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**Master's Thesis of Public Administration**

**A Study of Government Policy in  
Response to COVID-19 and Its  
Impacts on the Labour Sector  
in Lao PDR**

**코로나 19 대응 정책이 라오스 노동  
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**February 2023**

**Graduate School of Public Administration  
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# **A Study of Government Policy in Response to COVID-19 and Its Impacts on the Labour Sector in Lao PDR**

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## **Abstract**

# **A Study of Government Policy in Response to COVID-19 and Its Impacts on the Labour Sector in Lao PDR**

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This thesis is a study of government policy in response to COVID-19 and its profound effect on human's health, but also its effects on socio-economics and labour sectors. These impacts have been pervasive across nations including Lao PDR. The main goals of this study are to discover the effectiveness of government policies in response to these COVID-19 impacts.

The framework of this study is application of two mixed methods of quantitative and qualitative research. The primary data was collected through the distribution of four questionnaires to service recipients, businesses, and ten ministries involved in responding to COVID-19 prevention in Lao PDR. These data were processed by the SPSS program to get percentages and interpret them for content analysis and results. Literature review of reports, journals, books and official documents, provides secondary data.

The study's outcome were analysis of the effectiveness of the policies undertaken by the Lao government, most of which were found to be relatively effective in reducing the infection rate, which was reduced by 90% in the middle of 2021 compared to the daily epidemic period in the early stages of the epidemic in 2020. Even though the government has put in place a variety of measures to keep people aware of COVID-19, the implementation is still not strong enough due to inadequate budget and inappropriate promotion for affected people and business.

COVID-19 has resulted in lower incomes for workers and declines in revenue for many businesses, especially in the hospitality sector. Business's profits decreasing by 54% and loss of capital by 46%. Moreover, it affected employment as business laid off employees. There was not enough compensation for people and businesses who were affected by COVID-19 due to the difficult economic situation in Lao PDR. However, local workers or workers who return from abroad can access job opportunities throughout the country through the Department of Labor and Social Welfare which is responsible for organizing jobs searches.

After the end of the COVID-19 outbreak, Lao PDR is at risk of increasing its use of natural resources for economic recovery, which will have both direct and indirect effects on the environment and the sustainability of development. Further steps the government need to take include paying special attention to inflation and possible exchange rate fluctuations, especially in the context of limited domestic reserves, rising world oil prices, and the high dependencies on imports, and making sure a large number of workers can enter the social security system in Lao PDR.

**Keyword: Government Policy, COVID-19 Impact, Labour Sector, Socio-Economics, Lao PDR**

**Student Number: 2021-29286**

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## **ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYMS**

<b>ABBREVIATION</b>	<b>MEANING</b>
<b>GDP</b>	<b>Gross Domestic Product</b>
<b>KYC</b>	<b>Simcard Registration Service for Lao citizen with Lao Government Authority</b>
<b>Lao PDR</b>	<b>Lao People’s Democratic Republic</b>
<b>LNCCI</b>	<b>Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry</b>
<b>MPI</b>	<b>Ministry of Planning and Investment</b>
<b>ODA</b>	<b>Official Development Assistance</b>
<b>MSMEs</b>	<b>Small and Medium Enterprises</b>
<b>PMO</b>	<b>Prime Minister Office</b>
<b>PCR (test)</b>	<b>Polymerase Chain Reaction (Test)</b>
<b>RMNCAH</b>	<b>Reproductive Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health</b>
<b>SME</b>	<b>Small and Medium Enterprise</b>
<b>C1</b>	<b>Contact with Patient</b>
<b>C2</b>	<b>Close contact with Patient</b>

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# CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Study Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has rapidly evolved into a global health crisis, threatening survival – economically, socially, politically and epidemiologically – with grave consequences for human development, economic stability and sustainability. In Lao PDR, soon after the first case of COVID-19 was reported in March 2020, the Government swiftly implemented a nationwide lock-down which was gradually lifted from mid-May. As a result, the epidemiological impact of the pandemic on Lao PDR has not been severe. As of December 2020, the country has been relatively unaffected by the health shock of the pandemic and the number of cases has been significantly lower compared with other parts of the world (Center for Development Policy Research , 2021).

However, in April 2021, the Lao government ordered a 2<sup>nd</sup> lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic causing the increase in number of people affected up to 700 cases and spread all over provinces in Lao PDR (there are total 17 provinces, but only one province is not affected). In a period of 5 months, the number went up to 26,876 cases with 23 deaths (National Economic Research Institute, 2021).

The impact of the pandemic in Lao PDR has been predominantly socioeconomic due to the breakdown in domestic and regional supply chains, business closures, livelihood disruptions and income losses. Almost 500,000 people are estimated to have lost their jobs and 383,000 people are expected to fall back into poverty. In addition, food insecurity levels are expected to escalate as COVID-19 compounds an existing food security crisis that has been building up for the past two years. Further, disruptions in education for 1.7 million learners across the country is expected to have long-term ramifications in terms of large-scale learning losses.

Overall, the pandemic has “seriously affected Vientiane’s development objectives, exacerbated existing vulnerabilities and disrupted progress towards smooth graduation from least developed country status,” according to the Prime minister’s address during the UN General Assembly plenary on 3 December 2020. The impact of the crisis has been unprecedented and governments around the world are navigating important choices and thinking through the contours of the new

normal. More caveats, assumptions and speculations feed into every policy choice, which will affect the rate of economic recovery (Center for Development Policy Research , 2021).

## **1.2 Impact of COVID-19 on the Economy**

While the world is facing an outbreak of COVID-19, it has also affected the living conditions and the economy of Lao PDR. The economic sectors in Lao PDR have been severely affected by the traveling service, tourism, hotel, export of food processing industries, and trade. Moreover, It also affects external consumption demand and the disruption of production chains and commodity trafficking.

As a result, economic growth has slow down. The National Economic Institute has forecasted in March 2020 that the Lao economy will continue to grow at 6%, compared to the pre-COVID target plan of 6.7%. In June 2020, the Prime Minister informed the National Assembly that Lao PDR's GDP would growth by 3.3 or 3.6% by 2020, but this figure is still optimistic because at the same time the World Bank has predicted GDP growth in Lao PDR to be only 1%. and the Asian Development Bank has reduced the number to -0.5%.

During the crisis due to COVID-19, the government still faced weak fiscal conditions due to the amount of public debt as 60% of GDP, the budget deficit rank at -4.9%, Reserves budget is still low and the rise of inflation is affecting to the economic growth and the ability to pay for the public debt by 2020. Small and medium enterprises, which account for a large number of business sectors are the most affected due to the sufficient capital, revolving funds are limited, and limited access to finance that may risk of bankruptcy of SMEs is increased.

The economic sector, especially the hotel, retail service, and construction sectors, was severely affected. It is estimated that the damage to the overall service industry, tourism will be in the range of \$ 250-300 million. At present, it is not possible to estimate the impact on foreign direct investment (FDI), by 2019, 60% of the investment comes from China. Foreign investments are expected to be slow down due to slowing economic growth in major investors, especially from China.

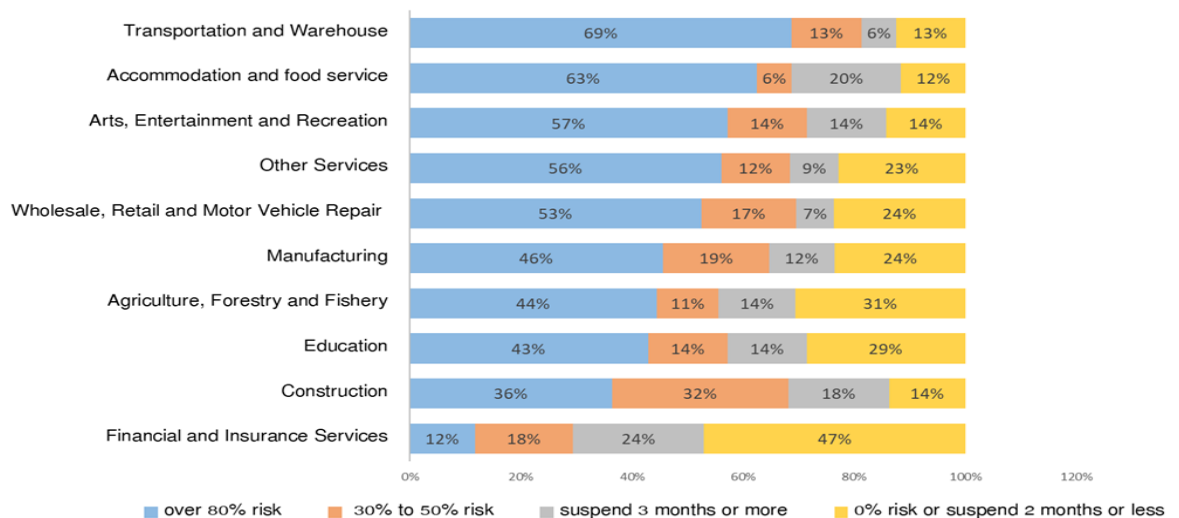
The remittances of Lao workers working abroad have increased significantly in recent years and reached \$ 284 million in 2019. This income will be reduced due to the repatriation of Lao workers from Thailand and other countries. Integrate with

the business environment that affects small and medium businesses and the income from remittances from abroad will make many families run out of money and turn into poverty, this situation will also affect the domestic consumer market and lead to the closure of more businesses that make the economic impact more severe and protracted. In this case, informal workers who working locally and subsistence workers who form the basis of rural agriculture are more at risk but have a harder time accessing Aid. However, since domestic agriculture is still self-sufficient, it is generally secure to say that the economic impact is not adversely affected (LNCCI-9, 2020).

### 1.3 Impact of COVID-19 on the Business and Labour Sector

In May 2020, the LNCCI (Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry) released the results of the COVID-19 Crisis Impact Survey on Businesses conducted between March and April 2020, comprising 474 enterprises participating in the survey. The survey found a serious impact on businesses. 36% of respondents will need to close their business 100%, 14% will close permanently, 80% risk of closing the business is expressed in the logistics, hotel, restaurant, entertainment, arts, and leisure services.

**Graph 1: Risks in closing business sector in Lao PDR during COVID-19 Outbreak (2020)**

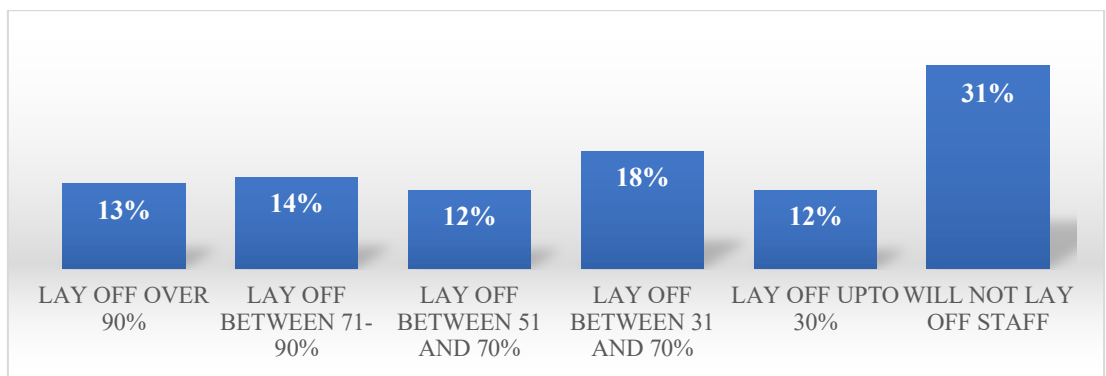




**Source:** Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry: Survey report in impact of COVID-19 on business, Vientiane 2020

The biggest barriers to doing business are paying wages and repaying loans with interest. Thus, 70% of the respondents agreed that all hires must be terminated and 40% should terminate employment; the termination of employment is in the range of hotel, shop services, and restaurants.

**Graph 2: Percentage that business lay off their staffs during COVID-19 Impact in 2020**



Source: Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry: Survey report in impact of COVID-19 on business, Vientiane 2020

In that survey, the banking sector was shown to have little effect on the crisis. Probably because business loans are not through financial institutions for the most part and because of the impact still in the early stages, financial institutions have not been affected by the inability to repay loans with interest, It is also unknown that how much debt cannot be paid (LNCCI-9, 2020).

Therefore, this study will explore the government policies in coping with COVID-19, and its impacts on Lao economy, especially on employment and labour sector in Lao PDR.

## 1.2. Purpose of Research

This thesis aims to discover these objectives:

- 1) To evaluate the effectiveness of the Lao government policies in response to COVID-19.
- 2) To assess the impact of COVID-19 on service recipients, business sectors and

- entrepreneurs in Lao PDR.
- 3) To assess the impact of COVID-19 on the current mission of the Department of Employment in the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare of Lao PDR.
  - 4) To understand the impact of COVID-19 on labour sectors, society and economy of Lao PDR
  - 5) To get suggestions, from the results of this study, to the Lao government- especially the Department Employment, on improving the labour sector in Lao PDR during and after the pandemic of COVID-19.

### **1.3 Scope of the study**

#### **1.3.1 Content of the study**

The content of the study will cover the study of Government Policy in Response to COVID-19 and its impacts on the Labour Sector in Lao PDR. This issue is related to the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and Ministry of Public Health and Ministry of Industry and Commerce in Lao PDR.

#### **1.3.2 Area of the study**

The data collection will be implemented in Vientiane Capital and other provinces where the Lao labour use the service from the Department of Employment such as: Champasak, Salavan, Savanakheth, Khammouan and Luang Prabang provinces.

### **1.4 Data Samplings**

For the part of data collection survey, there are four sets of questionnaires will be carried out in the form of in-depth interview to the government officers working at Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, the Prime Minister Office, the Parliament of Lao PDR, Ministry of Industry and Commerce, etc., who involving with the COVID-19 taskforce. There are all together 10 sectors with 20 sets of in-depth interview Questionnaires Form 4. Also the questionnaires will be distributed to private sectors and other stakeholders who are affected by the impact of COVID-19; and to the officers at the Department of Employment under Questionnaires Form 1, Form 2, Form 3 in total of 400 questionnaires. So, the total sampling are 400 targeted organizations and individuals.

## **1.6 Research questions**

- 1) How is the effectiveness of the Lao government policies in response to COVID-19?
- 2) What are the impacts of COVID-19 on the Lao economy?
- 3) What are impacts of COVID-19 on employment and labour sector in Lao DPR?
- 4) What is the recommendation for policies makers in Lao PDR to promote employment and labour sector after the COVID-19 pandemic?

# CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 Introduction

This section discusses theoretical concepts and literature related to the study of government policy in response to COVID-19 and its impacts on the Labour sector in Lao PDR in accordance with the principles of economics. If the market can allocate resources effectively, then the government does not need to intervene. However, if the market fails (Market failure), the allocation of resources will be inefficient, it is the duty of the government to use tools to intervene in the labor market is one of the most important markets. Also, this thesis starts with the notion of public administration; public organization and the notion of economic study.

## 2.2 Notion of Public Administration theory

Public Administration is an academic discipline and its theory started hundred years ago. Governmental administration of the earlier times was different considerably in its goal and structure from the contemporary's state administration (Basu, R., 2009). Its vital roles in the modern times is defined by Gerald Caiden are: (1) Preservation of the polity; (2) Maintenance of stability and order; (3) institutional of socioeconomic change; (4) Management of large-scale commercial services; (5) Ensuring growth and economic development; (6) Protection of the weaker sections of society; (7) Formation of public opinion; and (8) Influencing public policies and political trends (Basu, R., 2009).

Public administration is the management of affairs of the government at all levels- national, state and local. According to Pfiffner, J.M. stated "Administration is the organization and direction of human and material resources to achieve desired ends". It can conclude that, the essence of administration are: cooperative effort and pursuit of common objectives. Public administration is believed to be any kind of administration in the public benefits which implies to governmental administration. Administration of private enterprises is known as private admiration (Zandstra, G.L., ScholarWorks at WMU, 2007).

### **a. Viewpoint of Public organization theory**

To fulfill the promise of public administration theory, we now require a shift in the way we view the field, a shift that will lead us to be concerned not merely with the government administration but also with the broader process of managing change in pursuit of publicly defined social value. Public organization lie at the heart of public administration theory with this phrase: *“Government agencies are urged to attain the greatest possible efficiency in their delivery of services. On the other hand, they must be responsive to the needs and desires of those with whom they work”* (Denhardt, R. B., 2008).

### **b. Notion of Economic Study**

Economics is the science of allocation of scarce resources. These resources can include amenities that humans need or value and that nature can provide, such as labor, land, tools, raw material, clean water and air, foods and nutrition, diversity of species, and even beautiful landscapes. Those resources are necessary to produce the goods and services we want but they exist in limited in supply.

The study of economics began when Adam Smith (1723-1790) published his book *The Wealth of Nations* in 1776. In the first chapter, Smith introduces the concept of **Division of Labor**, which means that the way one produces a good or services is divided into a number of tasks that different workers perform, instead of all the tasks being done by the same person. The division of labor increase production with three reasons. The first is specialization; the second is the workers who specialize in certain tasks often learn to produce more quickly and with higher quality; and the third is the Economies of scale (Greenlaw, S. A. & Shapiro, D., 2018).

One of the most influential economists in modern times was John Maynard Keynes (1883-1946), pointed out that economics is not just a subject area but also a way of thinking.

