duties, most women still have many family responsibilities, due to the fact that she has to do many household chores and outside work including cooking food, washing clothes, taking care of the children and all other work in the house. At the same time, she may have to do outside work for additional income to support the family. Therefore, when women decide to do community work, it constitutes a collective/public sacrifice. Furthermore, to reduce household problems and at the same time, get the chance to work with the community, she has to know how to manage her time. A female Member of Parliament of the Administration Organization of Tambol Klongkud, Amphur Thamai, Chanthaburi District, she stated that...

I have to do all the household work myself from taking care of the children, washing clothes, and cooking food because my husband works in town. Because of many household chores I have to managed my time properly. If I know in advance the meeting schedule, then I have to finish all my household work.

However, most of the women gave high importance to the family, by consulting with their families. They considered the condition of being responsible for the family first before making their decision, so that there will not be family problems later. Moreover, if women join politics, chances of a broken family increase because society expects the woman to take care of her family especially taking care of children. Other than this, parents do not like their daughters to apply as political candidates, because they are worried that it can be dangerous and rather, encourage her to take care of their own children more, according to the opinion given by the women Municipal Committee Member of Chanthaburi District, she revealed that...

There are still a few numbers of women who work in politics; there are many obstacles for women, from social conditions and culture especially from the woman herself and her responsibilities towards family are still for women, which is difficult to change. As for myself, I have one hundred percent interest in politics and will still insist on working in my role as a female politician until no one decides to choose me for the work.

In the same way, on the matter of household management, the interview opinion given by two members of the Administration Organization of Tambol Bangchalong, Amphur Bangplee, Samutprakarn Province, they revealed that...

Women will not be able to work with the community if husbands do not agree because the main duty is taking care of the family. When I joined the community work in local political affairs, the family agreed and are very proud of me. My children have graduated and have their own jobs, so I can work fully.

Women have to take care of the family first, and perform her duties as mother. If she cannot be a good mother then it would be difficult to go out and do outside work. When the children have graduated and have their own jobs, mothers can be satisfied that they have done their best in their duties already.

In conclusion, the obstacles that hinder the participation of women in political decision-making, in the acceptance by their families, as Thai women are still under the influence of the culture that they are follower, and have the main role of being a mother and wife. The responsibilities and commitment of women towards their families whether in the role of a wife or daughter, makes women unable to work politically full time. The responsibilities towards household and family that society has fixed as the responsibility of women, make women unable to find the way to fully participate in politics. If these responsibilities are not shared with men, if society

continues to view men as leaders and women as followers, and if the opportunities for education are more limited than for men, the result is that women cannot fully participate in politics. In addition, the economical status of women would be not stable and it has been found in many cases that women have to depend on men about financial matter further decreases her opportunities.

6.1.2.2 The Courage to Express Oneself Politically

The courage to express oneself politically is another major obstacle for women wishing to participate in the political decision-making process due to a lack of confidence, knowledge and ability. However, not all women think like that. Through interviews with woman community leaders, it was found that the greatest obstacle to taking part in politics was “shyness” especially the fear of running for candidate and failing. However, if the roles in society for both men and women are equal, Thai politics will develop for the better. An interview with a female member of the Provincial Administration Council of Samutprakarn, reported that...

The reason which makes the women dare not to run for election is because they are scared they will not be accepted. However, at present, women have equal capabilities with men, have courage and are strong enough to play the political field. Thus, women should change themselves by trying to show achieve success and gain acceptance. It may be more tiresome because they have to try double than men, but they should show that women are capable.

In the past, Thailand had much fewer women candidates in politics both at the provincial and national levels. One of the reasons that causes fewer women to join the political field was that women felt shy and were scared of failure, not only losing the election but the strongly negative words spoken during and after campaigning. According to the interview of a female member of the municipal government for Chanthaburi, she revealed that...

After losing an election, the female candidate will be verbally attacked. Especially negative remarks by political competitors will discourage many women because their intention was good but they did not receive a good response, and were attacked instead. Also, sometimes even with the intention of applying for the sake of serving the people they are incriminated by their competitors. Facing this negative barrage takes away their willpower and makes many withdraw from the election campaign.

A woman, who campaigned in a village headman election, had to face character assassination and smear tactics. Although she failed to win the election of the village headman, she gained the trust of the people who made her the village chief in Tambon Khao Vua Amphur Thamai Chanthaburi Province. She provided the following opinion..

Not long after I got the position of the village chief, I decided to apply for village headman. First, when I applied for village headman I was rather pressured because I was assaulted by various sorts of disrespect such as vandalism of my political posters, and verbal insults that as a woman I could not do the work, was unable to do the job and unable to do the work well. The worst thing was that I was accused about adultery which created further pressure. However, I never lost heart in this election. I did not win based on votes but I won the villager's hearts.

A female member of the Tambon Samrong Nua Amphur Muang Samutprakran Province Municipality contributed her idea about the courage to express oneself politically, she revealed that...

To be a leader one should be broadminded, not lack confidence when somebody says or does something, leaning from side to side.

One should have her own guidelines, be widely open and accept the truth. Politics is a type of competition. To win and to lose is normal. Political candidates do not need to slander opponents and run negative campaigns. They should run normal election campaigns because if they intend to do well, there is no need to be scared that something can harm us.

