

Development of Education Administration Model Towards Excellence in the 21st Century for Thailand's Primary Schools

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Abstract

This research aimed to study the components and indicators and develop, try out, and evaluate the education administration model towards excellence in the 21st century for Thailand's primary schools. The research was divided into 4 phases: 1) study of components and indicators using the content synthesis method and in-depth interviews with nine school administrators in the best practice schools using semi-structured interviews. In addition, a focus group of 13 experts was organized: 2) develop a draft model from the components and indicators obtained from Phase 1 and collect feedback on the draft model from 9 experts using the connoisseurship technique, 3) try out the model in one volunteer primary school for three months, and 4) evaluate the model's accuracy, suitability, feasibility, and usefulness by five experts. The results showed that the education administration model towards excellence in the 21st century for Thailand's primary schools consisted of six components and twenty-seven indicators: 1) leadership of school administrators in the VUCA world (five indicators), 2) academic management towards excellence (five indicators), 3) strategic planning for empowerment in the 21st century (four indicators), 4) human resource management in the digital age (five indicators), 5) organizational management of change (four indicators), and 6) focusing on students, stakeholders, and building relationships in the digital world (four indicators).

Keywords: educational administration, excellence, 21st century, primary school, Thailand

1. Introduction

Education is seen as a fundamental cornerstone for national development, serving as a crucial instrument in cultivating human resources for a quality life, fostering awareness of societal changes, and enabling individuals to have fulfilling careers. Consequently, quality education is crucial for the development of human resources. (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council, 2022) Entering the 21st century, characterized as a knowledge and information society, necessitates education that adapts to the rapid changes in an increasingly interconnected global environment. (Delaney, 2019)

Historically and currently, Thailand's educational system has failed to optimize student growth to its fullest potential. This is evident in the historical results of the nation's advancement. Critical issues can be discerned by examining the deficiencies within the Thai education system, particularly with ineffective administration and management. Despite allocating a substantial expenditure to education, Thailand has not achieved significant success relative to other countries. The findings align with the International Institute for Management Development (IMD) competitiveness analysis for 2019-2020, which indicated that Thai education ranked 56th and 55th among 63 nations, respectively. (Office of the Education Council, 2020)

Consequently, educational institutions must establish organizations that adhere to quality requirements. To function as a knowledge manager, one must cultivate knowledge and the capacity to organize instruction proficiently and effectively. Numerous nations have adopted the principle of quality management in educational administration, as Sergiovanni, Kelleher, McCarthy, and Fowler (2008) observed that superior schools result in enhanced learning outcomes for students. The efficacy of the school administration is important to achieving a high-quality school.

This research focuses on developing an education administration model for excellence in the 21st century for

Thailand's primary schools. The goal is to provide quality education to all learners on an equal basis. This aligns with Thailand's objective to mitigate educational disparity, enhance the quality of education towards sustained excellence, and elevate Thailand's educational standards to be comparable with those of other nations.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 School Administration Towards Excellence

The schools pursue excellence through seven components: organizational leadership, strategic planning, student focus, measurement, analysis, knowledge management, personnel focus, practice focus, and high-quality student outcomes, with the objective of achieving excellence (Poonsawat, 2020). Research on exemplary school administration identified five primary components: student, teacher, educational, curriculum, and participatory management (Lekkhongsanthia, 2021). The quality assurance system management approach implemented in exemplary schools within the Bangkok secondary educational service area office yielded the following results: development of student quality, learning management procedures, teacher and personnel quality, administrator quality, and management process quality (Soawanit, 2020).

2.2 Education Administration in the 21st Century

In the 21st century, educational systems must continually adjust to the swift transformations of an increasingly interconnected global landscape. To address the requirements of youth and the job market, contemporary and future education must prioritize equipping young individuals with the essential skills for their life and alignment with future societal demands. (Delaney, 2019) Educational reform strategy in the 21st century focuses on four critical dimensions of development: 1) new era student reform and 2) new era teacher reform. 3) new-era school reform; and 4) new-era management system reform (Techanok, 2020).

Adams and Muthiah (2020) examined leadership difficulties in the 21st century. Global evidence demonstrates that effective leadership influences school and student outcomes. The results were threefold: 1) individual obstacles, including insufficient knowledge; 2) the educational environment, characterized by untrained personnel and limited facilities and resources; and 3) stakeholders, encompassing adverse parental attitudes and governmental action. Ismail, Muhammad, Omar, & Raman (2020) asserted that administrators can enhance teachers' effectiveness. Sustainable leaders can motivate educators to cultivate school excellence in addressing the educational problems of the 21st century.