There were also the Keynesian perspective which focuses on aggregate demand. The idea is simple, firms only produce output only if they expect it to sell. Thus, while the availability of the factors of production determines a nation’s potential GDP, the amount of goods and service that actually sell, known as read GDP, depends on how much demand exists across the economy.

The Keynesian prescription for stabilizing the economy implies government intervention at the macroeconomic level-increasing aggregate demand when private demand falls and decreasing aggregate demand when private demand rises. This does not imply that the government should be passing laws or regulations that set prices and quantities in microeconomic markets.

On the other hand, the neoclassical perspective places more emphasis on aggregate supply. Its philosophy is that in the long run, the business cycle will fluctuate around the potential, or full-employment, level of output. Neoclassical economist believe that long term productivity growth determines the potential GDP level and that the economy typically will return to full employment after a change in aggregate demand.

While Keynesian would tend to advocate an acceptable tradeoff between inflation and unemployment when countering a recession, neoclassical economists argue that no such tradeoff exists. Any short-term gains in lower unemployment will eventually vanish and the result of active policy will only be inflation.

**c. Other research:** Active labor market policies and COVID-19: (Re-) connecting people with jobs from OECD countries Active labor market policies (ALMPs) will be crucial aspect in shaping the labor market recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. Through effective training, assisting companies, it connects people to jobs to retain and recruit staff, and support people with major employment difficulties. It ensure an equitable and efficient emergence from the crisis, avoiding labor market detachment of more vulnerable individuals. Many countries reacted quickly in increasing funding for their public employment services (PES), training programs, hiring subsidies and other measures to increase labor demand (OECDiLibrary, 2021).

### **2.3 Labor Market Situation in Lao PDR**

Socio-economic development in Lao PDR is currently driven by many factors, such as political stability, peace, social stability, macro-economic growth, and sustainability, Which has become a fundamental factor conducive to the development, running of business, production, and services. Economic cooperation and integration have expanded significantly. Lao PDR has become a member of various international organizations, including the World Trade Organization, the

ASEAN Economic Community, which has a single market and production base only; This increases trade, investment, and services. The labour market situation in Lao PDR has changed with the growth of the economic sector. By estimating the proportion of labour force structure in the labor market by economic sector as follows: agriculture and forestry decreased from 65.3 percent in 2015 to 64.8 percent in 2016 and 64.5 percent in 2017; construction Industry increased from 11.4 percent in 2015 to 11.6 percent in 2016 and 11.8 percent in 2017, and services sector increased from 23.3 percent, 23.6 percent, and 23.7 percent, respectively (LNCCI-4, 2020).

#### **2.4 Policies related to the labour market in Lao PDR**

In order to implement the People's Revolution Party's guidelines, the government has enacted the laws, determine policies, resolutions, orders, and regulations of the state related to the labour market in each period, such as the Labour Law, the Social Security Law. and determine labor market policies related to the labour market as follow: “The government promotes the employment of Lao workers both inside and outside the country, Protect foreign workers who come to work in Lao PDR in positions that Lao workers cannot do. Aims to increase a balance between demand and supply of labour ” (LNCCI-3, 2020).

At the same time, the Government of Lao PDR has set a vision for the development of national human resources from now until 2030, as follows: “Developing human resources as the main productive force that can respond to sustainable socio-economic development in the direction of industrialization and modernization, also can integrate the regionally and internationally in both quantity and quality, giving people universal access to social services and improving their quality of lives”.

In the 8th Five-Year National Socio-Economic Development Plan 2016-2020, The government has determined the policies that focus on developing the workforce to be both quantitative and qualitative in line with international labor standards, creating a workforce in many areas and at many levels in line with and relevant to Economic structure, focusing on agriculture, industry, and services to meet the needs of the country's development and be able to compete with the region, especially ASEAN member countries.

To implement the policy, the government has planned and drafted many strategic plans for the labour force, which includes:

10-year labor and social welfare development strategy (2016-2025);

- The strategy of the Education and Sports Development Plan from 2016-2020 to encourage lower secondary school graduates to enter vocational education;
- Draft the National Strategic Plan for the Promotion of Rural Employment in Lao PDR in order to encourage rural workers to have stable, valuable, and fair employment;
- Draft the strategic plan for the development of the labour market information system to 2025 in order to establish and protect the national labor market information system.

The recent policy implementation mechanisms include:

- Improve the minimum wage from 900,000 Kip (\$90USD) to 1,100,000 Kip (\$110USD);
- Revise the decree on sending Lao workers to work abroad;
- Create a website for the labor market information system [www.lmi.molsw.gov.la](http://www.lmi.molsw.gov.la);
- Expand the labor market information network in 18 provinces throughout the country;
- Notification on the implementation of the mechanism for collecting information on unemployed people who are members of the Social security funds into the labour market information system (LNCCI-4, 2020 & LNCCI-3, 2020).

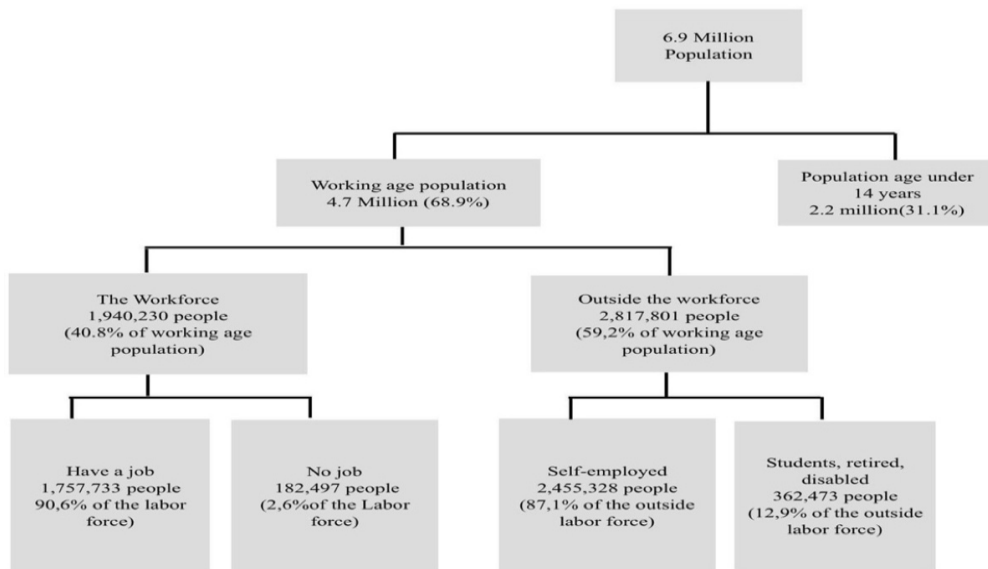
In addition, Lao PDR became a member of the International Labor Organization on 23 January 1964 and has so far ratified 10 ILO conventions. Made a memorandum of cooperation to send Lao workers to work abroad with 3 countries: Thailand, Korea and Japan.

## **2.5 Lao labor force**



The results of the 2017 Lao PDR Labor Force Survey show that the total Lao population is about 6.9 million. Of these, the Lao population in the working-age group (and over 15 years) is about 4.7 million, accounting for 68.9 percent of the Lao population, and the Lao population aged under 14 years is about 2.2 million. 40.8 percent of the working-age population (1,940,230 people) are economically active in the Lao labour market, and about 90.6 percent of these workers are employed. The remaining 59.2 percent (2,817,801 people) were outside the labour force, of which about 87.1 percent were self-employed (see Figure 1) (LNCCI-4, 2020).

**Graph 3: Lao population structure by workforce, 2017**



Source: The National Statistics Center (2018).

Note: "Percentage" means the percentage of the total Lao population.

The Lao labor force is unequally distributed in each province, as shown in Figure 2. The workforce in 5 provinces: Savannakhet, Vientiane Capital, Champassak, Vientiane, and Xayabouly covers approximately Half of the total workforce. The participation rate of the whole workforce (nationwide) is equal to 40.8 percent (LNCCI-4, 2020).

**Table 1: Distribution of labour workforce by province and sex, Lao PDR 2019**

Province	Labor force (1000 People)	Labor force participation (percent)		
		Total	Men	Women
Lao PDR	1,940	40.8	45.2	36.5
Voentiane Capital	272	62.6	69.6	56.3
Phongsaly	50	50.8	55.7	45.8
Luangnamtha	53	42.3	50.4	34.6
Oudomxay	87	41	48	34.3
Borkeo	52	37.7	48.3	26
Luangphrabang	120	36.6	41.2	32.1
Huapanh	80	36.8	38.4	35.2
Xayabouly	124	68.7	73.7	63.6
Xiengkhoung	72	58.5	60	57
Viengchan	132	39.6	42.7	36.5
Borlikhamxay	89	33	36	30.2
Khammoun	118	30	33	27.3
Savahnakhet	283	16.5	19.2	113.7
Salavanh	99	23	25.2	20.9
Xekong	29	18.5	21.6	15.7
Champasak	217	47.1	52.4	42.2
Attapue	39	37.5	44.7	30.9
xaysomboun	25	36.9	42.1	31.7

**Source: Report on Labour Focus 2019-2022, Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2019**

## **2.6 Roles, Responsibilities and Main Activities of LNCCI**

Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI) was established in 1989 and operates in accordance with Decree No. 237 / PM dated 18 May 2020 of the Prime Minister. The LNCCI is a social organization representing entrepreneurs

who operate in accordance with their own mission and budget. also acts as a bridge between the business sector and the government, as well as representing entrepreneurs, associations, and groups of businesses. also leads the chambers of commerce and industry in 17 provinces and chambers of commerce capital industry.

Currently, The LNCCI has more than 1,000 member units, The LNCCI also has the authority to control and monitor the activities of the Foreign Trade and Industry Council in Lao PDR, foreign business groups, associations, and domestic business groups. The LNCCI is also a national employers' representative body, The roles and responsibilities of the above work confirm that LNCCI is the highest business organization in Lao PDR.

Prime Minister's Decree No. 237 / PM has assigned the following tasks to LNCCI:

- 1) Representing employers, business associations, business groups, cooperatives, independent entrepreneurs, and general enterprises in order to develop, promote the economy and protect the rights and benefit of enterprises.
- 2) Promote good labor relationship and participate in discussions and negotiations on trade, investment, and labor issues such as the minimum wage/labor, etc. that occur within the country or abroad in order to protect the legitimate rights and benefit of the business owners and their business associates.
- 3) Employer Activities: The LNCCI is an organization representing employers in Lao PDR and represented the business sector in a multilateral meeting on labor standards, social welfare, and the key issue is determining the minimum wage and labor regulations. (LNCCI-9, 2020).

## **2.7 Main duties of the Department of Employment, Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare.**

- 1) Research and implement the guidelines of the People's Revolution Party, Laws, Decrees, regulations on labor development and employment;
- 2) Research and formulate the strategic plans, programs, projects and budget plans periodically on macro management of labor development and employment;

- 3) Research on macro-adjustment of labor demand and supply according to economic structure;
- 4) Research, create and manage a labor market information system to monitoring the changes in the labor market;
- 5) Research and apply for approval to establishment or abolition of facilities and skills development courses, Issue the regulations on protection of the skills development sites, and also issue the regulations and apply for approval of the use of national skill standards;
- 6) Research the policies and create conditions of reducing the illegal labor migration;
- 7) Encourage, promote, management, monitor and inspect the activities of employment service centers, employment service enterprises, employment service points and information centers for migrant workers;
- 8) Research and apply for the approval and adjustment of quotas on foreign workers throughout the country;
- 9) Research and consider for documents of sending Lao workers for training or internships in abroad;
- 10) Encourage poor people, disadvantaged, disabled, unemployed and people who has socially disadvantaged, including migrant workers, to develop their skills, create employment opportunities and can access to employment services;
- 11) promote disseminate legislation, policies, strategies, labor market information, skills development and employment.
- 12) Cooperate with foreign countries, international organizations, non-governmental organizations to compete for assistance support, and integrate skills development and employment. (Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, 2015).

# CHAPTER III: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter depicts the conceptual framework and the methodological context of the study. It describes the methods that were used to conduct the study including the study design, data sources, population samplings, data collection methods and interpretation of data results, and ethical considerations.

## 3.2 Conceptual Framework

**The framework of this thesis is focusing on the** study of Government policy in response to COVID-19 and its impacts on the labour sector in Lao PDR under the aims to discover the effectiveness of Lao government policies in response to COVID-19; the impact of COVID-19 on service recipients, business sectors and entrepreneurs in Lao PDR; the impact of COVID-19 on the current mission of the DOE; and the impact of COVID-19 on labour sectors, society and economy of Lao PDR. Also, to obtain some suggestions for the Lao government and DOE on improving the labour sector in Lao PDR.

## 3.3 Research Methodology and Procedures

This study has applied the mix method of Quantitative and Qualitative research. Methods for collecting data in conducting the study included the study procedures on how to do this study, study population, data collection tools and ethical concerns (Merriam, S.B., Tisdell, E.J., 2015).

## 3.4 Study procedures and Design

This study procedures and design were prepared before conducting the actual field data collection with population samplings in Lao PDR. Details of procedures and process of writing this thesis are displayed as follow:

- 1) Review the theoretical concepts, roles and missions of government policies in response to COVID-19's impact and the role of LNCCI and Department of Employment in Lao PDR.

- 2) Gather information on emerging employment and careers that are about to be lost due to the impact of COVID-19 from various official documents from both domestic and international sources.
- 3) Design a questionnaire to survey and collect data information on government services related to employment from service recipients, including employers, employees and service providers, including divisions and working groups within the Department of Skill Development and Employment.
- 4) In-depth interviews with target groups, including employers, employees of employment agencies, teachers, student, guides.
- 5) Analyze the data from the survey questionnaires by using SPSS program and applying the content analysis for the part of in-depth interview. Finally, summarize the results of the study and make suggestions for improving the role of projects / activities of the Department of Skill Development and Employment.

### **3.5 Study Design**

The study design was the cross-sectional design in cooperation between descriptive and analytical research design. Descriptive research design assist in establishing the relationship between the results of the data collection as in the form of opinions or perspectives of respondents toward the main content of this thesis. Moreover, analytical research design was used for building the quantitative relationship under the form of percentage and the respondents evaluate on the issues around the main points of this thesis (Merriam, S.B., Tisdell, E.J., 2015).

### **3.6 Data Source**

The secondary data collection has obtained from various sources: books, articles, journals, official documents related to government policy in response to COVID-19 and its impact on labour sector in Lao PDR.

For the primary data collection, there are four sets of questionnaires have been made in consultation with the supervisor. Then testing of questionnaires was carried out with some focused data samplings groups to see the effectiveness of the questionnaires. After having an approval of the questionnaires 'reliability from the

testing, the researcher used the questionnaires for surveying and gathering primary data for this study.

### 3.7 Data Samplings Estimation

This study has selected the Taro YAMANE formula in 1967 as a method to calculate and determine the data sampling size for data collection. It is 95% confidence level, where  $n$  is the sample size,  $N$  is the population size, and  $e$  is the level of precision. The mathematical illustration for the Taro Yamane method is:  $n = N/(1+N(e)^2)$

According to Table 1, the number on the Distribution of workforce by province and sex in Lao PDR 2019, Vientiane Capital of Lao PDR consists of 272,000 workforce (LNCCI-4, 2020). Therefore, this study defines the total number of data sampling  $N = 272,000$ ; when  $e = (0.05)$ .

Therefore, we can calculate the data sampling as follow:

$$n = N/(1+N(e)^2)$$

$$n = 272,000 / (1+272,000(0.05)^2)$$

$$n = 272,000 / 681$$

$$n = 399.41 \text{ and round up to } n = 400 \text{ data samplings.}$$

The division of 400 data samplings to 4 questionnaires forms are as follow:

**Table 2: Data allocation of samplings with each Questionnaire Form**

Questionnaires	Number of Targeted Samplings	Method of Analysis
Form 1	150	SPSS program
Form 2	150	SPSS program
Form 3	80*	SPSS program
Form 4	20**	Content analysis

\* The Department of Employment has total staffs of 80 people.

\*\* The in-depth interview for qualitative research with 10 public sectors who involve in COVID-19 prevention.

After collecting all the survey questionnaires, the data analysis will be done by using SPSS program for the Questionnaires Form 1, Form 2, Form 3 as a quantitative research method. The data gathering from the Questionnaire Form 4 will apply the method of content analysis or qualitative research.

### **3.8 Data Collection Tools**

Each questionnaire form was used with different targeted samplings as follow:

1) One set of questionnaires (Form 4) was used for an in-depth interview data samplings in various sectors who are involved with the COVID-19 taskforce and Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. The targeted samplings are the government officers working at Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Ministry of Public Work and Transportation, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Prime Minister Office, the Parliament of Laos, Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism, and Ministry of Education and Sports. There are 20 targeted groups in total. Each group per one form of this questionnaires.

2) The two sets of questionnaires (Form 1, Form 2) are distributed to private sectors and other stakeholders who are affected by the impact of COVID-19, this includes the entrepreneurs and the individuals who have used the service from the Department of Employment at Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. The targeted each form is 150 samplings. So, 300 questionnaires forms will be distributed for Form 1 and Form 2. For the recommendation part, in each Questionnaire Form, will be combined, analysis and draw the distinctive conclusion for Chapter V and Chapter VI in this thesis.

3) One set of questionnaire (Form 3) are distributed to the officers at the Department of Employment. There are totally 80 staffs working in this department. So, the total targeted samplings are 80 people.