Females need firmness to strongly participate in making political decision. In addition, females have to work twice or three times harder than males to be accepted. However, the important thing is males have to be open-minded, give opportunities and support; only then will females succeed in their work. Society should revise certain norms if it really wants to give opportunities to females. It has to change the thinking and attitudes of males also. Society should lay the foundation, develop the nature, and create good attitudes among male youths. As for social value, males must know how to behave with females. No matter the sacrifice, generosity will change the negative attitude of male youths towards females beginning at a young age. A female member of the Region Administration Tambon Klongkud Amphur Thamai Chanthaburi Province, expressed that...

There are more chances for women to apply for election, but women dare not express themselves, but if women play the political field, there will be many supporters. This is because the personality of women is gentle and friendly to everyone, trying to please people all around, which makes most people give them support. It is different from some men who are aggressive, rough and stick to their own ideas. In some villages none of the woman applied for the election, because men told them not to apply; it is difficult anywhere; women have family responsibilities, but actually it is not like that. If these responsibilities can be shared with somebody else, women can have the opportunity. This is not a major problem. In the long term, women could have more chances in the political field. At present,

women can go for meetings or stay overnight anywhere. This is not an obstacle. Especially for some women who have families and the husband is an understanding person, it is easier to work in politics.

In the same way, from an interview with a woman member of the Municipal Committee of Chathaburi Province, she gave the opinion that...

Women can work in politics, because they are more sensitive and have more patience; only a few things should not exceed the men's role, to act like a hero or over-smart because some matters women cannot do just like making firm decisions or using strength. Women should do the work according to their limits only and do it best by maintaining the focus on social welfare, developing the country, because by thinking positively, doing good, and without gender discrimination, everybody can do well and think well.

Men and women should have equality in all matters. Some work maybe less suitable, but not all. As for the women's rights are protected under the law; they should know that, and if it is not against the law, then do it but it should not be illegal. This is supported by the opinion of a member of the Administration Council of Tambol Khao Vua, Amphur Thamai Chanthaburi Province, she revealed that...

To be born as women, we should be more sensitive than men, not like before when women only stayed at home but now we women can do anything. What is not against the law, do it. Do not let it be against the law. But we should not go beyond the men. Females are kindhearted. Femininity involves extremes because sometimes we see that this should not be done. Never think that women are equal to men 100 percent, there are some differences.

It can be concluded that, some women lack confidence in their knowledge, and capabilities making them dare not to make strong decisions including

not being brave enough to enter in politics. They are scared of failure in election, scared of people that will attack and campaign negatively. This discourages women, an obstacle to entering the political representative competition. At the same time some women are firm, cautious, polite gentle and have determination to help their society. They can struggle and overcome these obstacles.

6.1.2.3 The Physical State of Women

One more important internal obstacle of women that obstructs their participation in political decision-making is the physical status of women in working with community. It appears like a problem and can be dangerous to women while working. It can affect women when they go out to meet the public or do other work in certain areas or certain times. It is viewed by society as unsuitable. According to the opinions given by eight women elected for local level administration, they feel that the physical inner condition of women is an obstacles for women. They stated that...

Families do not want women to go out of the house or face any difficulty in checking the work at isolated places and going out for social functions often may create problems within the family.

The way a woman conducts herself with the male colleagues, even though it is not adultery in any way, but can be seen in a negative perspective.

Social values of the Thai society are not wide open view women in bad ways, like when attending night parties. If she sits with the people who drink or go any where with men, they will talk about the woman in a negative angle, although they do nothing like what they say except work together with women and men.

To be accused of adultery, to be slandered or gossiped, are a few of the bad viewpoints towards women who work in the political field from their male colleagues and other people.

Sometimes they have to stay for the night shift, which they cannot do and have to let their husbands do instead or some kind of work which they cannot do together with men like labor work.

Being women, some work cannot be done actively; they have to be very cautious about themselves.

Being women, they can easily be looked at in negative ways, especially by the opposite gender, which limits the work done by women. In some cases they cannot do the work side by side or equal to men, who see that women are inferior to men.

The limit of gender, and the responsibilities towards family, makes women unable to be as good leaders as men, especially in risky matters and when making firm decisions.

It can be concluded that the physical differences of women are seen to be part of the problem and create obstacles for women. Women have to struggle about their conduct, and look after themselves. For women to progress and participate in political decision-making, they have to avoid obstacles in their work, starting with managing herself, time, family and work. It can be made more suitable by being diligent, attentive, seeking knowledge and showing a sense of responsibility. These will be important qualities to make women able to participate in the political decision-making process.

6.2 Conclusion

The obstacles that hinder the participation of women in the political decision-making process, stem from the culture, traditions and Thai social values that are not open to women as they should be. Tradition has long held that the rights and duties of women are restricted to being a housewife, looking after the family, taking care of children, taking care of the husband, and men should be the forefeet, women, the hindfeet. Thai society does not accept strong women because their high confidence and the physical conditions of women while performing work in isolated places or late at night is viewed as unsuitable by Thai society. To overcome these obstacles and participate in political decision-making, an education certificate is not enough. Women should also have working knowledge of the community, learnt through direct experience, a learning method that creates closer relationships with community members gives women more confidence in herself, thus being able to take on a greater role in political decision-making.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION, CONTRIBUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This investigation of educational achievement to women's participation in the political decision-making process proposes to study women's personal characteristics and their participation in the local political decision-making process, to study the relationships among educational achievement, demographic status, civil attitude and obstacles to women's political participation and women's engagement in the local political decision-making process. The scope of research covers Provincial/ Municipality Administrative Organizations and Subdistrict Administrative Organizations. The randomly selected group totals 395 people comprising 219 people from Chantaburi and 176 people from Samutprakarn. The random group is calculated by Yamane formula. The statistics used in quantitative data analysis are percentage average ratio, standard deviation, ANOVA analysis, Hierarchical regression analysis, Path analysis and qualitative data analysis using in-depth interviews from women who have elected to positions in local political offices, and local community leaders.