3. Objectives

- 1) To find out the components and indicators of the education administration model towards excellence in the 21st century for Thailand's primary schools.
- 2) To develop the education administration model towards excellence in the 21st century for Thailand's primary schools.
- 3) To try out the education administration model towards excellence in the 21st century for Thailand's primary schools.
- 4) To evaluate the education administration model towards excellence in the 21st century for Thailand's primary schools.

4. Methodology

This research was divided into 4 phases as following detail;

Phase 1

Study components and indicators of education administration towards excellence in the 21st century for Thailand's primary schools. There are three steps are as follows:

Step 1: Study documents, textbooks, articles, concepts, theories, and related research about school administration towards excellence, education administration in the 21st century, and primary schools.

Step 2: In-depth interview with experts consisting of nine primary school administrators in the best practice schools using semi-structured interviews.

Step 3: Gather opinions from experts using focus group discussions. The thirteen experts consisting of two policy executives, four primary school administrators, four primary school teachers, and three university professors.

Phase 2

Develop an education administration model towards excellence in the 21st century for Thailand's primary schools. There are three steps are as follows:

Step 1: Draft a model based on the information obtained from Phase 1 of the study.

Step 2: Gather opinions from experts using connoisseurship techniques. The nine experts were policy executives, educational service area administrators, primary school administrators with excellent performance, educational supervisors, and university professors.

Step 3: Create an education administration manual for excellence in the 21st century for Thailand's primary schools.

Phase 3

Try out the education administration model towards excellence in the 21st century for Thailand's primary schools. There are three steps are as follows:

Step 1: Evaluate the manual's accuracy and suitability before trial use by five experts, consisting of two educational service area administrators, two primary school administrators with excellent performance, and university professors.

Step 2: Try out the model in one specifically selected voluntary school for three months. (January - March 2023)

Step 3: Evaluate the feasibility and usefulness of the model by twenty-nine administrators and teachers in the volunteer school that tested the model.

Phase 4

Evaluate the education administration model towards excellence in the 21st century for Thailand's primary schools. There are two steps are as follows:

Step 1: Check the accuracy, suitability, feasibility, and usefulness of the model using a 5-level rating scale by five experts consisting of one policy executive, one educational service area administrators, one primary school administrators with excellent performance, one educational supervisors, and one university professor who are different groups from the experts in Phase 3 Step 1.

Step 2: Summarize and report the research results.

5. Results

Phase 1

The components and indicators of the education administration model towards excellence in the 21st century for Thailand's primary schools from a literature review, then in-depth interviews with nine school administrators in the best practice primary schools, and focus group discussions with thirteen experts are shown in Table 1 as follow.

Table 1. Components and indicators of the education administration model towards excellence in the 21st century for Thailand's primary schools from Phase 1

Literature Review	9 components and 39 indicators Leadership of school administrators (six indicators) Strategic planning (four indicators) Organizational structure (three indicators) Personnel administration (six indicators) Academic administration (seven indicators) Budget administration (three indicators) General administration (four indicators) Information and knowledge management (three indicators) Focusing on learners, parents, and related parties (three indicators)
In-depth interview with nine school administrators in the best practice schools	9 components and 47 indicators Leadership of school administrators (six indicators) Strategic planning (five indicators) Organizational structure (six indicators) Personnel administration (nine indicators) Academic administration (eight indicators) Budget administration (three indicators) General administration (four indicators) Information and knowledge management (three indicators) Focusing on learners, parents, and related parties (three indicators)
Focus group discussions with thirteen experts	7 components and 31 indicators Leadership of school administrators (five indicators) Strategic planning (four indicators) Personnel administration (five indicators) Academic administration (five indicators) Budget administration (three indicators) General administration (five indicators) Focusing on learners, parents, and related parties (four indicators)

Phase 2

Based on the results of Phase 1, the researcher drafted a model and gathered opinions from nine experts in the connoisseurship seminar, including policy executives, educational service area administrators, primary school administrators with excellent performance, educational supervisors, and university professors. The results are shown in Figure 1 as follows.



Figure 1. Education administration model towards excellence in the 21st century for Thailand's primary schools

1) Leadership of school administrators in VUCA world (five Indicators)

Indicator 1: Administrators develop conceptual skills by studying all information, analyzing, processing, and setting policies, as well as developing the school's direction to be consistent with the situation and keep up with changes.

Indicator 2: Administrators have communication skills to create shared awareness among everyone in the school regarding the vision, mission, and goals and to increase communication channels consistent with the school context and current situation.

Indicator 3: Administrators assign authority, promote personnel participation, have technical skills, and continually study new work methods.