## **3.9 Data Analysis and Interpretation**

### **3.9.1 Data Analysis**

In order to analyze and interpretation of the data correctly in accordance with the set objectives, the learner planned to determine the data analysis according to the study method as detailed below:

#### **◆ Quantitative data**

After completing collect the data, the students take the questionnaire to check the accuracy and completeness of the data in the questionnaire and select the complete version into the code (Coding Form) and then analyze in the finished program by analyzing the data according to the nature type of the questionnaire:

The general information of the sample group that answered the questionnaire was analyzed using Frequency and Percentage. These include: gender, age, place of residence, family status.

Information on the impact of COVID-19 have affected the Department of Employment and the Lao economy data were analyzed using Mean ( $\bar{X}$ ), Standard Deviation (SD) and Percentage.

#### **◆ Qualitative data**

Data from in-depth interviews were used to analyze the content with descriptive analytical methods leading to an explanation of the logical nature of the content (Content analysis).

# CHAPTER IV: DATA FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

## 4.1 Introduction

This study section summarizes the analysis and results from the data collection. It is in line with the objectives and research questions for this thesis. The data were run through the SPSS program. The quantitative data were displayed as tables of percentage for each characteristic in each questionnaire, such as gender or level of agreement. Qualitative data were combined and without repeating the overlapping answers then the content was analyzed and the results described using that method.

## 4.2 Data Analysis Form 1

This questionnaire was distributed to the people who have used the services provided by the DoE. The detailed results of data gathered are displayed in the tables below:

### 4.2.1 Part 1 Personal Information

#### 4.2.1.1 Age, Gender and Education of Respondents

**Table 3: Age, Gender and Education of Respondents**

<b>Social Demographic Characteristic</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>AGE</b>		
31-35 Year	33	22.00
36-40 Year	37	24.67
41-46 Year	49	32.67
>46 Year	31	20.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>GENDER</b>		
Men	81	54.00
Women	69	46.00

<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>EDUCATION</b>		
High school	30	20.00
Higher education	49	32.67
Bachelor degree	71	47.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The results of study showed on the Table 1 summaries the Demographic data analyzed univariate statics (N=150). The age of most respondents was 41-46 years (49 people equal to 32.67% of the sample), followed by the age bracket of 36-40 years (37 people equal to 24.67% of the sample), the bracket of 31-35 years old (33 people equal to 22% of the sample) and > 46 years = 31 people equal to 20.67% of the sample. The sample included 81 (54%) and 69 females (46%). The majority of respondents had a bachelor's degree(71 people, equal to 47.33%). 49 people had a higher education (32.67%), and 30 people had a high school level education (20%).

#### 4.2.1.2 Working Period and Income of Respondents

**Table 4: Working Period and Income of Respondents**

<b>Working Period and Income</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Working period</b>		
1-5 Year	45	30.00
<10 Year	63	42.00
10 -20 Years	42	28.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Income per month</b>		
2,000,000-3,000,000 Lao Kip	23	15.33
3,000,000-4,000,000 Lao Kip (\$300-\$400)	48	32.00
> 4,000,000 Lao Kip	79	52.67

(>\$400)		
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The study found that most of the respondents had worked for more than 10 years (63 people equal to 42.00% of the sample), with 45 people having worked for between 1-5 years (equal to 30.00%), and 28% had worked for between 10-20 years.

The majority of the respondents income (including OT) was more than > 4,000,000 lao kip (>\$400USD) with 79 people (equal to 52.67%) and between 3,000,000-4,000,000 lao kip (\$300-\$400USD) with 48 people (equal to 32%) and received income between 2,000,000-3,000,000 Lao Kip was 15.33%.

#### 4.2.1.3 Occupation, Type of Hiring/Employee, Work Department of Respondents

**Table 5: Occupation, Type of Hiring/Employee, Work Department of**

<b>Respondents</b>		
<b>Occupation, Types of Hiring/employee, and Working Department</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Occupation of the respondent</b>		
Government officer	36	24.00
State enterprise employee	39	26.00
Company employee	24	16.00
Do the Business /sales	21	14.00
Hired/employee	30	20.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Type of hiring/Employee</b>		
Daily hiring	35	23.33
Contract work project	5	3.33
Monthly hiring	69	46.00
Temporary hiring	41	27.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Work department of respondents</b>		

Finance-Accounting	39	26.00
Sale- marketing	51	34.00
Warehouse, delivery	38	25.33
Manufacturing	22	14.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The study found that the occupations of the respondents were mostly state enterprise employees with 39 people equal to 26.00%, followed by Government officer is 36 equals to 24.00%, Hired/employees is 30 people equals to 20.00%, Company employee is 24 people equal to 16.00% and do the business/sale 21 people equal to 14%.

The results of the study showed that the majority of respondents were monthly hired is 69 people equals to 46%, followed by temporary hired is 41 people equals to 27.33%, Daily hired is 35 people equal to 23.33% and contract work is only 5 people equal to 3.33%.

The results show that the majority of respondents are employed in the sales / marketing department with 51 employees or 34.00%, followed by the accounting / finance department with 39 people equals to 26.00%, the warehouse/delivery department is 38 employees equal to 25.33% and the Manufacturing department is 22 employees equal to 14.67%.

## **4.2.2 Part 2: Information about the satisfaction of using the service from the Department of Employmen**

### **4.2.2.1 Chanel of using the service of the Department of Employment**

Table 6: Chanel of using the service of the Department of Employment

<b>No.</b>	<b>List</b>	<b>Number of Answer</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
1	Website and Facebook of the Department	77	14.8
2	Officer within the department of Employment	24	4.6

3	(Job Fair)	75	14.4
4	Suggestion from Relative	30	5.8
5	Television and Newspaper	37	7.1
6	Friends	26	5.0
7	Labors association	29	5.6
8	Smart Job Center	74	14.2
9	Educational Institutions	76	14.6
10	Current working company	72	13.8
<b>Total</b>		<b>520</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The results of the study showed that the recognition of the services of the Department of Employment was mainly from the website and Facebook of the Department of Employment is 77 people answered the questionnaires equal to 14.8%, followed by educational institutions with 76 people who responded with 14.6% , Job Fair with 75 people who answered this question equal to 14.4%, smart job center is 74 people equal to 14.2%, current working company is 72 people equal to 13.8%, television and newspaper is 37 people equal to 7.1%, labors association is 29 people qual to 5.6%, from friend suggestion is 26 people equal to 5.0% and suggestion from officer within the department of Employment is 24 people equal to 4.6%.

#### 4.2.2.2 The Service that respondents used from the Department of Employment

Table 7: The Service that respondents used from the Department of Employment

No.	List	Number of Answer	Percentage(%)
1	Find a job within the country	71	25.9
2	Find work in abroad	30	10.9
3	Career guidance	46	16.8

4	Watch demonstrations/training for self-employment	65	23.7
5	Job seeker protection (grieving /asking for help).	31	11.3
6	Meeting/training/listening to various information clarifications	31	11.3
<b>Total</b>		<b>274</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The results of the study show that the use of the services of the Department of Employment is mostly to find jobs within the country with 71 people answer equivalent to 25.9%, followed by watch demonstrations/training for self-employment freelance with 65 people equivalent to 23.7% , career guidance of 46 people equivalent to 16.8%, Meeting/training/listening to various information clarifications, Job seeker protection (grieving /asking for help) were the same answer as 31 people equal to 11.3% and find work in abroad is 30 people answer qual to 10.9%.

#### 4.2.2.3 Speed of responding from Department of Employment to the needs of worker's request in the past

Table 8: Speed of responding from Department of Employment to the needs of worker's request in the past

No.	List	Frequency	Percentage(%)
1	Slower than expected	39	26.00
2	Within the expected time	73	48.67
3	Faster than expected	38	25.33
<b>Total</b>		<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The results of the study showed that the Department of Employment can provide the service to meet the needs of the respondents is within the expected time of 73 people equals to 48.67%, followed by slower than expected time is 39 people equals to 26.00% and faster than expected time of 38 people equals to 25.33%.

#### 4.2.2.4 The overall satisfaction with the service provided by the Department of Employment

**Table 9: The overall satisfaction with the service provided by the  
Department of Employment**

No.	The service satisfaction	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Very satisfied	43	28.67
2	Not satisfied	46	30.67
3	Moderate	32	21.33
4	Satisfied	29	19.33
<b>Total</b>		<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The results of the study showed that the overall not satisfaction was mostly 46 people with 30.67%, followed by the very satisfied with 43 people equals to 28.67%, the other 32 people are equal to 21.33% were moderately satisfied and 29 people were found to be satisfied with 19.33%.

#### 4.2.2.5 Duration of finding a job of respondents

**Table 10: Duration of finding a job of respondents**

No.	Duration of finding a job	Frequency	Percentage(%)
1	6 month – 1 year	107	71.33
2	1-2 year	43	28.67
<b>Total</b>		<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The study found that most of employee spent 6 months to 1 year on looking for a job up to 107 people equals to 71.33%, and the sample group said that the duration of 1-2 years is 43 people equals to 28.67%.

#### 4.2.2.6 Obstacles in finding jobs

**Table 11: Obstacles in finding jobs (choose more than 1 answer)**



No.	Obstacles in finding job	Number of Answer	Percentage (%)
1	No obstacles	48	10.2
2	Qualification	73	15.5
3	Foreign language	30	6.4
4	Working experience	74	15.7
5	Skills	36	7.6
6	Personality	28	5.9
7	Information	28	5.9
8	Applying for a job but there is no company accepting	38	8.1
9	Failed on job interview	38	8.1
10	Distance	78	16.6
<b>Total</b>		<b>471</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The study found that the most common obstacle to find a job is were distance travel problems with 78 people or 16.6%, followed by work experience with 74 people or 15.7%, qualification with 73 people or 15.5%, the other respondent said there is no obstacle on finding a job were 48 people equal to 10.2%, then the respondents said fail on job interview with applying for a job but there is no company accepting were the same as 38 people equal to 8,1%, lack of skill is 36 people answer equal to 7.6%, problem on foreign language is 30 people equal to 6.4% and lack of personality and information is 28 people equal to 5.9%

#### 4.2.2.7 Need to change a job

**Table 12: Need to change a job (If you are currently working)**

No.	Need to change a job	Number	Percentage (%)
1	Do not need	58	38.67
2	Not sure	61	40.67
3	Switched to a freelance job	31	20.67
<b>Total</b>		<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The results showed that the majority of the sample was 42 people accounting of 42% are not sure, followed by 41 people accounting of 41% did not want to change jobs and 17 people equal to 17% wanted to work as a freelance job.

#### 4.2.2.8 Tendency to use the service from Department of Employment

**Table 13: Tendency to use the service from Department of Employment**

No.	Will use the service from Department of Employment	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Definitely use	33	22.00
2	Not sure	47	31.33
3	Definitely not use	70	46.67
<b>Total</b>		<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The results showed that the majority of the sample were not sure to change a job was 61 people accounting of 40.67%, followed by 58 people accounting of 38.67% did not need to change jobs and 31 people equal to 20.67% wanted to work as a freelance job.

#### 4.2.2.9 Recommendation for the Department of Employment need to improve

**Table 14: Recommendation for the Department of Employment need to improve (more than 1 answer)**

No.	Areas need to improve	Number of Answer	Percentage (%)
1	Career guidance	42	10.0
2	Domestic job recruitment	45	10.7
3	Overseas job recruitment	56	13.4
4	Provide information about the domestic labor market	24	5.7

5	Provide information on the foreign labor market	33	7.9
6	Protect job seekers	39	9.3
7	Manage the work of foreigners	85	20.3
<b>Total</b>		<b>324</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The results of the study showed that most of the sample groups wanted the Department Employment management the work of foreigners with 85 people or 20.3%, followed by oversea job recruitment with 56 people or 13.4%, then domestic employment with 45 people or 10.7%, career guidance with 42 people equal to 10.0%, protect job seekers 39 people equal to 9.3%, Provide information on the foreign labor market is 24 people equal to 33%, and provide information about the domestic labor market 24 people equal to 5.7%.

### **4.2.3 Part 3: The impact of COVID-19**

#### **4.2.3.1 Perception of COVID-19 Consequence**

**Table 15: Perception of COVID-19 Consequence**

<b>No.</b>	<b>The impact of VOVID-19</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
1	Lead to unemployment	87	58
2	Cause more difficult to find a job	63	42
<b>Total</b>		<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The study found that the majority of the sample said that unemployment was 87 people or 58% and that it causes more difficult to find a job with 63 people or 42%.

### **4.3 Data Analysis Form 2**

This part is an analysis of data questionnaire form 2. It was used for data gathering from entrepreneurs who have used services from the Department of Employment in Lao PDR. Details of data analysis are shown below:

### 4.3.1 Part I: Personal Information

#### 4.3.1.1 Age, Gender and Education of Respondents

**Table 16: Age, Gender and Education of Respondents**

<b>Social Demographic Characteristic</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>AGE</b>		
25-30 Year	22	14.67
31-35 Year	33	22.00
36-40 Year	45	30.00
41-46 Year	50	33.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>GENDER</b>		
Men	91	60.67
Women	59	39.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>EDUCATION</b>		
High school	32	21.33
Higher education	45	30.00
Bachelor degree	73	48.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The results of study showed on the Table 13 summaries the Demographic data analyzed univariate statistics (N=150). The age of most of respondents was 41-46 years old with 50 people equals to 33.33%, followed by 36-40 years old with 45 people equals to 30.00%, 31-35 years old with 33 people equals to 22% and 25-30 years is 22 people equals to 14.67%. Males outnumbered females by 91 (60.67%) to 59 (39.33%). Among respondents, the majority of respondents had a bachelor's degree with 73 people accounting of 48.67%, followed by higher education is 45 people accounting of 30.00%, and high school level is 32 people equals to 21.33%.

#### 4.3.1.2 Type of Business, Years of Business Operations, Number of Employees and Monthly Income of Business

**Table 17: Type of Business, Years of Business Operations, Number of Employees and Monthly Income of Business**

Type of Business and Years of Business Operations	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Type of Business</b>		
Agriculture	32	21.33
Industrial	52	34.67
Services	66	44.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Period of Business Operation</b>		
1-5 year	39	26.00
6-10 year	69	46.00
>10 year	42	28.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Number of Employee/workers in the Business</b>		
10-20	68	45.33
21-30	47	31.33
More than 30	35	23.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Monthly income of the business</b>		
30,000,001-40,000,000 Lao Kip (\$2800 - \$3800)	52	34.67
> 40,000,000 Lao Kip More than (\$3800)	98	65.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The results of the study showed that the type of business of the respondents was mostly in the service sector with 66 people accounting of 44.00%, followed by the industry sector with 52 people accounting of 34.67 % and agriculture with 32 people accounting of 21.33%.

The study found that the duration of the business operation, the majority of respondents said that most of the opening period is 6-10 years with 69 people equals to 46.00%, followed by more than 10 years with 42 people equals to 28% and 1-5 years with 39 people equals to 26.00%.

The study found that the number of employees within the business is mostly 10-20 people is 68 people equals to who answered the questionnaire on the issue equals to 45.33%, followed by 47 people said that within the company there are 21-30 people equals to 31.33% and more than 30 people have 35 people who answer questions equals to 23.33%.

The study found that the monthly income of most businesses was more than 40,000,000 lao kip (\$3800 USD) with 98 people equals 65.33% and the income of 30,000,001-40,000,000 Lao kip (\$2800-\$3800 USD) is 52 people accounting of 43.67%.

#### **4.3.2 Part 2. Means of recognition on Department of Employment**

##### **4.3.2.1 The services of the Department of Employment**

**Table 18: Means of recognition on Department of Employment**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Means of recognition</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
1	Website or Facebook of the Department	38	25.33
2	Advised from the Officers in the Department of Employment	57	38
3	Job Fair	55	36.67
<b>Total</b>		<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The results of the study showed that the respondents recognize the Department of Employment services were 57 people of the sample group through Advised from the officers in the department accounting of 38%, Job Fairs 55 people accounting of 36.67%, and from Website & Facebook is 38 people accounting of 25.33%.

#### 4.3.2.2 Types of services that respondents used from the Department of Employment

**Table 19: Types of services that respondents used from the Department of Employment**

No.	Types of services that respondents used from the Department of Employment	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Supplying domestic workers	125	35.92
2	To manage the work of foreign workers	50	14.37
3	Find information about labor market within the country	135	38.79
4	Sending workers/employees to work/training abroad	38	10.92
<b>Total</b>		<b>348</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The study found that 38.79% of respondents' use the service of the Department of Employment on finding information about labour market within the country; and 35.92% used the service on supplying domestic workers. However, only 14.37% of respondents use the service of managing the work of foreign workers; and 10.92% use the service of sending workers/employees to work/training abroad.

#### 4.3.2.3 Speed of request's responding, Satisfaction and Use the service of DOE of Entrepreneurs

**Table 20: Speed of request's responding, Satisfaction and Use the service of DOE of Entrepreneurs**

Speed of request's responding and Satisfaction of service	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Speed of request's responding</b>		
Within the expected time	59	39.33
Slower than expected	91	60.67

<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Satisfaction with service</b>		
Very satisfied	60	40.00
Not satisfied	90	60.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Use the service of DOE in future</b>		
Definitely use	62	41.33
Not sure	88	58.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The study found that DOE quickly respond to their needs in the past within the expected time was 39.33%, and slower than expected 60.67%.