7.1 Conclusion

7.1.1 Characteristics of Women's Participation in Local Political Decision-Making Process

7.1.1.1 Demographic Characteristics

The study sample comprised a total of 395 female citizens, average age 31 years, ranging from 19 to 67 years, 57.2 percent are single status; and 42.8 percent of married women have on average 1 child and a maximum of 4 children with rather few having children under 6 years old. The average monthly income is 8,466.13 baht, with incomes ranging from 0 to 60,000 baht, and 85.6 percent work as company

employees. The average education is 13.36 years, 10.9 percent have a political background, and 16.5 percent are organization members.

Forty four people comprising local female leaders and local female politicians have an average age of 37 years, ranging from 21 to 62 years. The number of single women is equal to the number of married women and those living together. Of married women, 47.7 percent have one child on average, maximum three children with very few below 6 years old. The average monthly income is 20,584.55 baht, ranging from 2,800 baht to 80,000 baht and 77.2 percent earn a living as merchants and private business owners. The average age of educated people is 14.95 years; the minimum is Matthayom Suksa 3, and the maximum is Master Degree. The average number of years living in the area is 31 years; 34.1 percent have a political background, and 100.0 percent are members of organizations.

7.1.1.2 Women's Participation in Local Political Decision-Making Process

Three levels of political activities are observer level, supporter level, and competitor level. In political observer level, the behaviors of citizens are in accordance with local politicians and community leaders in that they participate in elections every time. For political supporter level, citizens are likely to persuade others to recognize and participate in the election but local politicians and community leaders usually contact with the local administrative organization. At the political competitor level, citizens mostly support politicians and political groups but local politicians and community leaders are candidates for local politicians.

7.1.2 The Relationship between Personal Characteristics and Participation in Local Political Decision-Making Process

Regarding the study of women's personal characteristics, eight variables were identified including demographic data such as age, marital status and having children less than 6 years of age, economic data including income and occupation, and social factors including education, political background and organization involvement. The dependent variables are the women's participation at three levels of the local political decision-making process, namely, political observer, political supporter and political competitor. Three variables that affect the political observer's participation were

identified as age, occupation and political background. Only one variable to the political supporter was statistically significant, political background. No statistically significant variables of the political competitor were found.

7.1.3 The Relationship between Educational Achievement and Participation in Local Political Decision-Making Process

1) From the analysis, educational achievement in the news information approach held the most influence both direct and indirect to the political decision-making process. This was followed by civic attitude and obstacles to engagement that had a direct positive effect. Other variables include educational achievement in learning capacity, social networking, occupation and length of education with a positive effect. Age, income, political background and member of organization were negative effects.

2) Comparisons of the relationship between educational achievement and participation in the political decision-making process in and out of the municipal area were made. Women in municipal areas held the same opinion as those out of the municipal area regarding educational achievement in approaching news information, social networking and organization involvement which exhibited indirect positive effects to participation in the local political decision-making process. Women in municipal areas held different opinions than women out of municipal areas regarding some points. Women in municipal areas think that educational achievement in learning capacity and the number of year of education are indirect positive effects, but age and political background are indirect negative effect.

3) Qualitative data analysis results regarding obstacles to women's participation in local political decision-making process concerned Thai culture, traditions, customs and societal values; women are still not accepted or given the opportunity to engage in political activities. The roles and rights of "good" women are believed to be those of housewife, taking care of the family, children and husband. Men are always the leaders and Thai society still does not accept assertive women who have high self-confidence. The natural physical characteristics of women are sometimes seen as unsuitable for activities such as surveying, visiting or participation in isolated areas and after official hours. Therefore, to overcome these obstacles and

the lack of quality education, women need to gain knowledge in working with the community through direct experience. A close relationship with the community enhances readiness and self-confidence to empower them to participate in local political decision-making process more effectively.

7.1.4 Hypothesis Test Result

The results of this study are in accordance with the specified hypotheses as follows:

1) Hypothesis One: The relationship between educational achievement and participation in the local political decision-making process in the Central Thai Region, is in accordance with the specified assumption. From the four variables of educational achievement, three variables rationally influence participation in the political decision-making process. The news information approach had a direct positive effect, and the items learning capacity and social networking had an indirect positive effect.

2) Hypothesis Two: Demographic status, civic attitude and obstacles to participation in the local political decision-making process in the Central Thai region, is in accordance with the specified assumption. The identified demographic status variables include occupation, age, income, length of education, political background and organization involvement, and the civic attitude variable and obstacles to participation variable both directly and indirectly totally affected women's participation in the political decision-making process.

