

REPORT OF RESEARCH RESULTS

Title: **A Study on Soft Measures to Promote Bicycling Mobility in Cities of Thailand**

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1. Summary

Currently, a main constraint of cycling promotion in Thailand is a bicycle road lane provision. The existing streets in the city center are too narrow for additional bicycle lanes without eliminating on-street parks. As a safe bicycle road, bike lane and bike path are the most required elements of people (Chaowarat, 2014). This situation causes reluctant to public organizations. According to interviews, the difficulty in improving physical environments, or the hard measure, makes local authorities give up to take cycling seriously as an alternative mode of transport. Besides the hard measures, there are soft measures that are significant in bicycle promotion. They concentrate on the positive advantages of cycling and pay more attentions to cultural attitudes (Franklin, 2001; Wardlaw, 2000; Jones, 2011; CTC, 1995). According to Carstensen and Ebert (2012), cycling culture is a factor influencing share of cycling in different cities. Several studies proofs the soft measure's effectiveness (G.Rose and H. Marfurt, 2006; Ashton-Graham *et al*; 2002; Hyllenius; 2003). Programs and practices of soft measure include campaigning, public relations, education and transport management. This research intends to investigate the soft measures. They might be an actual solution for cycling promotion in cities of Thailand where cycling infrastructure is right now confronting difficulties.

The research found that there were various programs and practices of soft measures used in the areas. They can be categorized into six groups, including campaigning, public relations, education, incentive, public participation, and policy and planning. The soft measure was not taken serious as a strategic tool to persuade people for cycling utilities. The campaigning and the public relations were ineffective in increasing more bicycle users. Their activities focus more on existing cyclists. The education and the incentive were the least implemented programs in the areas. Municipalities highly involved civil society organizations into campaigning and public relations; but relatively low involvement in cycling policy making, like a cycling plan or a cycling committee.

2. Aim of Research

The research aims to explore the use of soft measures for cycling promotion in the Northeast of Thailand. It reveals types of soft measures available in the area, their contributions, and suggestions for improvement.

3. Method of Research & Progression

Multiple methods were employed in this research. Questionnaires were sent to relevant organizations including municipalities, primary schools and local cycling clubs in twenty cities in the Northeast. Four cities were chosen for in-depth study in which interviews, questionnaires, activity observations and area surveys were employed. These cities were Khon Kaen, Kalasin, Ubon Ratchathani and Srisaket provinces. The fieldwork was done from August to October 2014.

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4. Results of Research

The projects and programs of soft measures can be subdivided into six groups, including a policy and planning, campaign, public relations, education, incentive, and public participation. The findings of these soft measure projects were shown as following.

4.1 Cycling Policy and Planning: Planning is a guideline for cycling system development, covering both soft and hard measures. It is an important element in cycling promotion (Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Housing, 2002). According to Pucher and Buehler (2008), different policies of countries and cities contribute different results regarding cycling use. In the Northeast of Thailand, this research revealed that the most available practice regarding cycling policy and planning was to allocate budget for cycling (28.57%); following by having a written cycling policy (21.43%), making a cycling database (21.43%), and making a cycling plan (21.43%) respectively.

4.2 Public Participation in Cycling Development Process: Public participation is supposed to improve public policy formation, reduce conflict and encourage local action (Lane, 2005; Vigar, 2006; Douglass, 1998). This study showed that a public-private partnership in cycling events or project realizations (64.29%) was the most available practice in the areas. The followings were a public meeting on cycling (42.86%), appointed cycling committees (42.86%), teachers-parents meetings on students' mobility (35.71%), and participatory cycling data collections (28.57%). The public-private partnership in cycling events or project realizations is a collaboration between local administrations, bicycle club and business associations. The events and projects are a Car-free Day, an environmental preservation day or Anti-corruption day, for example.