The results show that the satisfaction with the service provided by the Department of Employment, most of entrepreneurs are not satisfied with the recruitment services provided by the Department of Employment and the dissatisfied group had up to 90 people equals to 60.00% and the very satisfied group have only 60 people equals to 40.00%.

The study found that in the future, most entrepreneurs are not sure if they will continue to use the services of the Department of Employment, with up to 88 people or 58.67% of the sample group and 62 people equal to 41.33% of the sample group will definitely use the service.

#### **4.3.2.4 Duration of looking for employees, Department has the most problems in recruiting people**

**Table 21: Duration of looking for employees, Department has the most problems in recruiting people**

<b>Duration time of looking for employees</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Duration of looking for employees</b>		
6 month - 1 Year	89	59.33



1-2 year	61	40.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Department has the most problems in recruiting people</b>		
Finance, Accounting	50	19.31
Selling, Marketing	51	19.69
Warehouse, delivery	45	17.37
Manufacturing	45	17.37
Information technology	23	8.88
Maintenance technician	45	17.37
<b>Total</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Problem in finding workers</b>		
No one applied for the job	95	46.34
Lack of skills, knowledge and ability to work	52	25.37
Often change a job	58	28.29
<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The study found that the duration of the recruitment period, most of entrepreneurs spend 6 months to 1 year looking for employees, up to 89 people equal to 59.33%, and the sample group says that it takes 1-2 years is 61 people equals 40.67%.

The study found that the department that had the most difficulty with recruitment issues is finding the employee who has ability in finance-accounting was about 19,31%; Selling-marketing accounts of 19,69%; Warehouse-delivery, Manufacturing and Maintenance technician accounts of 17,37%. Only Information technology was 8.88%.

The study found that the problems encountered in finding people to work from the survey of entrepreneurs found that there are three main problems that are the problem. Firstly, No one applied for the job accounting of 46.34%; Lack of skills, knowledge and ability to work was 25.37%, and often change a job was 28.29%.

#### 4.3.2.5 Areas that DOE needs to be improved

**Table 22: Areas that DOE needs to be improved**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Areas need to be improved</b>	<b>Number of Answer</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
1	Reduce the process of finding workers within the country	85	18.28
2	Reduce the process of recruiting foreign workers	95	20.43
3	Help screening workers who are competent/meet their requirements	97	20.86
4	Provide information about the labor market within the country	97	20.86
5	Provide comprehensive labor information	91	19.57
<b>Total</b>		<b>465</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The results of the study show that the main thing that the Department of Employment has to improve is to select a group of workers who are competent/can meet their requirements also need to provide information about the labor market within the country were 97 people equivalent to 20.86%, followed by the reduction of the process of accepting foreign workers, there are 95 people, equivalent to 20.43.3%, provide comprehensive labor information is 91 people equal to 19.57% and reduce the process of finding workers in the country has 85 people, equivalent to 18.28%.

### 4.3.3 Part 3: The Impact of COVID-19

#### 4.3.3.1 Impact of COVID-19 on the Business and Employment of Entrepreneurs

**Table 23: Impact of COVID-19 on the Business, Employment and Finding Workers for Entrepreneurs**

<b>Impact of COVID-19 on the Business, Employment and Finding Workers</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>COVID-19 Impact on the business</b>		
Profit decreasing	81	54.00
Lack of capital	69	46.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>COVID-19 Impact on employment</b>		
Reduce the number of employees	150	100.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>COVID-19 Impact on Finding workers</b>		
Easier to find employees/labours	<b>81</b>	<b>54</b>
Unchanged from before COVID-19 situation	<b>69</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The study found that the impact of Covid-19 on entrepreneur business was a profits decreasing is 81 people accounting of 54.00% and Lack of Capital is 69 people equal to 46.00%.

The study found that the Covid-19 situation is affecting the employment of many businesses and make all entrepreneurs have to reduce the number of employees accounted of 100%.

The study found that the Covid-19 situation had an effect on finding employees making it easier to find workers/laborers, is 81 people equivalent to 54%, and Unchanged from before the COVID-19 situation is 42 people equal to 42%.

#### **4.4 Data Analysis Form 3**

This part is an analysis of data questionnaire form 3. It was used for data collection from the officer at the Department Employment. Details of data analysis are shown below:

## Part 1 Personal Information

### 4.4.1.1 Status and Position of Respondents at Department of Employment.

**Table 24: Status and position of officers at DOE**

Status and position	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>STATUS</b>		
Public Servant	67	83.75
Full-time employee	13	16.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>POSITION</b>		
Director General	1	1.25
Deputy Director General	2	2.50
Director of Division	5	6.25
Technical Officer	68	85.00
Administrative Officer	3	3.75
Public Relations Officer	1	1.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The study found that the status of respondents 67 people are public servants, accounting for 83.75% and only 13 full-time employees, accounting for 16.25%.

Also the study showed that the position of respondents was mostly Technical Officers within the Department of Employment which consist of 65 people or accounting of 85%, followed by the position of Head of Division with 5 people equals to 6.25%. There were 3 administrative staffs equal to 3.75%; 2 Deputy Director General equals to 2.50%. And one Director General of the Department and one Public Relations Officer equals to 1.25%.

## Part 2 The effects of COVID-19

### 4.4.2.1 Division of Respondent in the Department of Employment

**Table 25: Division of Respondents in the Department of Employment**

No.	Status	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
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1	Division of Employment Policy	21	26.25
2	Division of Internal Employment	14	17.50
3	Division of Overseas Employment	18	22.50
4	Division of Independent Employment Promotion	17	21.25
5	Division of Labor Market Information	10	12.50
<b>Total</b>		<b>80</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The results of the study showed that the majority of respondents were 21 people work in the Division of Employment Policy, accounting for 26.25%; 18 people work in the Division of Overseas Employment, accounting for 22.25%; 17 people work in the Division of Independent Employment Promotion, equal to 21.2%, 14 people work in the Division of Internal Employment, equivalent to 17.50%; and 10 people work in the Department of Labor Market Information, equal to 12.50%.

#### 4.4.2.2 Opinion of officers in DOE on level of COVID-19 affected the society

**Table 26: Opinion of officers in DOE on level of COVID-19 affected society**

No.	Content of Impact	Average ( $\bar{X}$ )	Standard Deviation ( <i>S. D</i> )	Level of the effected
1	Overall Condition	3.95	0.74	Much
2	Domestic recruitment	4.59	0.74	Very much
3	Overseas recruitment	4.58	0.57	Very much
4	Career promotion, guidance	3.94	0.83	Much
5	Labor market management	3.66	0.73	Much
6	Checking and Protection of job seekers	3.60	0.65	Much
7	Foreign Worker Management	4.60	0.56	Very much
<b>Total</b>		<b>3.51</b>	<b>0.50</b>	<b>Much</b>

The results of the analysis showed that the outbreak of COVID-19 has affected the overall Divisions in the DoE to a large extent  $\bar{x}=3.51$ , but when looking at each aspect, it can be seen that the Domestic recruitment, Overseas recruitment Foreign and Worker Management are at the highest level of impact from COVID-19. For instance, the aspect of Foreign Worker Management had the level of COVID-19 effected was very much or  $\bar{x}=4.60$ . And the other aspects are also observed that they are much effected from COVID-19: like Career promotion, guidance  $\bar{x}=3.94$ ; Labor market management  $\bar{x}=3.66$  and Checking and Protection of job seekers  $\bar{x}=3.60$ .

#### 4.4.2.3 Whether the New Normal changes in the mission of DOE

(New normal means a new work style that is different from the past due to something affecting the pattern. And the practices that people in society are normally familiar with and have been able to anticipate must be changed to a new way; under the new unfamiliar standards).

**Table 27: Changes that happened in the tasks of the organization**

No.	Content of Changes	(Yes) Change	Not Change	No Answer	Percentage (%)
1	Overall Condition	80	0	0	100.00
2	Domestic recruitment	79	0	1	98.75
3	Overseas recruitment	79	0	1	98.75
4	Career promotion, guidance	80	0	0	100.00
5	Labor market management	80	0	0	100.00
6	Checking and Protection of job seekers	80	0	0	100.00
7	Foreign Worker Management	79	0	1	98.75

The results of the study have shown that COVID-19 has caused changes in all of the tasks surveyed within many divisions of DoE, including domestic and overseas recruitment and the overall labour market, which has never happened before. And also most all 80 respondents in the DoE agreed that 100% of the tasks have had to be adjusted to work with the New Normal.

#### **4.4.2.4 New normal things that happened in the duties of the Organization**

**Table 24: New normal things that happened in the duties of the**

##### **Organization**

<b>No.</b>	<b>New things happened</b>	<b>Number of Respond</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
1	Using online system for work	80	100
2	Stay at the same place	80	100
3	Cannot gather with the colleague	80	100
4	All kind of adaptation	80	100

The study found that the New Normal things that happened after the COVID-19 outbreak in the workplace within each Division in the DoE are using online system for work; Working from home or Living or stay in the same place; Unable to gather with the team or co-workers, and they have to adapt to all new forms of working and living during the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **4.4.2.5 Preference to change the missions in the DOE or not**

From the responses to the open-ended questionnaire, it can be seen that the sample of 80 people said that 100% of the work within their own unit have been adjusted to adapt to the current situation in society. All are having difficulty meeting in person and various departments have switched to working remotely or online.

#### **4.4.2.6 Support need in order to accomplish the mission of the DOE**

**Table 29: Support needed in order to accomplish the mission of the department**

No.	Factor	Number of Response	Percentage (%) of Answer	Percentage (%) of Respondent answer the Questionnaire
1	Budgets	80	27.49	100.0
2	Personal	41	14.09	51.2
3	Knowledge	80	27.49	100.0
4	Structure of agency	10	3.44	12.5
5	Change working style	80	27.49	100.0
<b>Total</b>		<b>291</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>

According to the answers from 80 correspondents from DoE, the results indicate that the need for support for staff members to accomplish the mission of the agency include the Budget support as of 27.49%; the knowledge support was 27.49%, and the change of working style support was 27.49%. On the other hand, the need for Structure of Agency support was very low as of 3.44% and Personal support was 14%.

#### **4.4.2.7 The opinion on COVID-19 affect labor conditions and employment in Lao PDR**

When asked about the impact of COVID-19 in Lao PDR, the staff answered that it is affecting their labor conditions and employment in Laos. According to data from the Ministry of Social and Labor Welfare in 202, the unemployment rate was very high and repatriation (returning) of migrant workers to Lao PDR has reach 496,000 people. This is equal to 21.8%, of which about 60,000 people are workers from abroad and 436,000 peoples are unemployed in the country. This is a very high figure (Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare , 2002)

#### **4.4.2.8 The opinion on COVID-19 affect the Lao economy**

When asked about how COVID-19 affected the Lao economy, the 80 staff from DoE reported that the COVID-19 outbreak has had a significant impact on the socio-economic situation in general, and especially on the services sectors, such as tourism and hospitals, which have declined sharply. Many related businesses have had to shut down in compliance with the government measures to prevent and control



the spread of COVID-19 disease. According to the National Economic Research Institute, Lao PDR will lose at least \$350 million dollars in revenue from this sector (National Economic Research Institute, 2020).

The main short-term economic impacts from COVID-19 can be seen in the impact on the tourism sector, which is the first and most affected sector. Losing income for the first two months in 2020 was approximately \$452,000 dollars because the number of tourists from China and Thailand coming to Lao PDR has decreased by -16% (Chinese tourists) and -5% (Thai tourists) compared to the same period last year, 2019. However, the number of tourists from Korea and Europe also increased in the first two months in 2020. Currently, all activities of tourists coming to Lao PDR from any country are restricted to the maximum level. The number of tourists visiting Lao PDR has been almost non-existent. Although no official statistics have been released, the situation is expected to last up to more than 12 months as COVID is still out of control in many countries and there are still travel concerns and the possibility of a recurrence of the disease (Lao National Tourism Organization, 2020).

#### **4.4.2.9 The opinion on COVID-19 policy issued by the Lao government affecting the Labour sector in Lao PDR**

When asked about the effectiveness of policies on COVID-19 issued by the Lao government, the answer from officials from DoE was that, due to various circumstances, the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare of Lao PDR has issued Notification No. 4525/NAB dated 8 December 2021, stating that it is responsible for organizing jobs searches for workers. As a first step, each division in the Department has set up Labour information centers to collect statistics on unemployed labour and returning workers from aboard.

#### **4.4.2.10 Opinion on services of the DOE should improve in dealing with COVID-19 in current and future situations**

When asking about the improvement needed for the DoE in dealing with COVID-19 situation, the majority of respondents in the Department agreed that they should continuously provide information and service on job-seeking for unemployed people and workers who are looking for jobs. And they should closely work with

District Labour Offices across the country to monitor and collect monthly statistics on domestic unemployment and returning workers from abroad.

#### **4.5 Data Analysis Form 4**

This part is an analysis of data questionnaire form 4. It explores the qualitative results on the effectiveness of Lao government policies in response to COVID-19. It was used to collect data collection from the government officers working at 9 ministries and the Prime Minister Office in Lao PDR: Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Public Work and Transportation, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Prime Minister Office, the Parliament of Laos, Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism, and Ministry of Education and Sports. Details of data analysis are shown below:

##### **4.5.1 Stakeholders' role in response to COVID-19 in Lao PDR**

Correspondents provided opinions about their roles in response to COVID-19 such as asking for assistance from countries that have normal and close relationships with Lao PDR. They were also involved in creating methods of cooperation against COVID-19 for the Lao government. They strictly followed guidance issued by the government on cleanliness, distancing and staying at home.

Moreover, some respondents said they periodically coordinated and sent notification on COVID-19 prevention measures to embassies and international organizations in Lao PDR. Their roles also contributed to the education of public officers within the department regarding preventing themselves and their families from contracting the disease. They were coordinator of RMNCAH telehealth COVID-19 training Program; and closely following news from the government and the Ministry of Finance on COVID-19 protection measures. Their role involves assisting the Internal Trade Committee, which is the Secretariat of the Central Committee for the COVID-19 Prevention and Control. What's more, they were ready to deal with the COVID-19 disease and support the policies issued by government. Someone also participated in compiling reports on various tasks related to COVID-19 responsibilities to report to Lao officials at higher levels in Lao PDR.

#### **4.5.2 Opinion on the impacts of COVID-19 on the Lao economy**

The perceptions of Lao people on the impacts of COVID-19 on the Lao economy are firstly, the impact of COVID is widespread in Lao PDR because Lao PDR is a country that relies on tourism as a source of income. COVID-19 cause of less tourism and less income. Secondly there an increase is the trade deficit and lack of revenue from collection of taxes. Thirdly is the inflation causing goods to be more expensive and the economy not growing. COVID-19 have had a profound effect on daily life and the socio-economic situation in many areas, including shops and restaurants being closed during outbreaks in the community and the number of infected people has risen sharply. But at the same time, online commerce is on the rise and gaining popularity. The downside is that most of online commerce in Lao PDR is unregistered, tax-deductible, and the number of employees decreases.

There has been a reduction in employment in some sectors. The Lao economy has been disrupted, investment has fallen, unemployment has risen, services and tourism businesses mostly have been impacted, with many businesses shutting down. But at the same time, so far the domestic tourism and the development of domestic tourism sites have been developed and expanded. Moreover, the COVID-19 impacts makes the Lao economy weak, and commodity prices is higher that may affect people to live difficulties.

The economy is in deficit, combined with the control of commodity prices are not widespread, and it led to unplanned international trade. The service business is more affected than ever, as the lao PDR relies on tourism as a source income, when revenues from the service sector deducing, social spending becomes more cautious or tense, and the government is unable to collect taxes from this sector on a regular basis. What's more, the Lao PDR's gross domestic product (GDP) decreased from 7% in 2018 to 3.4% in 2021, inflation has risen and the minimum wage has not been adjusted. It Affecting many business units, especially in services business such as tourism, hotel, aviation, transportation. And the SME business such as shops that need to be closed down, especially restaurants, bars, schools, etc.

#### **4.5.3 The impacts of COVID-19 on the labour sector in Lao DPR**

The opinions about the impacts of COVID-19 on the labour sector in Lao PDR were firstly, since Lao PDR is a country that provides tourism services, when there is COVID-19 happens, it affects the reduction of domestic and foreign tourists. Also, employment has been affected, leading to widespread of unemployment. Low-income people and subsistence workers are the most affected. Number of unemployed workers increased, especially there were Lao workers who used to work abroad came back to Lao PDR. There are no tourists, and there are no jobs hiring. Employment hiring is declined and labor could not be exported. There is no place to export labor or services, when there are no customers, so of course there are no wages. What's more, the labor costs are too low. Some companies have revenue deficits, which has resulted in reductions of staffs and that may cause of rising unemployment. Some workers in Lao PDR are unemployed because some sectors have reduced their staff, especially in the tourism, hotel and restaurant sectors. For example, restaurants, food delivery is mostly ordered online, it is not necessary to have a full-time staff at the companies.

Secondly, COVID-19 severely impacts many companies and businesses have been shut down, leading to higher unemployment. The employment rate is low and most of the staff are terminated or receive a reduced salary. Due to the outbreak, there was a lockdown on all business sectors, which temporarily closed and reduced employment and labor costs. COVID-19 has puts workers at a higher unemployment rate. Production was not as planned due to labor constraints and increased consumption but less productivity. Employment in the service sector is declining due to government control measures and people afraid of COVID-19, domestic workers are adjusting from Lao workers returning from abroad and Chinese-Vietnamese workers are more restricted.

