

PARTICIPATORY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION FOR ENHANCING THAI STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

The goal of this study is to investigate participatory school administration which enhances students' academic performance in Thailand. The research also evaluates the efficiency of participatory school administration in Thailand. The quantitative research methodology was applied in this study. 400 samples were selected as respondents of a questionnaire survey towards the multi-stage sampling method. The research findings reveal that the school administrators participated in mutual trust building, brainstorming, delegation, and decentralization at a high level. Furthermore, the results show that there was a high level of efficiency of participatory school administration in Thailand, particularly in terms of problem solving, adaptability, student development, and high-achieving student development.

Keywords: School Administration, Participation, Efficiency

INTRODUCTION

School administrators are vital mechanisms for managing educational institutions. They are the key persons who set goals, implement policies, and make decisions for the educational institutions in order to achieve success. Factors contributing to successful school missions include administrative styles, characteristics of school administrators, satisfaction, motivation, assistance, encouragement of devotion, and leadership. School administrators must be able to optimize the '4M' (manpower, money, materials, and management), which are the basics of organizational management. A recent academic assessment of Thai students' performance shows that, averagely, Thai students have a low capacity of literacy, mathematics, and science [1]. This reflects educational inequality in the Thai society. The divergence in Thai students' academic performance results from unequal distribution of educational services. Subsequently, the "High-Quality School Project" was initiated by the Office of the Basic Education Commission, Ministry of Education, to reduce educational inequality and standardize local schools nationwide. The project promotes participation of all school stakeholders. Currently, there are 8,224 schools under the program (7,079 primary schools and 1,145 secondary schools), and the "High-Quality School Development Plan" is used as a guideline for mobilizing and developing the schools. In this study, school administrators' participation in the enhancement of Thai students' academic performance is explored across the schools under the High-Quality School Project. The efficiency of participatory school administration in those schools is also assessed.

OBJECTIVES

1. To investigate participatory school administration for enhancing students' academic performance in Thailand
2. To evaluate the efficiency of participatory school administration in Thailand

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many scholars have defined the term 'participation' based on their expertise. Sherry R. Arnstien [2] defines it as any kind of engagement in an activity with or without a specific role for an effective outcome. Jiraporn Srikam [3] describes participation as a gathering of individuals who share common interests and cooperate with each other towards collective action, planning, evaluation, and follow-up. Metha Metgarujit [4] similarly explains it as a process in which individuals or groups of individuals are allowed to engage in an activity directly or indirectly, especially in respect of collective acknowledgement, planning, action-taking, decision-making, and follow-up. Therefore, in this study, **participatory administration** is defined as a kind of administration which allows stakeholders to engage in decision-making, planning, and operation, leading to intimacy, mutual trust, and collective goals.

According to Prasan Promna [5], participatory administration can be executed in three major forms: 1) consultation management, 2) suggestion system, and 3) teamworking. Consultation management refers to the existence of an advisory body or committee who make decisions for an organization. A suggestion system can be established to gather recommendations towards meetings, surveys, or digital platforms. Teamworking is another technique that gives opportunities to all stakeholders to work as a team or in a quality control circle. The benefits of participatory administration include more comprehensive brainstorming and broader opinions, conflict mitigation and tolerance, effective communication and coordination, better decision-making, and higher job satisfaction. More specifically, participatory administration can increase school management efficiency in the following aspects:

- Efficient coordination and higher productivity within a time limit
- Highly-motivated, active, and well-performed personnel
- Excellent relationships and less conflict or resistance from operational officers
- Democratic working environment, cost saving, and resource optimization
- Collective responsibility and reduced burden on school administrators

When applying participatory administration to school management, different departments and players are involved in all processes ranging from planning, evaluation to improvement. As a result, school operations become more complex and challenging. Thus, **participatory empowerment techniques** should be adopted to solve the problems, as described below.

1. A board committee or advisory body, comprising teachers, school administrators, parents, and local community representatives, can be established to encourage collective action, development, and problem solving.
2. Democratic management can empower participation by promoting morality, harmony, and wisdom which contributes to tolerance, respect, and creativity in the workplace.

3. Teamworking can strengthen relationships at work and create bonds between a diverse group of individuals.

4. A quality control circle is a small group of personnel independently established for constantly improving an organization and approaching the organization's goals.

5. Total quality management is a fundamental principle of organizational quality management. It encourages commitment to school quality and deep consciousness in quality development, which are crucial for achieving academic success. Total quality management involves collective planning, follow-up, evaluation, and regular improvements of the quality development system.

6. School-based management emphasizes decentralization and participation in educational management. It also includes decentralization of educational management to the local communities [5].

In addition, a study carried out by Dumkum and Wongleedee [6] reveals that enhanced performance can be achieved by reward systems, regular trainings, effective communication, better teamwork, and upgraded computers and other facilities. Therefore, it can be assumed that teamworking and effective communication are key factors influencing not only participatory administration [5] but also productivity improvement [6].