7.2 Contributions

1) The obstacles to participating in the local political decision-making process can be divided into women's external and internal obstacles. The outer obstacles include culture, customs, traditions and social values that decide the differences between men and women. Support from political parties and from the public and private sector including acceptance or help for a woman working in the political field is still little. The important inner obstacles of women include readiness of the family, the confidence to express herself in politics and women's physical conditions which

determine her responsibility and her commitment towards the family. Some women have no confidence in their knowledge, or capabilities, which make them dare not to enter into politics. They are scared to be attacked aggressively by society. In addition, a women's physical condition must be carefully considered when working with the community in order to behave according to social norms and to take care of oneself so as not to create problems in the work or in participating in political decision-making procedures.

2) The results of the study show that women's participating in the political decision-making process is at quite a low level. Mostly it is limited to political transitional activities like to use their right to vote, follow the news of political movements and to participate in political spectator activities, contacting political officers or political leaders to gain political ideas or persuade others not to buy or sell votes, for example. Participating at high levels of politics or in politics can create clear conflicts and divisions of groups. Examples include supporting political leaders or political groups, participating in investigations on the management of district level organ, helping preferred candidates in their campaigns, taking part in opposing the management of the government and applying for political posts. The representative sample women will have very little chance in these political procedures. Many of these stem from the beliefs, social values, and Thai attitudes as most Thai women wish to avoid conflict and dislike violence. They mostly prefer to compromise, an necessary value characteristic of Thai extended families like showing respect for seniors, because they have many relatives and many complex networks among relatives. Thus, expressing favor or participating in political activities or becoming influential politicians may create conflicts in their community, their families and within themselves.

Moreover, the study found that group systems of political support are controlled according to the character of each person. For example, authority groups, benefit groups, influence groups, relative groups, and religion culture and tradition groups will be very important groups found to participate at different level that assist and rely on each other, no matter how the government may change. Each government support groups always maintains its importance to political candidates. Developing and promoting political participation should give importance to this point because it

is the creative body of the social surroundings that will affect political participation. It will limit the political participation of women to primary or secondary political levels only.

3) The results of analyzing the relation of educational success and the participation of women in political decision-making procedures founds the success of education in women regarding news and disseminated information has the greatest effect on the participation of women in political decision-making procedures. This is because modern communication system technology is not limited to the central part of the country like in Bangkok. Political news moves extremely rapidly throughout other provinces. As the public receives political news in a timely manner, it provokes women to take interest in managing their local political administration. The problems and obstacles women face in participating in politics apart from the general interest to obtain political information makes women in Chanthaburi and Samutprakan Provinces increase their knowledge level and women who are already working to improve society can make better decisions regarding whether or not to take part in political decision-making procedures and which type to choose. The study of Orathai Kokpol and Soparat Satuwong (1996: 65) found that a high education level or well-educated women would have many advantages when receiving news because they have wider knowledge, better understanding and do not become involved in anything easily. Generally, educated people will use media more than the less educated and will use printed media more than other media types. Moreover The World Bank gives the opinion that education is the most important key to satisfying the need of good news information, namely, understanding difficult topics, having choices and becoming familiar with the necessary skills and political learning.

4) The results of investigation of the relation between the success of education and the participation of women in political decision-making procedures found that the attitude of being a citizen had positive affects based on their ability to access the news information field. This is because of the attitude of citizenship, which includes the sense of being a citizen, the sense of efficiency in politics and the trust in politics supports the participation of women in politic decision-making procedures. This concurs with the study of Milbrath and Goel (1997) that stated that to participate in politics and the attitude of citizenship have a harmonious connection. It means that if

a person has highly efficiently feeling regarding politics, the level of his or her political participation will become higher also. Moreover, in the study of Suthira Thompson (1998), the results of having political feeling and culture found that the person who thinks that he or she has the ability to influence politic decision, he or she will have more contentment with the political system and will give more support to the political system. He or she will estimate the value of performing one's duty positively which matches the findings of this study that if women having the attitude of being a concerned citizen and believing that the political ability of women is not less than men will influence that women to participate in political decision procedures more than women who have lower attitudes towards citizenship. That is why, the attitude of citizenship is an important point that influences more or less women to participate in political decision procedures. It means that if women believe that they have the ability to influence political decision procedures, realize their capabilities or self-confidence and believe that they or their political participation can achieve the target, those women will enter into political decision procedures more.

5) The findings of this study demonstrate that obstacles that hinder the political participation of women have a positive affect in taking part in political decision procedure and these can be categorized as internal and external factors in the women themselves. These factors include: women do not yet receive enough support for participating in politics, the community gives less acceptance to women compared to men, and family responsibilities make them unable to do their utmost. This is due to the fact that the role of women in political decision-making procedures is limited by culture, social values, the belief and tradition which give more importance, opportunities, rewards and privileges to men than women. The influence from social values and the beliefs of Thai society are significant through in previous times the levels were set more highly unequal for women than for men. Though these unequal law have already been amended the social values and the beliefs of the majority of people have not changed accordingly because they are deeply buried in custom culture and society and are not just social artifacts (like laws, etc.) that can be changed easily (Kotom Areeya and others, 1997: 9-10). However, the study found that obstacles which block women from taking part in politics has a positive affect to the participation of women in political decision-making procedures. This shows that

the greater the obstacles towards women's political participation, the higher the motivation for women to take part in political decision-making procedures. This shows that women have developed their status in economic social and political areas, more than in the past, and it is observable that at present, the creation of women's group in the political arena is diverse. In the past it was limited to the high social class or educated women. At present, women of all levels and all occupations have the chance to assume the leadership rank in local communities, both in the form of village headman, village senior, and member of local councils (Thavilwadee Bureekul and others, 2001).