Thirdly, there is impact on currency exchange due to the depreciation of the kip. The minimum wage is 1,100,000 kip / person / month or \$ 120 / person per month, and it changed to the minimum wage of 1,100,000 kip / person / month or \$ 150 / person / month. Employment tends to decline due to reduction of the number of companies. When the country borders close, hotels, guesthouses, as well as other commercial businesses were also affected. Employees from those sectors were all suspended and lost their income.

#### **4.5.4 Opinion on the government responded to the crisis of Lao workers returning from Thailand and other countries**

The opinions about the impacts of COVID-19 on the labour sector in Lao DPR were firstly, since Lao PDR is a country that provides tourism services, when there is COVID-19 happens, it affects the reduction of domestic and foreign tourists. Also, employment has been affected, leading to widespread of unemployment. Low-income people and subsistence workers are the most affected. Number of unemployed workers increased, especially there were Lao workers who used to work abroad came back to Lao PDR. There are no tourists, and there are no jobs hiring. Employment hiring is declined and labor could not be exported. There is no place to export labor or services, when there are no customers, so of course there are no wages. What's more, the labor costs are too low. Some companies have revenue deficits, which has resulted in reductions of staffs and that may cause of rising unemployment. Some workers in Lao PDR are unemployed because some sectors have reduced their staff, especially in the tourism, hotel and restaurant sectors. For example, restaurants, food delivery is mostly ordered online, it is not necessary to have a full-time staff at the companies.

Secondly, COVID-19 severely impacts many companies and businesses have been shut down, leading to higher unemployment. The employment rate is low and most of the staff are terminated or receive a reduced salary. Due to the outbreak, there was a lockdown on all business sectors, which temporarily closed and reduced employment and labor costs. COVID-19 has puts workers at a higher unemployment rate. Production was not as planned due to labor constraints and increased consumption but less productivity. Employment in the service sector is declining due to government control measures and people afraid of COVID-19, domestic workers are adjusting from Lao workers returning from abroad and Chinese-Vietnamese workers are more restricted.

Thirdly, there is impact on currency exchange due to the depreciation of the kip. The minimum wage is 1,100,000 kip / person / month or \$ 120 / person per month, and it changed to the minimum wage of 1,100,000 kip / person / month or \$ 150 / person / month. Employment tends to decline due to reduction of the number of companies. When the country borders close, hotels, guesthouses, as well as other

commercial businesses were also affected. Employees from those sectors were all suspended and lost their income.

#### **4.5.5 Recommendation on the next policies that the DOE should undertake in response to the COVID-19 pandemic**

Recommendations on the next policies that the DoE should undertake in response to the COVID-19 pandemic are as follow:

- The Lao government should pay more attention on building skills and encourage them to work in our own country.
- Both the public and private sectors need to be involved to provide the workers with jobs so that they do not have to go to Thailand.
- Many parties, especially the public and private sectors, need to be involved in the administration so that workers can have jobs opportunity so that they do not have to go to Thailand.
- Lao workers' skills should be developed to international standards.
- In Laos PDR, there is a huge demand for labor, but wages must be commensurate with actual use.
- Skills training should be organized to provide job opportunities for those who want to work.
- Summarize and assess the impact on Lao workers both inside and outside the country, and find solutions for Lao workers both inside and outside the country.
- Increase the capacity of Lao workers in many areas, effective and efficient, create Lao labor concept to be diligent and work to compete with time.
- The department needs to coordinate with stakeholders to study more on labor needs in Lao PDR in order to develop a curriculum and develop Lao labor force to have more semi-skills or skills in developing and supplying more labor in Lao PDR.
- There should be measures in place to recruit workers.
- Should find jobs for worker returning from Thailand to work in factories located in Lao PDR.
- Find jobs and develop Lao workers into internationally skilled workers.

- Increase monitoring in accordance with strict and uniform labor laws throughout the country by not allowing employers to take advantage of employees.
- Continue to restrict the entry of foreign workers or make it more systematic. And increase employment in large projects to increase the number of Lao workers.
- Establish a labor reform plan as a national agenda refer to the basis for implementation so that it can be implemented in a practical and effective manner.
- Provide employment, channel guidance for workers who want to work.
- When they return to Laos, wages are an important factor. If the country is still open, these workers will continue to go to work abroad.

#### **4.5.6 Comments and recommendation to DOE on the impact of COVID-19 to labour sector in Lao PDR**

Recommendations to DoE about the impact of COVID-19 to labour sector in Lao PDR are as follow:

1. There should be a strategic plan for labor and priorities of job descriptions and close coordination with various business units.
2. Provide employment to accommodate the increasing number of workers so that they can have jobs.
3. Establish a fund to promote knowledge and jobs opportunity in Lao PDR so that people do not cross over to Thailand and to be able to help workers in times during the crisis.
4. COVID-19 is a disease that everyone in the world has to live with. It is not scary to be able to make a living, but we should be conscious of taking care of ourselves.
5. Should encourage them to work inside the country, Finding the right target group for the right job.
6. Organize vocational training so that those who are interested can upgrade their knowledge and skills.

7. Stakeholders should exchange lessons learned from abroad and assess the actual labor statistics affected by COVID-19 so that the workers can still have access to the labor market and live in new normal life due to COVID-19.
8. Now the workers are choosing jobs. If it is a job in their own country, they does not want to do it, but if it is a job in another country, and does the same kind of work they still don't want to do. Therefore, it is necessary to create awareness for Lao workers to work in their own country.
9. The department should think and develop a policy in the next five years as a response and ensure that both domestic and foreign workers can move effectively and produce results for the country.
10. Department should review about hiring to give control to the workforce.
11. The Department should promote and develop Lao worker skills at the international level, find a labor market to send Lao workers to work abroad.
12. There is an agreement with the measures set out by the government but must increase the inspection more strictly.
13. Create a career that society needs and can be used in real life, so the DoE must keep up with the events and cooperate with the Ministry of Education and Sports to develop a curriculum or cooperate with foreign countries with a clear goal.
14. Determining the minimum wage in many contexts, with the research of each employer and employee to make the minimum wage consistent and appropriate to their situation.
15. Create a website or Facebook page to inform the jobs that need labor to increase the channels for finding jobs for workers.
16. There should be more policies and promotion of labor and personnel by seeking sources of funding and mobilizing developed countries.



# CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

## 5.1 Introduction

This section explains the results of research findings displayed in Chapter IV. They are arranged in the same sequence as the objectives and research questions of this thesis.

## 5.2 Summary of Service Recipients' Perception on DOE's Service Policy

The service recipients were mostly of the age between 41-46 years old. Males were 54% of the sample and females were 46%. Most hold Bachelor's degrees. Most have worked for less than <10 years. Most received an income including OT of more than 4,000,000 Lao kip (\$400 USD) per month.

The study found that the occupations of the respondents were a cross-section of state enterprise employees, Government officers, hired employees, company employees and sales personnel.

They used the services of DoE to find jobs within the country; for training for self-employment; for career guidance; for various information clarifications, for job seeker protection; and for find work in abroad.

Most found that the DoE assistance to be timely, but, overall, they were not satisfy with DOE's services.

Most respondents spent 6 months to 1 year looking for a job up to 71.33%. They said that most common obstacle were distance travel problems followed by lack of work experience or qualifications. However, only 38.67% of them did not need to change jobs and 20.67% of them wanted to work as a freelancer.

Most of service recipients said they wanted the DoE to improve their work.

Finally, 58% of respondents perceived the COVID-19 had an impact on unemployment and 42% perceived it caused them more difficulty in finding a job.

## 5.3 Summary of Entrepreneur's Perception on DOE's Services Policy

The demographic data showed the recipients to be fairly evenly distributed between ages 31-46. The majority were male, accounting for ~ 60% and female number was ~40%. Most hold bachelor's degrees.

The types of business spanned the range of the service sector, industry sector, and agriculture. The number of employees within the business is mostly 10-30 people. The monthly income of most businesses was more than 40,000,000 Lao kip (\$3800 USD). Most respondents' used the services of DOE for information about the domestic labour market and for supplying domestic workers.

Most perceived that the DOE responded slower than expected to their needs and most of the entrepreneurs were not satisfied with the recruitment services provided by the DoE. Most are not sure if they will continue to use the services of the DoE in the future, This may be because they are slow in response to the business's need, and some of them don't know much about the service of DOE because the information from DOE is not widely disseminated to many business people.

Most of the entrepreneurs spend 6 months to 1 year looking for employees. There are three main problems in finding workers. Firstly, often no one applied for the job; secondly, many lacked the skills, knowledge and qualification for the job accounted of 25.37%.

Entrepreneurs' perception of needed improvements in DoE operations included its ability to select workers who are competent and can meet their requirements; the need to provide information about the labor market within the country; and reduction in the process of accepting foreign workers and finding domestic workers.

Entrepreneurs perceived that the impact of Covid-19 on business was a decrease in profits and lack of capital. 100% of all business perceived that Covid-19 made them reduce the number of employees. On the other hand, 54% of them perceived that Covid-19 made it easier to find workers.

#### **5.4 Summary Impact of COVID-19 on the current mission of DOE**

The study found that only 16.25% of officers at the Department were full-time employees. 85% of the respondents were technical officers. Only 6.,25% were heads of divisions.

The DOE staffs perceived that the outbreak of COVID-19 has affected the overall Divisions in the DoE to a large extent, but domestic recruitment, overseas

recruitment, and worker management suffered the highest level of impact. However, all 80 respondents in the DOE agreed that 100% of the tasks were adjusted or have changed to work with the New Normal situation resulting from Covid. .

The study found that the New Normal things that happened after the COVID-19 outbreak in the workplace are the use of online systems, working from home, the inability to gather as a team with co-workers.

When asked about the impact of COVID-19 on the labour sector in Lao PDR, the officials answered that the unemployment rate was very high, reaching the level of 496,000 people which equals to 21.8%, of which about 60,000 peoples are returning of migrant workers to Lao PDR from abroad and 436,000 peoples are unemployed in the country. (Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare , 2002).

When asking about the improvement needed for the DoE in dealing with COVID-19 situation, the majority of respondents agreed that they should continuously provide information and service on job-seeking for unemployed people and workers who are looking for jobs. And they should closely work with District Labour Offices across the country to monitor and collect statistics of domestic unemployment and returning workers from abroad in every month.

## **5.2 Effectiveness of COVID-19 Prevention Policy in Lao PDR**

When asking about opinions on what do public officers and workers know about the government policies on preventing COVID-19, many people from various organizations responded that they understood the government policies clearly and up-to-date, especially the COVID-19 prevention and remediation policies. Therefore, they had tried avoiding crowded places, always wearing a mask and getting vaccinations. They understood that the government orders on closing some business that could cause the spreading of disease like night clubs and bars. They also know well about legislation, for example, announcement of periodic official regulations to respond to the prevention and control of COVID-19 such as the official announcements that people can get vaccinated, banning weddings, and banning gathering for conferences that may cause spreading of disease. The government has put in place many of measures and policies to prevent and encourage individuals in society such as: public hospitals and centers for COVID-19 screening and treatment.

free diagnostic tests; getting vaccinated to prevent COVID-19 disease in a timely manner, treatment of infected people from all classes, free treatment for infected people, free diagnostic tests, and also provided 164 hotline services for home care. Also, the Ministry of Finance has issued policies to encourage citizen such as exemptions or reductions in some taxes to support entrepreneurs.

Moreover, in Lao PDR, people understood and acknowledged the travel restrictions on entry-exit Lao PDR. Furthermore, Lao people agreed and conducted common measures to prevent COVID-19 infection by wearing masks, washing hands with an alcohol or gel, keeping a distance, and cleaning frequently the exposed areas. What's more, they acknowledge policy on receiving foreign aid from many countries, especially from countries to which Lao PDR has a strong party relationship like China. In addition, the government also facilitated the movement of goods from provinces to provinces during the COVID-19 outbreak. It also coordinates with importing companies and domestic factories to balance the demand for sufficient of goods during the epidemic; encouraging the use of the KYC application to confirm COVID-19 vaccination receipts, creating a QR-code to track travelers, track self-treatment at home and also provide video counseling with doctor and other policies.

Furthermore, Lao people agreed and conducted common measures to prevent COVID-19 infection by wearing masks, washing hands with an alcohol or gel, keeping a distance, and cleaning frequently the exposed areas. What's more, they acknowledge policy on receiving foreign aid from many countries, especially from countries to which Lao PDR has a strong party relationship with like China; transportation of goods, especially cross-border goods. In addition, the government also facilitate the movement of goods from provinces to provinces during the COVID-19 outbreak. It also coordinates with importing companies and domestic factories to balance the demand for sufficient of goods during the epidemic; encouraging the use of the KYC application to confirm COVID-19 vaccination receipts, creating a QR-code to track travelers, track self-treatment at home and also provide video counseling with doctor and other policies. There were opinions that it is important and deeply understanding of the policies laid out by the Lao Revolutionary Party and the Lao government, such as: be aware and prepare for

handling of disease; implementation of policies and procedures for dealing when infected the diseases and also living during the COVID-19 and economic crises.

### **5.3 Advantages and Disadvantages of COVID-19 Prevention Policies**

When asking about the advantage and disadvantage of policies in response to COVID-19, majority of people replied that the advantages of the policies are firstly, it is considered to be continuous and up-to-date. Secondly, the Lao government has set standards measures that are important to the Lao citizens in which the government has issued the Notice of Measures to deal with COVID-19 disease by evaluating and relying on the past performance of measures. Some measures have been reduced and added to suit the actual situations. Thirdly, the policy on access to vaccines is relatively good, with dissemination of information through online social media, radio and through various organizations to encourage people to get vaccinated. Moreover, the government provides free diagnosis and treatment, free vaccinations, and announcement of preventive measures which are periodically adjusted to the current situation. As a result, mortality and infection rates were not so high compared to developed country like the United States. There are further measures on reducing the number of infections by encouraging families to spend time doing activities together, and save more money.

The policies have been shown to be effective. Currently, the infection rate was reduced by 90% in the middle of 2021 compared to the daily epidemic period in the early stages of the epidemic in 2020, and now in the Vientiane Capital, the number of vaccinated is 80% of the population (except children 14 years and under and the elderly with poor health) and in other provinces as well. However, in the end of 2021, due to incoming for Lao workers from Thailand and a few illegal Thai tourists that entered Lao PDR, the number of infected cases increased rapidly across the country from 50 cases in the middle of 2021 to more than thousands of cases in the end of 2021.

On the other hand, the disadvantages of the policies are firstly, some measures and policies may not be suitable for all groups and do not provide adequate compensation. Secondly, there was a lack of good vaccination management system. Moreover, people perceived those goods are more expensive, and everyone is

affected by the economic impact of COVID-19. This is not an unprecedented phenomenon that the government often causes the problem first and learns from it later. Secondly, the measures and guidelines also have some gaps in implementation and have encountered difficulties in actual practice, sometimes the policies confuse citizens with the processing of documents. For example, people who will travel within the country from one province to another must obtain approval documents from the COVID taskforce first, but somehow the process is very difficult due to the many organizations involved. Some coordination points are not yet linked to one another and some information is not clearly explained. Thirdly, medical centers for COVID-19 treatment were not sufficient and not convenient. Fifthly, the information about COVID-19 is not widespread, especially in remote areas.

Fifthly, even though the government has put in place a variety of measures to keep people aware of COVID-19, the implementation is still not strong enough and the measures are neglected. And there is a lack of financial support for affected poor people and businesses that have experienced the largest impact, especially tourism companies, hotels, and restaurants. Moreover, some entrepreneurs are still violating the regulations and not cooperating with the government.

#### **5.4 Suggestions for Improvement of COVID-19 Prevention Policies**

Suggestions on policies improvement to be more effective are as follow:

- Focusing on problem solving and learning to deal with the situation in a systematic way.
- All the relevant sectors must coordinate with each other, divide the work into specific ones and then apply strict non-selective sanctions to person who have violation the measures.
- The implementation of the policy and measures should be checked whether it really works, it is not just only an order from the government, because some parties do not strictly follow the measures, such as some restaurants that remain open after the time limitation.
- The government should prevent the emergence of new risky groups of COVID-19 infections.

- Policies should have a punishment and fine to those who violate the measures.
- There should be clear improvements in coordination points, especially in the implementation of measures and guidelines to prevent the gaps.
- COVID-19 Prevention Measures should be taken to control some business that take the advantage to increase the prices of products during the pandemic and the Measures should cover the controlling of the entertainment places that are crowded and at risk of infection.
- All sector should arrange the priority tasks in addressing the prevention and controlling of COVID-19 disease; in the health and economic sectors, such as the distribution and spreading of vaccines in urban and rural areas in each province; and raising the awareness of how dangerous of the COVID-19 disease throughout the country of Lao PDR.
- Advocate all citizen to get vaccination.
- Strict measures should be taken to where there is a COVID risk of spreading, especially in entertainment venues, karaoke and bars.
- Increase opportunity to access free health care or inexpensive treatment for the risky and infected people. Also let the community and organizations, including the public-private sector, take the lead in preparing the equipment and disinfectants available to the general public. Taking control of social activities - ensure safety and strictly control standards. The Lao government must allocate its funds appropriately and on time, also conduct monitoring and evaluation in periodically.
- The government should formulate a socio-economic development plan along with the application of measures to control the COVID-19 disease in conjunction with a detailed and annual plan in order to be able to work specifically to solve the economic and financial difficulties to prevent and control the disease to return to normal as soon as possible.
- The government should take measures to reduce the pandemic, but still keep the economy stable.
- The important thing is to adapt to live a new normal life, be careful to protect themselves.