Indicator 4: Administrators possess management skills in the disruption era and demonstrate leadership. To drive education systematically, digital changes create a network to develop innovation, review directions, and follow up on school performance.

Indicator 5: Administrators can be role models, super leaders, have skills for modern technology, be aware of changes, apply principles appropriate to the situation, create networks to coordinate cooperation, and develop schools into learning organizations.

2) Academic management towards excellence (five indicators)

Indicator 1: Administrators provide academic leadership and able to create, improve, and develop a school curriculum to enhance competencies and skills necessary in the 21st century to meet the needs of learners.

Indicator 2: Administrators give importance to learning that focuses on students, pay attention to appropriate and up-to-date teaching pedagogy, adjust learning management according to the situation, and promote active learning.

Indicator 3: Administrators have skills in planning, organizing student development activities and extra-curricular activities, arranging class hours, and creating and organizing an atmosphere conducive to learning.

Indicator 4: Administrators can provide media, technology, and learning innovations. and adequate modern learning resources, including being an innovator or technology leader who knows how to keep up with changes

Indicator 5: Administrators have supervisory and operational skills, and study evaluation criteria in various forms continuously and systematically.

3) Strategic planning for empowerment in the 21st century (four indicators)

Indicator 1: Administrators plan to use big data and blockchain to collect data, analyze the internal and external

environment using SWOT techniques, and update and forward information for convenience in further use.

Indicator 2: Administrators have planning skills, a process for creating strategic plans clearly, setting both short-term and long-term adjustable strategic plans, and monitoring performance using participatory management principles.

Indicator 3: Administrators can operate according to the strategic plan by considering national policy and focus along with continuous monitoring and evaluation of performance on a periodic basis including dissemination to the public.

Indicator 4: Administrators control and review the vision, mission, and goals of the school to be in line with the 21st century, are always aware of changes, and make emergency response plans to solve immediate problems.

4) Human resource management in the digital age (five indicators)

Indicator 1: Administrators give importance to recruiting and selecting personnel who have the ability and qualifications to match the job, consider suitability and value, plan and design work that is agile and flexible, and appropriate to the school situation and context.

Indicator 2: Administrators have good communication and coordination channels, grant decision-making authority, manage participatively, have team building skills, and create a good atmosphere for working together.

Indicator 3: Administrators see the value and benefit of developing personnel with new knowledge and skills in digital technology to become innovators who can adjust to the situation and keep up with the changes.

Indicator 4: Administrators have the ability to inspire and, have positive thoughts towards personnel in jointly determining future directions, building morale and encouragement, and placing importance on safety, and well-being, and career advancement.

Indicator 5: Administrators give importance to evaluating the performance of to promote personnel to have skills, self-leadership and be professional.

5) Organizational change management (four indicators)

Indicator 1: Administrators procure, raise funds and resources to reduce educational inequality; provide facilities to support adequate learning management; coordinate communities to participate in supporting the budget; use the annual budget with awareness, value and transparency; and monitor and evaluate budget according to the principles of the government.

Indicator 2: Administrators analyze and collect information to design and manage systematic building, plan to deal with incidents, as well as use modern technology and resources to create an educational network to promote learning.

Indicator 3: Administrators develop learning resources, create an atmosphere conducive to learning to respond to all forms of lifelong learning, and monitor and evaluate service quality to use as feedback to improve confidence for parents.

Indicator 4: Administrators listen to opinions from all parties, hold school committee and parent meetings every semester, and have a public relations journal on the website to inform the activities and operating results on a monthly basis.

6) Focusing on students, stakeholders, and making relationship in the digital world (four indicators)

Indicator 1: Administrators analyze individual student data through the learner support system, collect data and evaluate results to support effective learning management in the digital age.

Indicator 2: Administrators have management that focuses on student results, and have monitored tracking in academic achievement, desired characteristics as well as performance and essential skills in the 21st century.

Indicator 3: Administrators create and manage relationships in the digital world with students and stakeholders in driving professional learning communities, and listen to various suggestions to support participatory education.

Indicator 4: Administrators create a joint development network to organize a learning process that emphasizes learners in an era of educational change.

Phase 3

The trial of the education administration model towards excellence in the 21st century for Thailand's primary schools obtained voluntarily showed positive results. The assessment conducted prior to implementing the model focused on evaluating its accuracy and suitability by five experts, which were found to be at their highest levels,

$\bar{x} = 4.78$ and 4.87 respectively. Additionally, the assessment of feasibility and usefulness, which was conducted after implementing the model in the volunteer school by twenty-nine administrators and teachers in the volunteer school, yielded the highest levels, $\bar{x} = 4.82$ and 4.85 respectively.