6) The findings of the study report that the age of women has both a direct and indirect influence on political decision-making procedures. A sample representation of women with the average age of 31 years, working age women, may have sufficient enough influence in modern times to participate in political decision-making procedures irrespective of all sorts of social modern media, enable women to better view examples of modern women. This includes the awareness from social assemblies and methods of education in which they now focus on women's right and roles more than in the past. This makes women realize the importance of women's right and influences them to take part in political decision-making more than other age groups. This social instructing procedure was less noticeable in the past. This made women in the past think that politics was outside their realm of activity; that it was strictly the males' duty.

7) This study found that women who live in or outside the municipal areas feel that to be a member of an institution has a positive relationship towards making decisions about participating in political decision-making procedures through the attitudes good citizenship. Regarding the factor of being a member of an institution of women, either inside or outside municipal areas, this study found both to have similar characteristics, meaning that to be a member of a women's group or institution in the community and the kind of group activity improved their participation without regard to geographic conditions. When women join groups to earn a living, they usually receive support from government institutions or officials in the form of development workshops that teach professional tips including how to establish economical sufficiency in the community. This makes women understand important management

principles on how to take part in development. These then bind women to obtained benefit due to their political participation. In addition, when they understand the benefits to be obtained from this development, they will more completely understand their importance and be more willing to participate in politics. In spite of this, to be a member of an organization and to participate in other group activities, regardless of locality, is an important influencing factor permitting the women to have stronger ideas, more positive attitudes and more proactive behavior that suits the democratic system. Therefore, by taking part in group conferences, village community conferences and network conferences, the chance for women to develop and demonstrate their ideas greatly increases. Listening to others express viewpoints, being admitted to meetings, making and implementing resolutions will further develop the feeling of democracy among women and create more positive attitudes toward democracy and the value of community participation. Thus, to encourage women to take part in community activities of different organizations and groups, creates a process of learning together with other women resulting in a higher regard towards democratic principles. This is due to the fact that developing and learning about democracy is not only classroom-based, but it has to be undertaken in real practical terms also. Experimenting with democratic processes in real life situations will make the abstract ideology of democracy become absorbed in the paths and career life of women.

7.3 Limitations of the Study

While in the course of conducting this research, the investigator discovered problems, obstacles and limitations to the study from the beginning until the end. They include the following:

- 1) The information field. The researcher found that some information was not deep enough especially in regard to the quality of the data obtained, especially from women who were elected to political positions. These ten politicians felt limitations to disclose certain types of information. Demographic data, their family's background and information about income etc., was usually concealed especially any negative information because these people are politicians and felt the need to project idealistic

characteristics, so as not to blemish their public image. As a result, some information obtained in the study might be considered superficial, misleading or even false.

2) The information collection. The researcher encountered many problems and obstacles especially regarding the women's population group, which is appointed to political posts and women community leaders. Most of these participants had many personal affairs and social activities to attend to. Hence, they did not have sufficient time to meet and give information for the researcher to collect, or when they managed to make their interview appointment, the time involved to collect quality data was not enough. As a result, some of the information that this study is based on was not fully obtained, or the information had to be obtained by a close associate of the participant, second hand, in order to completely gather the needed information.

3) The researcher. Since the researcher did not reside in the area of the conducted study and did not stay with the villagers for a long period of time, it made them less familiar with the villagers in the area and vice versa. Sometimes villagers are not confident enough to share their true personal perspectives or give complete and actual information as they had not enough time to build and establish the trust needed to convey this deeper level of information, especially any information that may bring about a negative effect to them personally. As a result, some of the information may have been superficial and may have lacked complete details. To conduct this type of study, the researcher should try to talk and make a better understanding about the information needed, emphasize that the information and their identity will be kept confidential then go and collect the information once again.

7.4 Recommendations

According to the findings of this research, the educational success of women has a significant relation to the participation of women in local political decision-making procedures. In order to promote this aspect, the participation of women in political decision-making procedures has to be encouraged. The educational success of the women will decrease the problems and obstacles towards political participation by women according to the nature of the population, economy and society as discussed in detail below.

7.4.1 The Participation of Women in Political Decision-Making

Procedures at the Community Level

The research revealed that a limited number of women participate in the process of political decision-making at the deep level or in gladiatorial activities; mostly they are limited only to low level political activities and only by those that are deeply interested in politics, therefore, the following suggestions are made.

1) Encourage women to have greater potential and higher capabilities to prosper, and to be financially stable because economic activities will be the main factor that affect the decision to consider serving as representatives in ruling the local community. It can be said that the most suitable persons to administer the local community must develop strong managerial skills in order to make the economy of the local community prosper.

2) Encourage women to participate more in policy level decision-making and politics through the strategy of affirmative action, in order to give greater opportunities to the women by giving a proportion or establishing a quota for women to enter into decision-making organizations, especially the local level organizations. It is an important tactic that will help in creating more positive attitudes that support the equality of men and women in society. This is because increasing the potential and authority of women is the important key to increasing the standard of women and making society accept the political role of women. When women have the chance to work side by side men in the society, the common public can see and trust in the ability of women, and they will be respected and accepted.