Should be advertising the effect of COVID-19 and continue the policy to eradicate the COVID-19 diseases.

## **5.5 Further Methods for the Lao government Should Adopt in**

### **Handling the COVID-19 Crisis**

According to the answers from the stakeholders in 10 agencies, they have provided suggestions for further methods that the Lao government can do in handling the COVID-19 crisis are as follow:

- Focus on more vaccinations and open the country
- Strict, decisive, accepting and be adaptable to live with it.
- Raise awareness of the benefits of vaccination to people who have not yet been recognized.
- The government should continue to ensure that children are fully vaccinated.
- The strict measures should be taken.
- Government should be considered or assumed in all cases to prevent crises in the future risk.
- Help to reduce the costs such as price control of goods.
- At present, the government has made adjustments periodically according to the actual situation, which is a good thing, but I would like to suggest that some measures that are not necessary should be released, such as restricting the area. If PCR tests have been inspected both before and after arriving in the Lao PDR, the results of the PCR test should be considered to be reliable, as some countries have already reduced the number of quarantine days.. On the other hand, the implementation of the notification proposes that the relevant sectors should take the implementation of specific legislation and make it clearer for the people to understand more easily.
- Should advertise for the Lao people to understand more how to live with COVID-19 disease in New Normal.
- Facilities in trade, take appropriate measures not to affect the economy, focusing on the livelihoods of the people, if possible, the government should look at low-income people so that they can continue to live during the crisis.



- Should have a strict policy and allocate a tight budget to distribute those budgets to priority areas.
- Enact strict measures on the screening of people entering the country through the border, including Lao people living in Lao PDR.
- Sales of drugs anti-COVID-19 and protective equipment price should be controlled, many people believe that when they test infected, they can buy their own medicines and do not report themselves to the public health officer, this may cause the number of confirm cases to be inaccurate, and some pharmacy stores stock up on medicine to stock to raise their prices while the real infected people cannot buy medicine at the price set by the government.
- Strictly continue to suppress short-term contacts to avoid the spread of the disease.
- Reduce taxes on vaccines, drugs.
- Increase the use of the budget and have a policy of reducing taxes on the supply of vaccines, drugs and anti-quiners more than other policies.
- Encourage the management of production, import-export, setting the minimum wage, monitoring, managing the prices of goods and services so as not to take advantage of the opportunity to stockpile goods, increase prices such as no price tag, etc. Manage the import of counterfeit or expired goods to promote domestic production, strengthen domestic production, quality products with reasonable prices to be able to use internal inside the country and move forward to export through cross-border e-commerce and so on. To implement the detailed plan of the National Resolution on resolving the economic and financial difficulties; in addition, a detailed plan for the continuation and mitigation of the prevention and control of the COVID-19 disease, especially the use of the KYC application.
- The government should subsidize low-income people, and promotes online business.
- Due to limited fiscal liquidity, it is necessary to stimulate the economy to return to normal situation for the economic growth.

## 5.6 COVID-19 and Its Impacts on the Lao Economy

The perceptions of Lao people on the impacts of COVID-19 on the Lao economy are firstly, the impression that COVID impact is widespread in Lao PDR because Lao relies on tourism as a source of income. COVID-19 cause of less tourism and less income. Secondly is the trade deficit, lack of income from tourism, lack of revenue from collection of taxes. Thirdly is inflation of the price of goods.. COVID-19 has had a profound effect on daily life and the socio-economic situation in many areas, including shops and restaurants being closed during outbreaks in the community and the number of infected people has risen sharply, COVID-19 has affected the tourism industry in the country, leaving the hotel business unprofitable, and those involved in the tourism industry face many difficulties and challenges. But at the same time, online commerce is on the rise and gaining popularity. The downside is that most of online commerce in Lao PDR is unregistered, tax-free and reduces employment.

The service business is more affected than ever, as the lao PDR relies on tourism as a source income, when revenues from the service sector deducing, social spending becomes more cautious or tense, and the government is unable to collect taxes from this sector on a regular basis. What's more, the growth in Lao PDR's gross domestic product (GDP) decreased from 7% in 2018 to 3.4% in 2021, inflation has risen and the minimum wage has not been adjusted.

According to the Macroeconomic Policy Research and Economic Restructuring Center of Lao PDR, the GDP of Lao PDR was estimated to be 2,7% (2021) compared to 3,3% in 2020 and 5,5 % in 2019 before the COVID-19 outbreak. Therefore, it can conclude that the COVID-19 has strongly impacted the Lao economy. Details is shown in Table 31 below.

**Table 31: The Prediction of Lao PDR Economic Growth in 2021**

Changes of GDP	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021 (in the case of Basic)	2021 (in the case of lowest)
<b>Gross Domestic Product</b>	<b>7,0%</b>	<b>6,9%</b>	<b>6,3%</b>	<b>5,5%</b>	<b>3,3%</b>	<b>3,7%</b>	<b>2,7%</b>
Agriculture	2,8%	2,9%	1,3%	1,2%	1,2%	1,3%	1,1%
Industry	12,0%	11,6%	7,8%	5,6%	9,2%	6,2%	5,0%
Services	4,7%	4,4%	6,9%	6,9%	-1,2%	2,5%	1,2%

Product Taxes, nets	7,8%	7,0%	6,2%	5,5%	3,0%	2,6%	2,0%
<b>The structure of GDP</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021 (in the case of Basic)</b>	<b>2021 (in the case of lowest)</b>
<b>Gross Domestic Product</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Agriculture	17,2%	16,2%	15,7%	16,1%	16,5%	16,2%	16,3%
Industry	28,8%	30,9%	31,5%	31,5%	33,3%	34,1%	34,1%
Service	42,5%	41,5%	41,6%	41,5%	39,6%	39,2%	39,1%
Product Taxes, nets	11,5%	11,4%	11,1%	10,9%	10,7%	10,6%	10,6%
<b>Contribution of growth</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021 (in the case of Basic)</b>	<b>2021 (in the case of lowest)</b>
<b>Gross Domestic Product</b>	<b>7,0%</b>	<b>6,9%</b>	<b>6,3%</b>	<b>5,5%</b>	<b>3,3%</b>	<b>3,7%</b>	<b>2,7%</b>
Agriculture	0,5%	0,5%	0,2%	0,2%	0,2%	0,2%	0,2%
Industry	3,9%	3,9%	2,7%	2,0%	3,3%	2,3%	1,9%
Service	1,9%	1,8%	2,7%	2,7%	-0,5%	1,0%	0,5%
Product Taxes, nets	0,8%	0,7%	0,6%	0,6%	0,3%	0,3%	0,2%

**Source: Macroeconomic Policy Research and Economic Restructuring Center of Lao PDR, June, 2021 (MPR&ERC of Lao PDR, 2021)**

### **5.7 Impacts of COVID-19 on Labour Sector in Lao DPR**

The opinions about the impacts of COVID-19 on the labour sector in Lao DPR were firstly, since Lao PDR is a country that provides tourism services, when there is COVID-19 happens, it affects the reduction of domestic and foreign tourists. Also, employment has been affected, leading to widespread of unemployment. Low-income people and subsistence workers are the most affected. Number of unemployed workers increased, especially there were Lao workers who used to work abroad came back to Lao PDR. There are no tourists, and there are no jobs hiring. Employment hiring is declined and labor could not be exported. There is no place to export labor or services, when there are no customers, so of course there are no wages. What's more, the labor costs are too low. Some companies have revenue deficits, which has resulted in reductions of staffs and that may cause of rising unemployment. Some workers in Lao PDR are unemployed because some sectors have reduced their staff, especially in the tourism, hotel and restaurant sectors. For

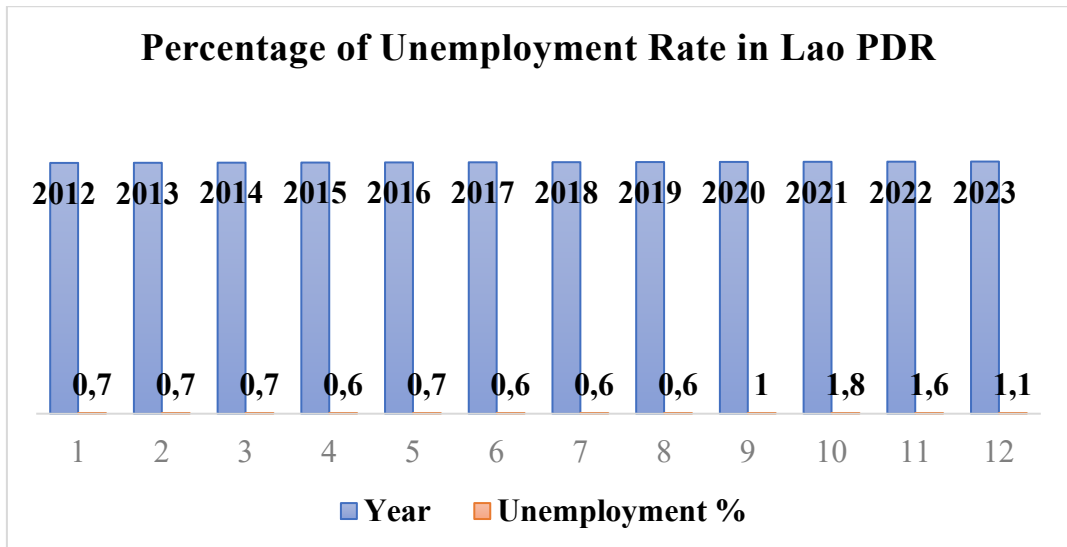
example, restaurants, food delivery is mostly ordered online, it is not necessary to have a full-time staff at the companies.

Secondly, COVID-19 severely impacts many companies and businesses have been shut down, leading to higher unemployment. The employment rate is low and most of the staff are terminated employment or receive a reduced salary. Due to the outbreak, there was a lockdown on all business sectors, which temporarily closed and reduced employment and labor costs. COVID-19 has puts workers at a higher unemployment rate. Production was not as planned due to labor constraints and increased consumption but less productivity. Employment in the service sector is declining due to government control measures and people afraid of COVID-19, domestic workers are adjusting from Lao workers returning from abroad and Chinese-Vietnamese workers are more restricted.

Thirdly, there is impact of currency exchange due to the exchange rate or the depreciation of the kip, which is expressed in 2018. The minimum wage was 1,100,000 kip / person / month or \$120 USD/person per month, and with the changed in the exchange rate, that would be equivalent to \$100 USD/ person / month. Explain that wages increase automatically when compared to foreign currencies. Employment tends to decline due to reducing of companies, and it has made job performing not effective. When close of the country borders, close of cities, hotels, guesthouses, as well as other commercial businesses were also affected. Employees from those sectors were all suspended and lost their income. People loss of their jobs and unemployed, which is a cause of social discouragement.

To validation the result of study, according to the survey from the Trading Economics Global Macro Model and Analysts Expectations from the World Bank (World Bank, 2022), the unemployment Rate in Lao PDR is expected to reach 1.60 in 2022 and 1.10% in 2023. Therefore, it can draw a proof of COVID-19 has impacted the labour sector in Lao PDR which many business industries have laid off their workers and the unemployment rate has increases to 1.8% in 2021 compared to 0.6% in 2019 before COVID-19 outbreak in Lao PDR and the world. Details please see Graph 4 below:

Graph 4: Percentage of Unemployment Rate in Lao PDR



Source: Tradingeconomic.com (World Bank) (Retrieved: May 5, 2022)

## 5.8 Recommendation for policies makers in Lao PDR to promote employment and labour sector after the COVID-19 pandemic

### 5.8.1 Recommendation on the next polices that the DOE should undertake in response to the COVID-19 pandemic

Recommendations on the next polices that the DoE should undertake in response to the COVID-19 pandemic are as follow:

- The Lao government should pay more attention on building skills and encourage them to work in our own country.
- Both the public and private sectors need to be involved to provide the workers with jobs so that they do not have to go to Thailand.
- Many parties, especially the public and private sectors, need to be involved in the administration so that workers can have jobs opportunity so that they do not have to go to Thailand.
- Lao workers' skills should be developed to international standards.
- In Laos PDR, there is a huge demand for labor, but wages must be commensurate with actual use.
- Skills training should be organized to provide job opportunities for those who want to work.

- Summarize and assess the impact on Lao workers both inside and outside the country, and find solutions for Lao workers both inside and outside the country.
- Increase the capacity of Lao workers in many areas, effective and efficient, create Lao labor concept to be diligent and work to compete with time.
- The department needs to coordinate with stakeholders to study more on labor needs in Lao PDR in order to develop a curriculum and develop Lao labor force to have more semi-skills or skills in developing and supplying more labor in Lao PDR.
- There should be measures in place to recruit workers.
- Should find jobs for worker returning from Thailand to work in factories located in Lao PDR.
- Find jobs and develop Lao workers into internationally skilled workers.
- Increase monitoring in accordance with strict and uniform labor laws throughout the country by not allowing employers to take advantage of employees.
- Continue to restrict the entry of foreign workers or make it more systematic. And increase employment in large projects to increase the number of Lao workers.
- Establish a labor reform plan as a national agenda refer to the basis for implementation so that it can be implemented in a practical and effective manner.
- Provide employment, channel guidance for workers who want to work.
- When they return to Laos, wages are an important factor. If the country is still open, these workers will continue to go to work abroad.

### **5.8.2 Comments and recommendation to DOE on the impact of COVID-19 to labour sector in Lao PDR**

Recommendations to DoE about the impact of COVID-19 to labour sector in Lao PDR are as follow:

- There should be a strategic plan for labor and priorities of job descriptions and close coordination with various business units.

- Provide employment to accommodate the increasing number of workers so that they can have jobs.
- Establish a fund to promote knowledge and jobs opportunity in Lao PDR so that people do not cross over to Thailand and to be able to help workers in times during the crisis.
- COVID-19 is a disease that everyone in the world has to live with. It is not scary to be able to make a living, but we should be conscious of taking care of ourselves.
- Should encourage them to work inside the country.
- Finding the right target group for the right job.
- Organize vocational training so that those who are interested can upgrade their knowledge and skills.
- Stakeholders should exchange lessons learned from abroad and assess the actual labor statistics affected by COVID-19 so that the workers can still have access to the labor market and live in new normal life due to COVID-19.
- Now the workers are choosing jobs. If it is a job in their own country, they does not want to do it, but if it is a job in another country, and does the same kind of work they still don't want to do. Therefore, it is necessary to create awareness for Lao workers to work in their own country.
- The department should think and develop a policy in the next five years as a response and ensure that both domestic and foreign workers can move effectively and produce results for the country.
- Department should review about hiring to give control to the workforce.
- The Department should promote and develop Lao worker skills at the international level, find a labor market to send Lao workers to work abroad.
- There is an agreement with the measures set out by the government but must increase the inspection more strictly.
- Create a career that society needs and can be used in real life, so the DoE must keep up with the events and cooperate with the Ministry of Education and Sports to develop a curriculum or cooperate with foreign countries with a clear goal.

- Determining the minimum wage in many contexts, with the research of each employer and employee to make the minimum wage consistent and appropriate to their situation.
- Create a website or Facebook page to inform the jobs that need labor to increase the channels for finding jobs for workers.
- There should be more policies and promotion of labor and personnel by seeking sources of funding and mobilizing developed countries.



# **CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

## **6.1 Introduction**

This section presents the last part of this study as conclusion and recommendations based on the results of the study.

## **6.2 Conclusion**

The conclusion is based on the following research objectives and questions:

- The effectiveness of Lao government policies in response to COVID-19,
- The impact of COVID-19 on the Lao economy,
- The social and environmental impact of COVID-19,
- The impact on the labour sector, and
- Policies and further recommendations

### **6.2.1 Effectiveness of Lao government Policies in Response to COVID-19**

The policies in response to COVID-19 were found to be continuous and up-to-date. The Lao government has set standards and measures that are important to the Lao citizens. It has issued periodic notices of these measures that rely on the past improvements in performance such as some measures that either reduced or increased requirements in response to the actual situations. Moreover, the policy supporting access to vaccines has been relatively good, with information on access disseminated through online social media, radio and through various organizations that encouraged people to get vaccinated to prevent COVID-19. Also, the government provided free diagnosis and treatment, free vaccinations, and periodically announced preventive measures adjusted to the current situation. Because a large number of people received vaccines, mortality and infection rates were not as high as in some developed country like the United States. Further measures were taken to reduce the number of infections by encouraging families to

spend time doing activities together rather than with others, which also saved them money.