Phase 4

The assessment of the education administration model towards excellence in the 21st century for Thailand's primary schools encompassed the evaluation of accuracy, suitability, feasibility, and usefulness by five experts. The findings revealed that accuracy, suitability, feasibility, and usefulness of the model reached the highest level, $\bar{x} = 4.90, 4.87, 4.89,$ and 5.00 respectively.

6. Discussion

The education administration model towards excellence in the 21st century for Thailand's primary schools consisted of six components and 27 indicators: 1) leadership of school administrators in VUCA world, 2) academic management towards excellence, 3) Strategic planning for empowerment in the 21st century, 4) human resource management in the digital age, 5) Organizational change management, and 6) focusing on students, stakeholders and making relationship in the digital world.

6.1 Leadership of School Administrators in VUCA World

Administrators hold a significant position in educational management. The swift advancements in technology and environment have resulted in a VUCA world defined by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. Consequently, if the school officials understand the changes, it will result in more sustainable opportunities for educational advancement (Angkurasi, 2023). Previous research indicates that administrators' leadership is a factor influencing access to educational quality in world-class standard schools. Administrators must employ their management skills and leadership to establish policy, allocate resources, and engage in planning to cultivate an organizational culture. Administrators must enhance personnel competency, design database systems, evaluate operational outcomes, and establish supervision and monitoring systems (Kumnadee, Phuwanakau, Wattananarong, & Nirunthavee, 2021). Prior study identified the International Standard School Quality Management Model. The leadership aspect of administrators has nine indicators: accountability for educational quality, fostering comprehension and communication on educational quality management, leadership, change leadership, and ethics. Professional ethics, academic leadership, fostering positive relationships with students and parents, managing openness and accountability, social responsibility, and exemplifying good conduct are also significant (Leepairat, 2020).

6.2 Academic Management Towards Excellence

To attain excellence in academic management, administrators must possess the expertise to formulate school curricula, facilitate learner-centered education, coordinate developmental and extracurricular activities, implement innovative learning strategies and contemporary resources, and oversee, assess, and evaluate student outcomes. Academic administration is the core of educational management. The objective of any educational institution is the management of education. Consequently, the quality and standards of educational institutions are determined by academic performance. This will encompass curriculum development, instructional activities, personnel management, organization of academic initiatives, and assessment and evaluation (Techanok & Visitthapanyo, 2022). Academic management is fundamental to education as it provides the necessary guidance for successful educational administration. Ratsuisaen (2022) delineates guidelines for academic excellence, which encompass the development of learning resources in schools to facilitate effective communication of positive news, the alignment of educational curricula with the core curriculum of primary education and societal needs, the inspection, evaluation, enhancement, and development of curricula with stakeholder involvement, the organization of meetings for the exchange of ideas regarding learning activities, community engagement in educational management, the preparation of extracurricular projects to foster critical thinking skills, the supervision of teaching and learning in accordance with established systems and processes, and the oversight and support of teachers in conducting classroom research.

6.3 Strategic Planning For Empowerment in the 21st Century

Schools should employ big data, blockchain technology, and SWOT analysis in strategic planning, execution, and assessment of strategic plans. To cultivate exemplary schools, administrators must analyze and comprehend the management of educators and students through the strategic management process, which encompasses environmental analysis, strategy formulation, strategy execution, and strategy evaluation (Rungsang, 2022; Bunon, Pheasaand, & Steannoppakao, 2022). Strategic management for advancing schools towards excellence encompasses six components: administrative leadership, teacher quality, collaborative networks, student quality,

management, and personnel development; each component is propelled by a four-step strategic management process. 1) environmental analysis, which involves the assessment of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. 2) organizational direction setting, which entails establishing vision, commitments, actions, objectives, success indicators, and the formulation of strategic plans. 3) implementing strategies, which encompasses the delegation of responsibilities to personnel, the allocation of resources and budgets, and the execution of operations in alignment with strategies; and 4) strategy evaluation, which involves the oversight, supervision, and monitoring of strategies, the assessment of operations in accordance with strategies, and the reporting of operational outcomes relative to strategies (Wetchasart, Anannawee, & Sittisomboon, 2022).