3) At present, private organizations, which support and encourage women to make the decision to participate in local level politics have shown good results, women should be encouraged and empowered to apply for election more, which will make more women get elected. This step is not intended solely to support women when they run for election but also to provide them with ongoing development methods and continuous support after the election. This type of support and increased potential of women after the election is considered to be of great importance and it is surely will not be less than giving support in elections for local level organization.

7.4.2 The Successful Results from Women's Education

This research has shown that the results of women's education regarding verbal ability show no significant affect to local level political decision-making. Therefore, the following recommendations are made.

1) Promote women's participation In organizations and other government sectors. Women should be promoted in regard to their personality development and interpersonal communication techniques, to better disseminate knowledge and develop persuasive speaking skills and eloquence. Organizing seminars to give knowledge about personality development, studying the work of women's organization that have a role in helping the community, successful community develop strategies and examining model communities are a few of the examples of actions that will make woman see the importance of taking on a political role for herself and be successful in local community work by participating in local political decision-making procedures.

2) Encourage further education for women because this will allow the woman to have higher capabilities, in order to solve the community problems more effectively, which will make them be more accepted by their constituents. Other than this, education is important and it cannot be denied that Thai society hold great respect to persons with high educational qualifications. However, having only educational qualifications is not enough; women should have the knowledge to work for oneself and for their communities also, and this knowledge can be obtained from direct experience. Therefore, supporting women in this area, will make them to be more fully prepared and have more confidence to join and participate in political decision-making procedures.

7.4.3 Problems and Obstacles Towards Women's Participation in the Politics

This research has found out that the problems and obstacles of women's participation in politics happens due to internal and external obstacles of the woman herself, so the recommendation is made that the government should have an ongoing policy to eliminate the elements of the society and culture that are negative towards women, to create more positive and equal value towards men's and women's roles in

among the new generation through the family, educational institutions and public media as follow:

1) Family institution: Since the family appoints fixed roles regarding the work of men and women to their children, and in order for parents to be good role models, it is necessary to develop the viewpoint of parents about the roles of men and women in the family. This can be achieved by encouraging the values that the father should share in the household responsibilities equally with the mother and to train the son from an early age to help in the household work.

2) Educational institution: Education is a powerful tool in creating many viewpoints for day to day living and also an important instrument in increasing the potential of women, so by adjusting the course content and study procedures, both in the sphere of teachers, and teaching methods that provoke and encourage both male and female candidates to understand the equal roles of men and women, which are suitable to the changes in society. In addition educators can add content about human rights in school courses for the new generation to understand and develop more positive attitudes towards both genders with an emphasis on equality.

3) Mass Media: Mass Media can help in creating more positive viewpoint towards women because mass media is an important influence in this modern communication age and has an important potential in changing society to accept new and more positive viewpoints. That is why this media can point out the current inequalities between men and women and to create the realization by the public that is needed before changes in social values can take place.

7.4.4 Characteristics of Population, Economy and Society

1) The results of the research reveal that women, who have low levels of education and incomes, participate in local political decision-making procedures more than women of higher education and incomes. We should encourage women to obtain higher levels of education so that women can participate in political decision-making more, especially to motivate the number of women who have education higher than Bachelor's degree, to apply as local level political candidates or fix the minimum educational level for applying as local politic candidates.

2) The result of the research indicate that being a member of an organization has a positive influence towards participating in local political decision-making procedures. The results of the study report that most of the women are members of an organization, but not a political organization, so they should be encouraged to join politics, so that women can take on more roles in political decision-making. This can be done by organizing local political groups. Providing knowledge in how to set up this kind of political organization for women, including how to use different measures to ensure that political parties will give more opportunities for women to engage in politics is recommended.

3) Encourage women to join social groups. Social group will serve as effective tools where the women can express their different abilities, and the leadership will help in accepting members of that social group. It means that one part of society can changed views to accept women more. If women do this in all social member groups, they will have the chance to participate political decision-making procedures more.

7.5 Implications for Future Research

1) The researchers are interested to study the point that women with low education and income take part in politics more than women with higher education and income. They should study this point further to analyze the nature of this occurrence to better enhance the political participation of women.

2) Future research should study the participation of political decision-making procedures only with the women who are holding the political positions, to see the whole picture of the factors regarding political participation clearly.

3) Future research should focus on the problems and obstacles facing women in political participation including the method to overcome these obstacles before and after being elected in local political positions.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

**“Women’s Educational Achievement and Their Participation in the Thai
Central Region Local Political Decision-Making Process”**

Questionnaire Number.....

Interview date.....

- | | | |
|-----------------|--|---|
| Province | <input type="checkbox"/> Chantraburi | <input type="checkbox"/> Samutprakarn |
| Amphur | <input type="checkbox"/> Muang Chantraburi | <input type="checkbox"/> Muang Samutprakarn |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Tha Mai | <input type="checkbox"/> Bang Plee |
| Tambon | <input type="checkbox"/> Chanta Nimit | <input type="checkbox"/> Preak Sa |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Ta Chang | <input type="checkbox"/> Samrong Nua |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Klong Kud | <input type="checkbox"/> Bang Chalong |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Khao Vua | <input type="checkbox"/> Nong Prua |

Interviewee.....Position.....

Phone number.....

Part 1 Demographic Data

Directions Please mark ✓ in () or write your answer in the blank provided.