4.3 Cycling Promotion Campaigns: A cycling promotion campaign is a series of operations intended to achieve a particular purpose regarding bicycle use. This study showed that the most practice promotions were the Car-free Day event and a collective riding of particular cycling groups; whereas the following events were a bike race (92.86%), a bicycle rally for particular purposes (92.86%), a bike tour (64.29%), a bike to works program (28.57%), a bike to schools program (21.43%), and a bike to local shop program (7.14%). The Car-free Day is a global-wide event. In Thailand, it is taken place in late November of a year. Every city is supposed to arrange a similar bicycle rally in the morning and optional cycling programs in the afternoon. It makes powerful news, appearing in nation-wide television programs and another broad media. The aim of the event is to persuade people to cycle more for the purposes of environmental care. The collective ridings are activities of particular cycling groups whose members have similar interests. The groups can be established on the basis of similar bicycle types, occupations, lifestyle or purpose of cycling. Unlike the Car-free Day, the collective rides take place more regular. Mostly they are weekly meetings.

4.4 Public relations: Public relation is the practice of managing the spread of information between an individual or an organization and the public (Gruning, 1984). In the Northeast of Thailand, the study unfolded that the most media used for cycling promotion was the internet website (85.71%). The followings were a logo for local bicycle campaign (57.14%), a cycling traffic signage (57.14%), a cycling exhibition (28.57%), a bicycle route map (21.43%), a cycling instructor's manual (21.43%), a cycling souvenir (14.29%), a local broadcasting channel (14.29%), and a school letter to parents (7.14%). The internet website plays a significant role in publicizing cycling news, especially a social media, such as Facebook. They function as a central point of information exchange between group members.