Most of the policies have proven to be effective as the number of infection rate was reduced by 90% in the middle of 2021 compared to the daily epidemic rate in the early stages of the epidemic in 2020. At present, about 80% of the population have been vaccinated in the Vientiane Capital (except children 14 years and under and the elderly with poor health) and also in other provinces as well. However, at the end of 2021, the number of infected cases increased rapidly across country from 50 cases in the middle of 2021 to more than thousands of cases in the end of 2021. This was due to Lao workers returning from Thailand and a few illegal Thai tourists who entered Lao,

On the other hand, the disadvantages of the policies are first that some measures may not be suitable for all groups. Secondly, there was a lack of good vaccination management. Third, people found the treatments to be expensive, and the government did not provide appropriate compensation. Thus, many suffered economic impacts from COVID-19. This is an unprecedented phenomenon and the government often caused the problem first and learned from it later. Fourth, the measures and guidelines also had some gaps in implementation and encountered difficulties in actual practice such as confusion over the processing documents. Fifth, there were not enough medical centers for COVID-19 treatment and were not as convenient as they should have been. Sixth, the advertising of COVID-19 measures were not widespread, especially in remote areas.

Even though the government has put in place a variety of measures to keep people aware of COVID-19, the implementation is still not strong enough and the measures are sometimes neglected. The budget for dealing with the epidemic was not sufficient. Moreover, there are difficulties and obstacles such as the recession so that some workers and some entrepreneurs are still violating the regulations and not cooperating with the government in the implementation of its measures especially among those with lower incomes. The epidemic especially affected tourism companies, hotels, restaurants and other enterprises. There was not enough compensation for people and businesses who were affected by COVID-19 due to the difficult economic situation in Lao PDR.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare of Lao PDR has issued Notification No. 4525/NAB dated 8 December 2021 to the Department of Labor and Social Welfare, Labor and Social Welfare Office throughout the country to implement the policy that the local workers or workers who return from abroad can access job opportunities. The policies stated that the Department of Labor and Social Welfare and the Labor and Social Welfare Office throughout the country are responsible for organizing jobs searches for workers. The first step was for each Division in the Department to set up labour information centers and collect statistics on unemployment among laborers and returning workers from abroad, and report these to the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare.

Entrepreneurs and businesses experienced decreased profits amounting to 54.00% and loss of capital of 46.00%. Moreover, 100% of all business perceived that Covid-19 caused them to reduce the number of employees. On the other hand, 54% of them perceived that Covid-19 made it easier to find workers/laborers. 42% of them said that finding workers was unchanged from before the COVID-19 situation.

## **6.2.2 Impacts of COVID-19 on the Lao Economy**

In early 2021 during the outbreak of COVID-19, many businesses were further affected. The measures to prevent the spreading of COVID-19 diseases in many countries, including Lao PDR, have affected the supply chain, delaying the import of raw materials which delayed production. This had a direct impact on revenue, causing most businesses to close temporarily and to reduce and delay making payments. This had a chain effect on employment in the economy. The most affected business groups include: business that export their goods and the tourism-related businesses. Garment products and camera parts are two of Laos' main export industries, and both were affected by declining demand in export markets. According to trade statistics, the value of garment exports in 2020 decreased by 11% compared to 2019 and in the quarter 1/2021 decreased by 9% compared to the same period of 2020 due to the cancellation of orders from brand owners that closed retail stores or outlets; Camera parts in 2020 decreased by 30% compared to 2019 and in the first quarter of 2020 decreased by about 6% compared

to the same period of 2020 due to the decrease in the production of camera equipment in Thailand (Research Institute of Economic and Commerce (Lao Version) , 2022)

Cancellation of tourists' travel to Lao PDR and border closure measures has affected the tourism service businesses. These include accommodation and food services, tour guides, airlines, van, and taxi services. 50% of the sample were temporarily closed. In Luang Prabang, a prime tourist destination, 78% of the sample were temporarily closed. Accommodation and food services account for 46% of domestic consumption. This includes products from the food-beverage and tobacco sectors 11%, retail trade 10%, and agriculture 4.5%. As a result of tourism disruptions and measures to close the city, the sales of alcoholic beverages decreased, such as the volume of beer sales of Lao Beer Company which decreased by 4.6% in 2020 and decreased by 50% in the first 5 months of 2021. Household businesses that supply vegetables and wood for tourism services in key tourist areas were also affected. The problem of insufficient raw materials for business is affecting the business in the processing industry.

Due to the difficult situation mentioned above, the business sector is experiencing difficulties in paying their bills. About 30% of the sample exporters had difficulty paying their wages and social security contributions, 22% of the domestic service business group and 30% of the food processing group had difficulty repaying their loans.

To address and mitigate the impact on the business sector, the business sector and entrepreneurs have adapted to the current situations of COVID-19 and economic crisis; and the government has done its best with lay out a variety of policies and assistance measures. These include businesses in the processing industry postponing their investment plans and reducing labor in the first half of the year, and taking out additional loans to improve liquidity and reduce the import of production equipment. The government has implemented measures such as income tax exemptions for micro-enterprises and postponement of submission of financial statements for the year 2020 for workers in both the public and private sectors with income of less than 5 million kip (\$500) for 3 months.

In the future, there is a high probability that demand for consumer goods and production will gradually return to normal. Due to progress in vaccinations, the economies have recovered in many countries in the world and the region, especially

Laos's main trading partners such as China, Vietnam, the European Union, and Thailand.

### **6.2.3 Impact of COVID-19 on Social and Environment**

Lao PDR is still in the Group of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) where socio-economic status remains at high risk to natural disasters and epidemics. In addition to the economic impacts, the outbreaks of COVID-19 both in Round 1 and Round 2 also impacted the social environment, directly and indirectly. Although no social impact survey results from the 2021 epidemic have yet been released, the impact is expected to be similar and may even be higher due to the longer closure period than the first round.

Suspension of teaching-learning has affected the quality of education and has widened the gap in access to education between the rich and the poor and between urban and rural areas, and dropout rates may increase. Only about 16.5% of students were able to participate in the learning process, which may be due to the lack of access to technology such as radio, television, computers, etc. This was especially true in rural, remote and poor areas. Most students in Lao PDR are unfamiliar with learning through these online media. and the teaching content focused on information about how to protect oneself from COVID-19 rather than the transfer of technical knowledge. In addition, the survey found that about 1.6% of families with school-age children are ready to drop them out of school to help with family work due to the family condition being severely affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. (Interviewed, a staff from UNDP in Lao PDR, Mr. A, 2022).

The household economic difficulties have indirectly affected the reduction of poverty. The number of vulnerable groups in Lao PDR is about 430,000 peoples, or about 6.2% of the total population. About 320,000 people, or about 74 % of that population, will become poor again due to the effects of the COVID-19. During the outbreak, people were reluctant to go to health facilities and because of economic difficulties, access to good nutrition is more challenging, which will affect the overall health of people, especially pregnant women. In addition, losses of jobs, loss of income, and prolonged cohabitation have led to an increase in family violence during COVID-19 epidemics.

On the other hand, the outbreak of COVID-19 had a positive impact on the environment due to the decline in economic activity, consumption, travel, tourism and transportation, which significantly reduces the use of energy, natural resources, greenhouse gas emissions and waste generation; This has a positive impact on climate change.

After the end of the outbreak, Lao PDR is at risk of increasing its use of natural resources for economic recovery, which will have both direct and indirect effects on the environment and the sustainability of development. The need to use more natural resources may be due in part to the declining trend of Official Development Assistance (ODA).

#### **6.2.4 Impact of COVID-19 on Labour Sector**

The research found that the number of unemployed in Lao PDR during the 2020 epidemic was 321,700, with the unemployment rate expected to rise to 23.4% by 2020-2022 about 130,500 of them are Lao workers who returning from abroad and the remaining 191,200 are within the country. Almost all of the workers who lost their jobs did not have unemployment insurance and therefore they could not receive income compensation from the social security system. About 35% of the workers who lost their jobs were in the wholesale-retail service sector, 18.4% are in the industrial-construction sector, 35% are in the processing industry and the remaining 22% are in the food, beverage, and tourism services sector, where women employee out-number men. In addition, with the return of Lao workers from abroad due to the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020 Lao PDR lost up to \$130 million in remittance revenue, which is a critical problem for the livelihoods of the poor people in rural area.

- **Impact of COVID-19 on Labour Sector in neighbouring countries**

1. **Thailand:** According to the report from the World Bank, the national employment remained stable at **68%** between March 2020 and June 2021. However, large variations were observed between regions and population groups. Employment declined by **8** percentage points in urban areas and the capital city, while it increased by **8** percentage points in rural areas and the

northern region as many of those who lost their jobs due to the pandemic returned to agricultural sectors. Overall, over **50%** of respondents were affected by job losses, temporary work stoppage, and reduced number of working hours or reduced pay. (The World Bank, 2021).

**2. Vietnam:** The COVID-19 pandemic is a public health, development and mobility crisis exacerbating vulnerabilities and inequalities. The pandemic has had major multidimensional impacts on the lives of all populations in Vietnam, especially children, women, the elderly and other vulnerable groups such as migrants, ethnic minorities, labourers, smallholder farmers, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), people living with disabilities and people living with chronic health issues. Market disruptions, nationally and internationally, including significant limitations on international travel are generating economic impacts that disproportionately impact vulnerable groups and populations and in turn are driving many social impacts. Schools closures, in place from February to early May, have disrupted the learning of 21.2 million children, whilst it has been estimated that by the end of the second quarter the crisis could affect the livelihoods of 4.6 to 10.3 million workers. As some 35 million Vietnamese workers do not have social insurance, particularly among those working in the agriculture and informal sectors, there is a legitimate concern that those just above or on the poverty line, including the rural poor, are being hard hit by the impact of COVID-19, as the outbreak threatens their access to basic essential services and already vulnerable livelihoods. Supply chain and market disruptions in the agricultural sector due to COVID-19 have combined with the impact of natural disasters and crop and livestock epidemics, particularly drought, saltwater intrusion and African swine fever. COVID-19 impacts on agricultural and non- agricultural livelihoods have been severely impacted. (ILO, 2021).

**3. Cambodia:** Over the course of the pandemic, there have been four community outbreaks: between 7 March-April 2020; November 2020; December 2020; and February 2021, the latest outbreak has represented the

biggest public health challenge to date. The large number of cases that stemmed from this outbreak have had a severe impact on people's livelihoods and wellbeing, caused by radical changes and the adoption of strict measures. These included a strict lockdown, prohibition of travel between provinces, school closures, market closures and stay-at-home orders in some areas.

Since the first outbreak in March 2020, Cambodia has suffered economic impacts, with businesses reducing both their economic activity and their workforces. COVID-19 has therefore had a large impact on the welfare of Cambodian households. In 2020, the economy was estimated to have contracted by 3.1 percent, following an average growth of 7.0 percent per annum from 2010-2019. The impacts on employment, and household wage and non-wage incomes were significantly larger than what the macro-economic trends would suggest. (UNICEF and The World Food Programme, 2021).

### **6.3 Policies and Further Recommendation**

Remedial measures could include such measures such as relevant authorities setting up stockpiles of goods, especially food that can be made available at lower prices than the prevailing market in the poorer areas, and inducing rental operators to reduce rents fee by interjecting competition from government-provided housing. Indirect measures can be taken to monitor and control the prices of consumer goods that are necessities for the well-being of the people, to avoid hoarding by consumers and price gouging by suppliers. The government could also pay attention special attention to inflation and possible exchange rate fluctuations, especially in the context of limited domestic reserves, rising world oil prices, and high dependencies on imports.

In addition, the government should pay more compensation through the social security system to poor households. Because a large number of workers have not yet entered the social security system, there is no risk protection and official assistance cannot be provided. To create an appropriate social protection system, it



is necessary to collect a specific database on vulnerable populations (including the poor, the unemployed, those with unstable income, and those who are continually and severely affected by disasters and epidemics). On the basis of this information, the National Social Security System should be gradually expanded and strengthened.

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# APPENDIX

# Official Document for Data Collection in Lao PDR

Official Translate



LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC  
PEACE INDEPENDENCE DEMOCRACY UNITY PROSPERITY

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
Asia-Pacific and Africa Department

No: 07/MOFA.APA.4  
Date: 06 February 2022

To: Director General of Department of Employment, Ministry of Labours and  
Social Welfares.

Title: Request for cooperation in answering the questionnaires.

The Asia-Pacific and Africa Department would like to inform that: Currently Mr. photideth SENSATHITH, Asia-Pacific and Africa Department's Officer is pursuing Master's degree on Public Administration and Public Sector Reform at the Seoul National University, Republic of Korea, in order to collecting the data to support his final thesis on topic: **A Study of Government Policy in Response to COVID-19 and Its Impacts on the Labour Sector in Lao PDR (the questionnaires forms is attach herewith).**

Therefore, the Asia-Pacific and Africa Department avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Department of Employment, Ministry of Labours and Social Welfares the assurances of its highest consideration.

Asia-Pacific and Africa Department



coordinator

Mr. vannapha Khammanivong

Tel: 020 91404888

## Consent Form

Dear Respondent,

I am Phothideth Sensathith, currently studying at Graduate School of Public Administration, Seoul National University, I am taking Master course in public Management and Public Sector Reforms.

I hereby asking for your kind cooperation to answer my questions below in order to support my Master thesis study based on topic: **A Study of Government Policy in Response to COVID-19 and Its Impacts on the Labour Sector in Lao PDR. Your answers are valuable and highly appreciated.** They will be useful information for the government in response to COVID-19 and its impacts on the labour sector in Lao PDR. I will strictly follow the Statistics Law and keep any personal information that you provide confidential. Thank you for your cooperation!

*Therefore, If you agree to answer my questions, please sign your name below.*

---

*Subject's signature or fingerprint*

---

*Date of Interview*

# Questionnaire Forms

## Questionnaire Form 1

Date of interview...../ ..... /2022

Interviewer's name.....

### The questionnaire for those who have used services from the Department of Skills Development and Employment

#### Part1 Personal Information

1.1 Age..... year

1.2  1.Male  2.Female

1.3 Current place of living.....

1.4 Are you studying? 1.Yes  2.No

1.5 What is the highest level of education?

- 1.Elementary School  2.High School  
 3.Diploma/High Vocational Certificate  4.Bachelor Degree  
 5.Master Degree/Higher  6.Other  
.....

1.6 Are you currently working?  1.yes  2.No

1.7 How many years have you worked?..... (If less than a year, write a fraction, example. 1 month = 1/12 month)

1.8 Income includes overtime pay (OT) and service charges, on average  
.....Kip/month

1.9 What is your occupation? (If answer Unemployed, skip to answer in part 2)

- 1.Government officer  2. State enterprise employee  
 3.Company employee  4. Business  
 5. Hired/employee  6. Agriculture/Livestock/Fishery.  
 7. Retired  
 8. Unemployed, Your previous occupation was.....  
 9. Other(specify).....



1.10 Type of Hired/employee if in 1.9 answer 4, 5 or 6

- 1. Daily labour
- 2. Contract work project (domestic)
- 3. Montly hire (domestic)
- 4. Contract work project (overseas)
- 5. Montly hire(overseas)

1.11 What department do you work in?

- 1. Finance-Accounting
- 2. Sale- marketing
- 3. Warehouse, delivery
- 4. Manufacturing
- 5. Maintenance technician
- 6.

Personal

- 7. Information technology
- 8. Business management.
- 9. Other(specify).....

1.12 Employment type

- 1. Trial-Training employment
- 2. Temporary worker
- 3. Full time employment

## **Part 2: Information about the satisfaction of using the service from the Department of Skills Development and Employment**

2.1 How do you know the services of the Department of Skills Development and Employment? (more than 1 answer)

- 1. Website of the department
- 2. Facebook of department
- 3. Google/search engines
- 4. Newspaper advertisement
- 5. Television
- 6. Friends
- 7. Union/labour confederation
- 8. Smart Job Center
- 9. Government agencies websites
- 10. Using the services of other departments such as social security
- 11. Working company
- 12. Educational institution
- 13. Labor meeting day
- 14.
- Other(specify).....

2.2 Which service have you ever used from the Department of Skills Development and Employment? (more than 1 answer)

- 1. Find work within the country
- 2. Find work abroad
- 3. Find information about jobs within the country.
- 4. Find information about jobs in abroad.
- 5. Career guidance
- 6. Watch demonstrations/training for self-employment
- 7. Job seeker protection (grieving /asking for help).
- 8. Meeting/training/listening to various information clarifications

2.3 How quickly was the Department of Skills Development and Employment able to respond to your needs in the past?

- 1. Not satisfied
- 2. Slower than expected.
- 3. Within the expected time
- 4. Faster than expected

2.4 What is your overall satisfaction with the service provided by the Department of Employment in the past?

- 1. Very dissatisfied
- 2. Not satisfied
- 3. Moderate.
- 4. Satisfied
- 5. Very satisfied

2.5 What is your overall satisfaction with using Smart Job Center?

- 0. Never use
- 1. Very dissatisfied
- 2. Not satisfied
- 3. Moderate.
- 4. Satisfied
- 5. Very satisfied

2.6 You spend an average of .....days looking for a job. It takes approximately ..... hours per day of searching until you find a job.

2.7 Obstacles in finding job (more than 1 answer)

- 1. No obstacles
- 2. Qualification
- 3. Foreign language
- 4. Working experience
- 5. Skills
- 6. Personality
- 7. Information
- 8. Applying for a job but there is no company accepting
- 9. Failed job interview
- 10. Distance
- 11. Other(specify).....