1. Age..... years old.
2. Marital Status
 - () Single/Divorced/Widowed/Separated
 - () Married and living with the spouse

3. Number of Children.....
4. Number of Children younger than 6 years old who stay home and have not started schooling.....
5. I have been living in this province foryears.
6. My monthly income is aboutBaht.
7. Occupation/Career
 - () Civil Servant/Public Enterprise
 - () Private Organization Employee
 - () Independent Career
 - (Such as trading, agriculture, animal farming, and others)
8. Number of years educated.....years.
9. Number of years your father has been educated.....years.
10. Number of years your mother has been educated.....years.
11. Have any of your family members been elected as a political representative?
 - () No.
 - () Yes, please identify:
12. At present, are you a member of a social or economic group of your community?
 - () No.
 - () Yes, please identify:

Part 2 Educational Attainment

Directions Please mark ✓ in () or write your answer in the blank provided.

1. Are you working with any group set up to solve community issues or problems?
 - () Never
 - () Yes, occasionally
2. At present, are you a member of your local social or economic group?
 - () No.
 - () Yes, number of groups:

3. In case you are currently a member of a political group, please state your group/affiliation by marking ✓ in the space that corresponds to your position(s).

Name of Group/ Organization	Position				
	Chair	Deputy Chair	Member (with position)	Member (without position)	Other (Please Identify)
1.....
2.....
3.....

4. At present, which of the following political positions do you hold?

- None
- Village Head
- Leader of Village Group
- Member of SAO
- SAO Committee Member
- Member of Municipal Council
- Member of PAO
- Others (Please identify)

5. In case you are currently a local politician, how long have you been in office?
(From the first until the present)

- Less than 1 year
- 1 year or more (Number of years.....)

6. In your opinion, which media provides you the most reliable and accurate political information.

- Information from media such as radio, TV, printed materials, and digital media
- Information from people such as family members, neighbors, and community leaders
- Information from specific-purpose media such as notices, billboards, or loudspeakers

7. Within the past one year, have you ever attended a conference, workshop, or seminar organized in your community or outside of your community?

- No.
- Yes. (Number of times:))

8. If you have attended a training course, workshop, seminar or a conference, please identify them in the table below.

Name of Course/Workshop/Seminar	Organizer
1.....
2.....
3.....

Directions Read each given statement then assign a score (0 to 10) to reflect or represent your behavior. (0 = Never, and 1 – 10 Rarely to Always)

No.	Statement	Score (0 – 10)
1	In the past six months, I kept myself updated on politics via the following media: 1.1 Radio or Television	.....
	1.2 Printed materials	.....
	1.3 Internet or Election Hotline 1171	.....
	1.4 Family Members, Neighbors, Co-workers	.....
	1.5 Community Leaders e.g. Village Head, leader of the village group, local politicians	.....
	1.6 Information provided by my village or community such as notices or village loudspeakers	.....
	2	On a daily basis, how much do you listen to, watch, or read the following media on political issues?
2.1 Hourly news updates from radio		.....
2.2 News from Radio Thailand		.....
2.3 News and updates from general newspapers		.....
2.4 News and update from political newspapers such as Matichon, Siamrat, or Thai Post, etc		.....
2.5 Hourly news updates from TV		.....
2.6 Daily news from TV		.....

No.	Statement	Score (0 – 10)
3	In my opinion, education can develop my skills and abilities in the following aspects:	
	3.1 My understanding of innovations and new technologies	.....
	3.2 My ability of choose good political representatives	.....
	3.3 My ability to understand complex political issues and subtleties	.....
	3.4 My ability to choose well-informed and reliable information which is useful for decision making	.....
	3.5 My ability to become a well-informed citizen on political issues and problems.	.....
3.6 My greater opportunities to access more education, training/workshops or seminars within and outside my community.	.....
4	Education has helped me develop my rhetorical ability in the following aspects:	
	4.1 Ability to give a persuasive political speech	.....
	4.2 Expertise and advanced skills in making political speeches	.....
	4.3 Greater opportunities to participate in political debates	.....
	4.4 Feeling confident to discuss or give a political speech	.....
4.5 Broader information and perspectives on politics	.....
5	Education has helped me develop my social network in the following aspects:	
	5.1 Accessing information about people and current events in the community	.....
	5.2 Working in a group to solve problems	.....
	5.3 Learning from others and exchanging information with others	.....

No.	Statement	Score (0 – 10)
	5.4 Increasing the number of contacts, resulting in my familiarity with other people and participation in the political making process	.....
	5.5 Supporting my engagement in the political decision making process	.....

Part 3 Civic Attitudes

Directions Read each given statement and assign a score to reflect your opinion (0-10, from strongly disagree to strongly agree).

No.	Statement	Score (0 – 10)
1	Everybody should pay attention to politics as it involves them.	.....
2	Casting one's vote is to protect one's rights as well as to perform one's important civic duty.	.....
3	It's my duty to follow up and keep an eye on the behavior of civil servants and local politicians.	.....
4	Voting is a civic duty for everybody, which can't be forced.	.....
5	When there are already a lot of voters, my vote will be obsolete.	.....
6	My vote affects the behavior of the elected members of my local administrative organizations.	.....
7	Voting is one way for me to have my say on the administration of the government.	.....
8	If I had a chance to do political work, I could do it as well as any other.	.....
9	There are several legal ways for us to monitor the performance of our local admin bodies.	.....