6.4 Human Resource Management in the Digital Age

In the digital age, schools play a vital role in human resource management by recruiting skilled individuals, facilitating effective communication and coordination, fostering personnel development, inspiring staff, and assessing performance. A pivotal factor in advancing a school towards excellence, as indicated by a prior study, is personnel development. This encompasses enhancing personnel knowledge and skills, boosting morale, fostering positive work attitudes, systematically cultivating high potential in teaching and innovation skills, and, crucially, promoting moral and ethical development. This enables personnel to execute their duties to their fullest capacity and strive for success (Wetchasart, Anannawee, & Sittisomboon, 2022). Human resource management in the digital era encompasses 1) human resource planning through digital technology to formulate human resource strategies, 2) human resource recruitment utilizing digital platforms for job announcements, 3) human resource development aimed at enhancing personnel competencies via digital tools, and 4) sustaining human resources by fostering job satisfaction through digital means (Phoglin, Leephaijaroen, & Thummake, 2022).

6.5 Organizational Change Management

Organizational change management encompasses resource mobilization, methodical management development, learning resource creation, and public relations, which includes soliciting feedback from all stakeholders. The capacity to mobilize resources, both financial and non-financial, is a crucial element that enables the organization of education in alignment with objectives and significantly influences the efficient and successful growth of pupils. School administrators require strategies to optimize the utilization of available or acquired resources for the school's maximum benefit. Administrators must meticulously organize the timing, location, and staff to ensure accuracy, transparency, and fairness, according to the context and needs of the school, community, and all stakeholders, while considering the most substantial benefits and value (Rittiyoong & Kositpimanwet, 2022). Furthermore, educational institutions must cultivate high-quality learning resources, ensuring that all stakeholders recognize their significance and appreciate the value of such resources. These resources are vital for students to gather information, engage in analytical and critical thinking, and independently generate knowledge (Kruaengkan, 2020). Public relations at educational institutions are crucial and essential since they influence the enhancement of educational quality; thus, it is imperative to remain attuned to contemporary developments. Elements that contribute to the efficacy of public relations efforts include the expertise and disposition of public relations staff, financial backing, clarity and consistency of policy, accessibility of resources and equipment, utilization of varied and contemporary communication platforms, and the suitability and continuity of timing for public relations initiatives (Homsombat, Chalakbang, & Koboorn, 2022).

6.6 Focusing on Students, Stakeholders, and Making Relationship in the Digital World

An essential aspect of managing a school for success is prioritizing students and stakeholders while fostering relationships in the digital realm. This encompasses the analysis of student data, emphasis on student outcomes, management of digital relationships with students, and the establishment of collaborative development networks. Education in the digital era necessitates the structuring of an educational format suitable for contemporary times and the selection of learning modalities that align with the behaviors of today's digital-age learners. It is essential to concentrate on students who independently pursue information, engage in rigorous self-directed learning, generate new insights, build upon existing knowledge, and use their understanding to adapt to evolving circumstances and settings (Chatwattana, 2021). The learning behaviors of contemporary learners have evolved, necessitating that the design of material and learning activities adapt to these behaviors in the digital era. This underscores the necessity of providing students with information and skills aligned with 21st-century conditions. Learning design must comprehend the characteristics of learners by prioritizing their engagement with technology, involvement in practical tasks, sharing discoveries, and facilitating the articulation of their viewpoints. This aims to engage students in learning, enhance their happiness, and promote positive learning behaviors (Punkhetnakorn, Nak-in, & Yongsoi, 2021). Moreover, previous studies have demonstrated that parents and communities play a crucial role in delivering education. Consequently, educational institutions must to establish a collaborative

network to enhance educational quality by consistently engaging partnerships across many sectors to collectively foster student development (Pongsanee, 2021).

7. Implications for School Administrators

- 1) School administrators should empower workers by assigning them authority and responsibility to actively engage in educational management and exhibit exceptional leadership skills in the face of a tumultuous environment.
- 2) School administrators should incorporate big data and network technology to gather online data in order to inform strategic decision-making.
- 3) School administrators should create an organizational framework that aligns with the specific circumstances of the school, foster motivation and personal growth among staff members, and assess performance in relation to the digital era.
- 4) School administrators should enhance and refine curricula to align with the present circumstances by prioritizing active learning through contemporary technology media, while also consistently and systematically overseeing, monitoring, and assessing.
- 5) School administrators should allocate the budget in accordance with the annual operating plan in a transparent manner, utilize technology to enhance learning, and regularly disseminate school news to the public.
- 6) School administrators should prioritize student outcomes and cultivate positive relationships with parents and other stakeholders in the digital realm. This includes actively listening to suggestions and establishing collaborative partnerships.

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Authors contributions

All authors developed the study framework, established research objectives, and devised the methodology. Ms. Pathidta Tiwong gathered data, conducted analysis, and composed the initial draft. Asst. Prof. Suntaree Wannapiro assisted in data analysis, paper preparation, and presentation of the published findings.

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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Obtained.

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Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

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