2.8 You want to change jobs (If you are currently working)

- 1. Do not need
- 2. Not sure
- 3. Switched to a freelance job
- 4. go to work abroad
- 5. Change the new company
- 6. change the department
- 7. Change the province/area

2.9 Do you expect to use the service from the Department of Skills Development and Employment again in the future?

- 1. Definitely use
- 2. Not sure
- 3. Definitely not use

2.10 How would you like the Department of Skills Development and Employment to improve the service?

- 1. Don't need to improve
- 2. Anyway(indifferent)
- 3. Need to update urgently

2.11 what areas would you like the Department of Skills Development and Employment to improve? (more than 1 answer)

- 1. Career guidance
- 2. Domestic job recruitment
- 3. Overseas job recruitment within the country.
- 4. Provide information about the labor market within the country.
- 5. Provide information on the foreign labor market
- 6. Protect job seekers
- 7. Manage the work of foreigners
- 8. Don't have
- 9. Other(specify).....

*(If answer 8.No in question 2.11 skip to 2.13)*

2.12 If the Department of Skills Development and Employment can improve to meet the demand as mentioned in 2.11 how much do you expect to use the service?

- 1. Definitely use
- 2. Not sure
- 3. Definitely not use

2.13 Do you have any advice for the Department of Skills Development and Employment?.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

**Part 3 The impact of COVID-19**

3.1 How does the Covid-19 situation affects to you?

- 1. Not effect
- 2. Concern about losing a job.
- 3. Lead to unemployment
- 4. Cause more difficult to find a job
- 5. Make it easier to find a job (specify job .....

3.2 (If your answer in 3.1 is answer choice 2: There is concern about losing a job) You can assess the chance of unemployment from the Covid-19 situation compared to before the Covid-19 situation. What percentage increase?.....(In case you don't know/can't answer, enter the code -9.9 (minus 9.9))

3.3 (If your answer in 3.1 is answer choice 3: Lead to unemployment) You can assess your chances of finding a new job within the time required during the COVID-19 situation compared to before the COVID-19 situation, How much percentage reduction?.....(In case you don't know/can't answer, enter the code -9.9 (minus 9.9))

3.4 (If your answer in 3.1 is answer choice 4: Cause more difficult to find a job.) Assess how difficult the job opportunity is compared to before the Covid-19 situation, What percentage increase?..... (In case you don't know/can't answer, enter the code -9.9 (minus 9.9))

3.5 (If your answer in 3.1 is answer choice 5: Make it easier to find a job easier) you can assess your chances of finding a job compared to before the Covid-19 situation, What percentage increase?..... (In case you don't know/can't answer, enter the code -9.9 (minus 9.9))

3.6 What services do you think the Department of Skills Development and Employment should improve/add in accordance with the COVID-19 situation (current) and the post-COVID-19 situation (future)?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

◆◆◆◆◆ Thank you very much ◆◆◆◆◆

## Questionnaire Form 2

Date of interview...../ ..... /2022

Interviewer's name.....

### The questionnaire for entrepreneurs who have used services from the Department of Skills Development and Employment

#### Part1: Personal Information

1.1 Age..... year

1.2  1.Male       2.Female

1.3 Location of entrepreneur.....

1.4 Type of business/business

1.Farmer       2.Industry       3. Services

1.5 What does the business do?.....

1.6 Business has been operation.....year (If less than a year, please write a fraction, for example. 1 month = 1/12 month)

1.7 What is the highest level of education?

1.Elementary School       2.High School  
 3.Diploma/High Vocational Certificate       4.Bachelor Degree  
 5.Master Degree/Higher       6.Other

.....

1.8 Number of workers in your business (including you).....persons

1.9 Are you a business owner?       1.yes       2.No (representative, e.g. Human Resources Department, Accounting Department, etc.)

1.10 Income of your business..... kip/month

*(In case you don't know/do not want to answer, write the code -9.9 (minus 9.9) and in case of answering not kip/month income, the respondent can estimate in kip/month on behalf)*

**Part 2: Information about the satisfaction of using the service from the Department of Employment**

2.1 How do you know the services of the Department of Skills Development and Employment? (more than 1 answer)

- 1. Website of the department
  - 2. Facebook of department
  - 3. Google/search engines
  - 4. Newspaper advertisement
  - 5. Television
  - 6. Friends
  - 7. Union/labour confederation
  - 8. Smart Job Center
  - 9. Government agencies websites
  - 10. Using the services of other departments such as social security
  - 11. Working company
  - 12. Educational institution
  - 13. Labor meeting day
  - 14.
- Other(specify).....

2.2 What kind of service have you ever used from the Department of Skills Development and Employment? (more than 1 answer)

- 1. Supplying domestic workers
- 2. To manage the work of foreign workers
- 3. Find the information about labor market within the country
- 4. Sending workers/employees to work/training abroad.
- 5. Other(specify).....

2.3 How quickly was the Department of Skills Development and Employment able to respond to your needs in the past?

- 1. Not satisfied
- 2. Slower than expected.
- 3. Within the expected time
- 4. Faster than expected

2.4 What is your overall satisfaction with the service provided by the Department of Employment in the past?

- 1. Very dissatisfied
- 2. Not satisfied
- 3. Moderate.
- 4. satisfied
- 5. Very satisfied

2.5 Do you expect to use the service from the Department of Skills Development and Employment again in the future?

- 1. Definitely use
- 2. Not sure
- 3. Definitely not use

2.6 The average time you spent in looking for an employee/labour .....days, It takes approximately.....hours per day to find an employee/worker to work at your company.

2.7 Which department has the most problems in recruiting people to work? (more than 1 answer)

- 1. Finance, Accounting
- 2. Selling, Marketing
- 3. Warehouse, delivery
- 4. Manufacturing
- 5. Maintenance technician
- 6. Personal management
- 7. Information technology
- 8. Business management
- 9. Other(specify).....

2.8 The problem in finding workers is (more than 1 answer)

- 1. No one applied for the job.
- 2. Lack of skills, knowledge and ability to work
- 3. Often change a job.
- 4. Lack of diligence, patience, enthusiasm for work
- 5. The recruitment system is not good enough. make it possible to get people who do not want
- 6. Other(specify).....

2.9 How would you like the Department of Employment to improve the service?

- 1. Don't need to improve
- 2. Anyway(indifferent)
- 3. Need to update urgently

2.10 What areas would you like the Department of Skills Development and Employment to improve? (more than 1 answer)

- 1. Reduce the process of finding workers within the country.
- 2. Reduce the process of recruiting foreign workers.
- 3. Help screening workers who are competent/meet their requirements.
- 4. Provide information about the labor market within the country.
- 5. Provide comprehensive labor information
- 6. Other(specify).....

2.11 If the Department of Skills Development and Employment can improve to meet the demand as mentioned in 2.11 how much do you expect to use the service?

- 1. Definitely use
- 2. Not sure
- 3. Definitely not use

2.12 Do you have any recommendation for the Department of Skills Development and Employment?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**Part 3 The impact of COVID-19**

3.1 How does the Covid-19 situation affects to your business?

- 1. Profit increasing
- 2. Not change (profit the same).

- 3. Profit decreasing.
- 4. Total revenue decreasing
- 5. Total revenue increasing.
- 6. Total cost decreasing
- 7. Total cost increasing
- 8. The working style has changed.

3.2 (If there is a change in profit increasing (or profit decreasing) of your business, what's the percentage change compared to before the Covid-19 pandemic.....  
*(In case you don't know/don't want to answer, enter code -9.9 (minus 9.9))*

3.3 How does the covid-19 situation affect the employment of your business?

- 1. Increase the number of employees
- 2. Change employees but the number remains the same.
- 3. Not change.
- 4. Reduce the number of employees

3.4 (If there is a change) how does the Covid-19 situation affect on finding workers for your business.

- 1. Easier to find employees/labours.
- 2. Unchanged from before COVID-19 situation.
- 3. Makes it more difficult to find employees/labours.

Explanation : Please mark  in which corresponds to your opinion in Article 3.5 -3.8

Article	List	Increase	Decrease	Not change	Not suitable for this business
3.5	<b>Changes in the position that need to be hired</b>				
	1. Finance, Accounting				
	2. Sale, Marketing				
	3. Warehouse, Delivery				
	4. Manufacturing				
	5. Maintenance technician				
	6. Personal management				
	7. Information technology				
	8. Business management				
	9. Other(specify).....				
3.6	<b>The characteristic of employment that will be changed</b>				
	1. Contract worker/labour				
	2. Temporary worker				
	3. Full-time employee				
	4. Hire daily employee/labour				
	5. Hire hourly employee/labour				
	6. Wage				
	7. Working day				
8. Welfare benefit					



9. Have an early retirement program				
10. Hire foreign workers				
11. Change the form of hiring, e.g. as a job/a piece of work or a project.				
12. Other(specify).....				

3.7	<b>The qualifications of the required labor will change</b>				
	1. Educational qualification				
	2. Skills				
	3. Experiences				
3.8	<b>Type of career needed to hire will be change</b>				
	1. Manager , director				
	2. Professionals in various fields such as engineers, doctors, nurses, accountants , et				
	3. Technical staff such as business service ,sales representatives , Civil engineering technicians, accountants, quality inspectors of clothing products.				
	4. Clerks such as administrative workers, intensive workers debt, warehouse staff				
	5. Service and merchandisers, such as sales people at the store.				
	6. Skilled workers in agriculture, forestry and fisheries				
	7. Craftsmen and related workers such as jewelers and jewelry craftsmen, metal welders, reinforced concrete plasterers.				
	8. Factory and machinery operators and assembly operators such as automotive assembly technicians, seamstresses of textile products, car drivers, truck drivers.				
	9. Basic occupation (labor)				

3.9 What services do you think the Department of Skills Development and Employment should improve/add in accordance with the COVID-19 situation (current) and the post-COVID-19 situation (future)?

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

## Questionnaire Form 3

Date of interview...../ ..... /2022

Interviewer's name.....

### The questionnaire for the officer at the Department of Employment

#### **Part1 Personal Information**

1. Identify your group

1. Public servant       2.full time employee       Temporary worker/contract employee

2. Specify your job position

1. Director General                                       2. Department Inspector General  
 3. Manager     4. Director of division  
 5. Human Resources                                       6. Lawyer  
 7. Technical Officer                                       8. Statistician  
 9. International Relations Officer                       18. Other (specify)

.....

3. Specify your agency (Office / Division / Center.).....

4. How much COVID-19 has changed the mission of the department?

**A. Explanation : Please mark  in which corresponds to your opinion**

List	Much	Very Much	Not change	Can not answer
1. Overall				
2. Domestic recruitment				
3. Overseas recruitment				
4. Career promotion, guidance				
5. Labor market management				
6. Protection of job seekers				
7. Foreign Worker Management				

B. The changes that occur in the mission of the agency will become a new normal (New Normal) or not? (New normal means a new work style that is different from the past due to something affecting the pattern. And the practices that people in society are normally familiar with and have been able to anticipate must be changed to a new way; under the new unfamiliar standards).

**Explanation : Please mark  in which corresponds to your opinion**

List	No	Yes	Can not answer
1. Domestic recruitment			
2. Overseas recruitment			
3. Career promotion, guidance			
4. Labor market management			
5. Protection of job seekers			
6. Foreign Worker Management			

C. COVID-19 impact working condition at the department?

- 1. Using online system for work
- 2. Stay at the same place
- 3. Cannot gather with the colleague
- 4. Cannot gather with the colleague
- 5. All forms adaptation

5. What a new normals have occurred in the mission of the department? (Please specify in any order / if not, write "none" / if don't know, write "unknown")

.....  
 .....  
 .....

6. Would you like to change the mission of the agency or not?

.....  
 .....  
 .....

7. What kind of support do you need in order to accomplish the mission of the agency? (You can specify more than 1)

- 1. Budget
- 2. Personal
- 3. Knowledge
- 4. High Technology.
- 5. Change the structure of agency
- 6. Change working style
- 7. Law enforcement

- 8. Amending the law
- 9. Adjusting the communication of the Department.
- 10. Adjust the evaluation of the organization's
- 11. More integration between departments
- 12. More integration with external agencies
- 13. No support needed
- 14. Don't know
- 15. Other (specify) .....

8. Comments and suggestions to the Department of Skills Development and Employment

.....  
 .....  
 .....

**9. How do you think COVID-19 will affect the Lao economy?**

.....  
 .....  
 .....

**10. What do you think of the policy on COVID-19 issued by the Lao government effecting the Labour sector?**

.....  
 .....  
 .....

**11. What services do you think the Department of Employment should improve / increase in dealing with COVID-19 in current and future situations?**

.....  
 .....  
 .....

✦✦✦✦✦ Thank you very much ✦✦✦✦✦

# Questionnaire Form 4

## Questionnaires for stakeholders regarding the response of the Lao government to the COVID-19 pandemic

Dear Respondent,

I am Phothideth Sensathith, currently studying at Graduate School of Public Administration, Seoul National University, I am taking Master course in public Management and Public Sector Reforms.

I hereby asking for your kind cooperation to answer my questions below in order to support my Master thesis study based on topic: **A Study of Government Policy in Response to COVID-19 and Its Impacts on the Labour Sector in Lao PDR. Your answers are valuable and highly appreciated.** They will be useful information for the government in response to COVID-19 and its impacts on the labour sector in Lao PDR. I will strictly follow the Statistics Law and keep any personal information that you provide confidential. Thank you for your cooperation!

*Therefore, If you agree to answer my questions, please sign your name below.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Subject's signature or fingerprint*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date of Interview*

### **Part I: Personal Information**

- 1.Name:  
.....
2. Age..... year
3. Gender:  
.....
- 4.Position:  
.....
- 5.Workplace:  
.....

### **Part II: The effectiveness of Lao government policies in response to COVID-19**

1. What is your role in response to COVID-19?  
.....  
.....
2. What do you know about the policies that the government is carrying on preventing the COVID-19?

.....  
.....  
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of that policies in response to COVID-19?

.....  
.....  
4. What are your suggestions for making the policies to be more effective?

.....  
.....  
5. What further methods should the Lao government adopt for handling the COVID-19 crisis?

.....  
.....  
**Part III: The impact of COVID-19 on employment in various sectors**

1. In your point of view, how do you perceive the impacts of COVID-19 on the Lao economy?

.....  
.....  
2. What are impacts of COVID-19 on the labour sector in Lao DPR?

.....  
.....  
3. How has the government responded to the crisis of Lao workers returning from Thailand and other countries?

.....  
.....  
4. What are your recommendation on the next polices that the Department of Skills Development and Employment should undertake in response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

.....  
.....  
5. Do you have any comments or recommendation to Department of Skills Development and Employment about the impact of COVID-19 to labour sector in Lao PDR?

## Abstract in Korean

# 코로나 19 대응 정책이 라오스 노동 부문에 미치는 영향 연구

**Phothideth SENSATHITH**

서울대학교 행정대학원

글로벌행정전공

본 연구는 코로나 19에 대응한 정부 정책이 라오스 PDR의 노동 부문에 미치는 영향에 대한 연구이다. COVID-19는 라오스 PDR을 포함한 전 세계적으로 확산되었는데, 이는 인간의 건강에 심각한 영향을 미치지만 라오스 PDR의 사회경제 및 노동 분야에도 큰 영향을 미쳤다. 따라서 본 연구의 주요 목표는 COVID-19에 대응하는 정부 정책의 효과와 라오스 PDR의 사회 경제 및 노동 부문에 미치는 영향을 파악하는 것이다.

이 연구는 양적 연구와 질적 연구의 두 가지 혼합 방법을 적용했다. 보고서, 저널, 서적 및 공식 문서의 문헌 검토는 2차 데이터를 제공했다. 1차 데이터 수집을 위해 라오스의 COVID-19 예방 대응과 관련된 서비스 수혜자, 비즈니스 부문 및 10개 부처를 포함한 4개 당사자에게 4개의 설문지 양식을 배포하여 수행했다. 자료수집 후 1차 자료를 SPSS 프로그램으로 처리하여 백분율을 구하여 기술 형태로 해석하고 연구 결과로 경합분석을 실시하였다.

연구 결과는 라오스 정부가 COVID-19의 발생에 대처하기 위해 내놓은 정책으로 현재 대부분의 정책이 효과적인 것으로 나타났으며 2021년 중반에 감염률이 2021년 중반에 비해 90% 감소했다. 정부가

코로나 19 에 대한 경각심을 갖기 위해 다양한 대책을 내놓고 있음에도 불구하고 여전히 시행이 미흡하고 대책이 한 실정이며 영향을 받는 사람들과 사업체를 위한 적절한 예산 및 홍보 또한 부족하다. COVID-19 는 비즈니스, 특히 영업 부문에 큰 영향을 미쳤다. 영업이익은 54% 감소했다.

라오스 경제 상황의 어려움으로 COVID-19 의 영향을 받은 사람과 기업에 대한 보상이 충분하지 않았다. 다만, 국내 근로자나 해외에서 귀국한 근로자는 노동사회복지부가 담당하고 있어 구직활동을 할 수 있다. COVID-19 발병이 끝난 후 라오스는 경제 회복을 위해 천연 자원 사용을 늘릴 위험에 처해 있으며, 이는 환경과 개발 지속 가능성에 직간접적인 영향을 미칠 것이다. 추가 조치는 인플레이션 및 환율 변동 가능성에 특히 주의를 기울이는 것이다. 특히 국내 보유고가 제한적이고 세계 유가가 상승하고 수입 의존도가 높지만 COVID-19 발생으로 인해 통화 수입이 감소했다. 그리고 많은 수의 근로자가 라오스의 사회 보장 시스템에 의해 보호받아야 한다.

주요 키워드: 정부정책, COVID-19 영향, 노동부문, 사회경제학, 라오스 PDR

학번:2021-29286