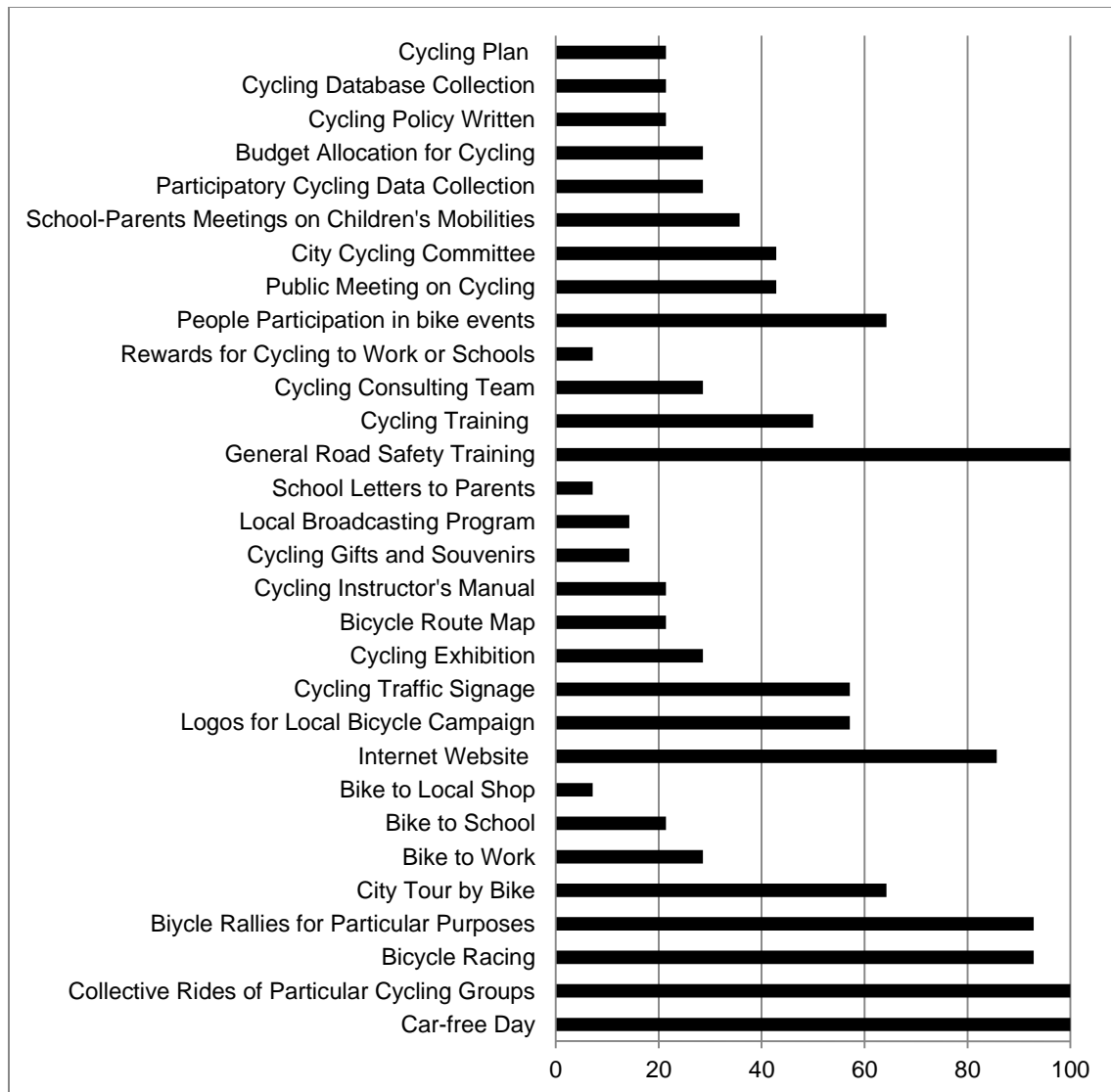


Figure 1. Programs and Practices regarding Soft Measure (Percentage)

4.5 Education Programs: Education is a form of learning than the knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and habits. The study showed the most use education program available in the Northeast of Thailand was a general road safety training (100%). The following programs were a cycling training (50%) and a cycling consulting team (28.57%). The general road safety training program aimed to equip pupils with knowledge of how to use roads safely. It focused on motorcycle as it was the most popular means of transport among pupils and was a major cause of accident. This one-day training was a nation-wide program, responsible by a provincial police department. The cycling training program was likely a supportive program in cycling events, like the Car-free Day; whereas the cycling consulting team was likely an additional service provided by local bicycle shops or clubs.

4.6 Incentives Programs: Intensive scheme is a kind of motivations that encourages an individual to perform and action. Combining an effective incentive scheme can increase cycling uses (Caulfield and Leahy, 2011). Among the 14 cities in the Northeast of Thailand, there was only a single program available. It was a reward for riding to work, a program implemented in a

public hospital. This program was initiated by the head of hospital who is currently an outstanding leader in cycling promotion of the area.

For discussions, the situation can be clearly understood when main contributors of the soft measure are concerned. They are civil society organizations and public organizations. Currently, the civil society organizations play a leading role in almost every bicycle campaigns, public relations and education. Although their dominance is so high until it reaches their limited responsibilities and authorities, most of their programs and practices are still general, superficial, and lack of innovation. There is lack of campaigns which intend to increase bicycle users in daily life. Their objectives mainly focus on the announcement. Their contributions do not touch the level of cultural alteration in a short coming period. The second group is the public organizations. According to the research, they make relatively less contributions in cycling development process. Instead of being a spearhead, they neglect to take a leading role in cycling promotion, and let civil society organizations take entire responsibilities in the cycling events.

For suggestion, first, the perception of relevant organizations towards the soft measure must be changed. The soft measure must be taken more seriously as an effective tool to persuade individuals to ride in daily life, rather than simply for recreation. Second, public authorities need to play a leading role in cycling promotion process, instead of simply being a facilitator. With the leading of public authorities, programs and practices could be more specified to particular target groups, and getting higher levels of persuasion. Effective programs like 'Bike to Work' or 'Bike to School' could be realized. Hence, the soft measure could do its function effectively, and ultimately lead to cultural alteration.

5. Future Areas to Take Note of, and Going Forward

Future research can derive from these six categories of soft measures. The education might be the most effective program, especially the one that focus on particular groups like 'Bike to School' or 'Bike to Work' as it can move towards cultural change regarding bicycle use.

6. Means of Official Announcement of Research Results

This research results will be announced through acknowledged academic journals.

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