No.	Statement	Score (0 – 10)
10	Nowadays political problems are complex, and I am not capable enough to help solve them.	.....
11	The policy of the government on provincial administration is a good one.	.....
12	I believe that those who do political work have done so to help people who are in trouble and need help; they have done so to develop their local community.	.....
13	Any decision made by a politician is based on the highest benefit of the country and the public, rather than on the benefit of his team and party.	.....
14	I trust that my local politicians have performed their duties properly and honestly.	.....
15	Local politicians uphold their political promises.	.....

Part 4 Obstacles to Women’s Engagement in the Local Political Decision Making Process

Directions Read each given statement and assign score to reflect your opinion (0-10, from strongly disagree to strongly agree).

No.	Statement	Score (0 – 10)
1	Women lack self-confidence.	.....
2	Women think they lack political skills.	.....
3	Women lack political knowledge and experience.	.....
4	Women’s physiques does not allow them to fully perform their duties or tasks.	.....
5	Family burdens and responsibilities make it difficult for women to work outside their homes.	.....
6	Gender role beliefs make women’s work less credible.	.....
7	Women often lack support from other women.	.....

No.	Statement	Score (0 – 10)
8	Men's networks exclude women.	.....
9	Compared to men, women often receive less recognition for their contribution to society or the community.	.....
10	So far, the government has done well enough to support women's participation in the political-decision making process.	.....

Part 5 Women's Participation in the Local Political Decision-Making Process

Directions Please mark ✓ in () or write your answer in the space provided.

1. In the last local election, did you exercise your right by casting your vote for the chair of the provincial administration organization or provincial administration council?

() Yes. (Proceed to no. 3)

() No.

2. Please state your reason (s)

.....

3. Have you exercised your right by casting your vote in your local election such as an election for the village head, leader of the village group, members of SAO, members of municipal council, or members of the provincial administrative organization?

() Yes.

() No.

4. Have you ever run for a position in the local political office?

() Yes.

() No.

5. Have you held/are you holding a political office?

() Yes.

() No.

Directions Please read each statement carefully and assign the most appropriate score for each of the statements that you feel reflect your behavior.

(0 = Never; 1 rarely – 10 always)

No.	Statement	Score (0 – 10)
1	I almost always follow what is on or the administrative matters of my local administrative organizations.	.....
2	In the past six months, I have conversed or discussed political issues, local or national, with other people.	.....
3	In the past six months, I have exchanged my opinion on local political issues, with other members of my family.	.....
4	In the past six months, I have conversed or discussed political issues, local or national, with other people.	.....
5	I share a part in stimulating community members to solve problems in the community by collaborating with your local politicians.	.....
6	I never miss my local elections.	.....
7	I used to write a letter or make a contact with other media to inquire about political issue or express my political view.	.....
8	I used to contact my local admin organizations on matters such as such as taxes, construction regulations, and budget support.	.....
9	Within the past 12 months, I made contact with a government officer or my local politician to report/complain about the problems of the village or of mine.	.....
10	Within the past 12 months, I made contact with one of the political leaders/representatives via mail, telephone, or asked to see them to ask for help in solving problems faced by the community.	.....

No.	Statement	Score (0 – 10)
11	I used to persuade other people to see the significance of local politics and realize the importance of voting.	.....
12	I used to persuade the people I know to vote for a local politician that I have been supporting.	.....
13	I used to urge other people not to sell their votes.	.....
14	I used to talk to other people I know about the negative consequences of not voting in the local election.	.....
15	I used to participate in a meeting on my local management of the public services.	.....
16	I used to participate in a village-level meeting, forum or community meeting.	.....
17	I used to take part in a project planning or a community policy on public matters such as local infrastructure management.	.....
18	I have been involved in a follow-up investigation assessing members of some local administrative bodies.	.....
19	I have supported or helped a local politician or a political group that I like.	.....
20	I used to support a candidate campaigning for an election or participate in other activities supporting that candidate.	.....
21	I have participated in a political rally.	.....
22	I used to run for a local political office.	.....

APPENDIX B

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

**“Women's Educational Achievement and Their Participation in the Thai
Central Region Local Political Decision-Making Process”**

Interviewer name Date of interview

Interviewee name Position Phone.....

Province Chantaburi
 Samutprakarn

1. How does the women’s educational achievement relate to their participation in political decision making process?
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.....
.....
2. How does the women’s educational achievement enhance their capacity to reach political news information?
.....
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.....
3. How does the women’s educational achievement enhance their capacity in political learning?
.....
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4. How does the women's educational achievement enhance their capacity in political speaking, communication and opinion?

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.....

5. How does the women's educational achievement enhance their social networking participation toward political participation?

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.....

6. Does the civic attitude influence to the difference of women's participation in political decision making process?

No

Yes, because

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.....
.....

7. Does the obstacle in women's political participation influence to the difference of women's participation in political decision making process?

No

Yes, because

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.....
.....

8. Please specify your obstacles to participate the political decision making process.

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.....

BIOGRAPHY

NAME	Ratchaneepan Sodsangchan	
ACADEMIC BACKGROUND	1982	B.Ed. (Mathematics) Chandrakasem Teachers Colleges
	1998	M.S. (Hons., Population and Development) National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA)
PRESENT POSITION	Teacher, Setthabutbampen school, Bangkok Educational Service Area2	
EXPERIENCES	1992-1996	Teaching: Mathematics, (Buakaew-Kasorn School, Pathomtanee Province)
	1996-present	Teaching: Mathematics, (Setthabutbampen School, Bangkok Educational Service Area2)