Based on the literature review, a conceptual framework consisting of observed variables and latent variables was constructed to demonstrate the path relationship between the factors influencing participatory school administration for enhancing Thai students' academic performance, as illustrated in Fig. 1.

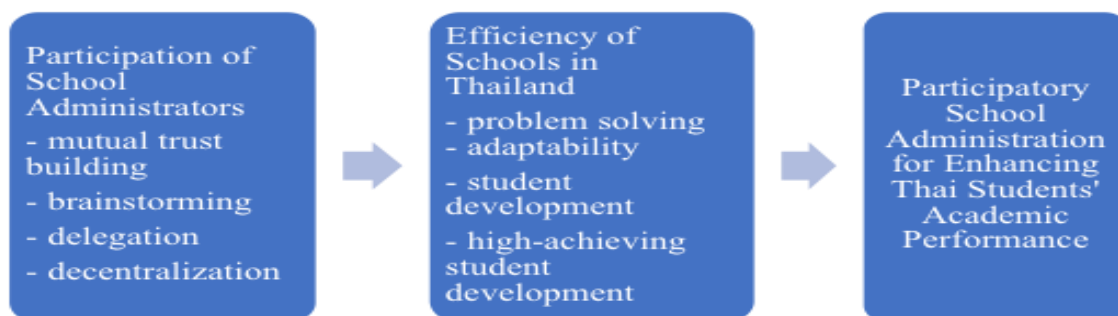


Fig. 1 Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

This research employs the quantitative research design. The population of this study consisted of 8,224 school administrators in Thailand. 400 samples were selected by the multi-stage sampling approach from 5 regions of Thailand based on the Taro Yamane's formula [7] at a confidence level of 95%. A 5-point Likert scale questionnaire survey was used for collecting data. The content validity of the questionnaire survey was tested by the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC). With 30 samples, the reliability of the survey items was measured by Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient; the overall survey was acceptable due to the internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.895$). The data was analyzed by descriptive statistics. Percentage

and frequency were used for analyzing the demographic data of the survey respondents, while mean and standard deviation were applied for evaluating the participatory school administration and efficiency of schools in Thailand.

RESULTS

The research results show that the majority of the survey respondents were male (61.8%), aged between 41-50 years old (35.55%). 54.95% of the total respondents had earned an undergraduate degree, while 49.6% had 5 years or less of administrative experience. Their overall participation in school administration enhancing Thai students' academic performance was rated at a high level. Considering the participatory school administration activities each by each, it can be seen that the most participated activity was decentralization, followed by brainstorming, mutual trust building, and delegation, respectively (See Table 1).

Table 1 Level of Participation in School Administration Activities

Items	Participatory School Administration Activities	\bar{x}	S.D.	Interpretation	Order
1	Mutual trust building	3.95	0.75	High	3
2	Brainstorming	3.97	0.76	High	2
3	Delegation	3.75	0.74	High	4
4	Decentralization	3.99	0.79	High	1
Overall		3.91	0.77	High	

As demonstrated in Table 2, the efficiency of schools in Thailand was also rated at a high level. The most efficient aspect was problem solving, followed by high-achieving student development, adaptability, and student development, respectively.

Table 2 Level of Efficiency of Participatory School Administration in Thailand

Items	Participatory School Administration Skills	\bar{x}	S.D.	Interpretation	Order
1	Problem solving	4.29	0.85	High	1
2	Adaptability	3.99	0.79	High	3
3	Student development	3.75	0.74	High	4
4	High-achieving student development	4.15	0.81	High	2
Overall		4.04	0.80	High	

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE WORK

In this study, participatory school administration for enhancing students' academic performance and efficiency of participatory school administration in Thailand were investigated. The research samples consisted of 400 school administrators randomized across the country. The research results reveal that there was a high level of participation in school administration. The school administrators decentralized their power and allowed the fellow colleagues to express opinions in all respects. They also promoted brainstorming and mutual trust building among the faculty and staff. Lastly, they played a significant role in delegating responsibilities in their schools. These activities contributed to the enhancement of students' academic performance. The findings are consistent with a study conducted by Chalard Chantarasombat [8] in which participatory administration allows all stakeholders to engage in problem solving, operational planning, decision-making, and evaluation in order to mobilize an activity effectively. This also conforms to another research carried out by Kanokwan Rojchanauthai [9] which explores participatory administration of primary school committees under the Rattanakosin Network, Bangkok Metropolitan Administration. Furthermore, the fact that the school administrators in this research highly participated in all investigated activities is consistent with a study conducted by Kitti Kampoosa [10]; the study examines the relationship between participatory administration and teachers' job satisfaction in the Educational Zone 1, Sakon Nakhon Province, and reveals that participatory administration can enhance teachers' job satisfaction at the highest level.

The efficiency of schools in Thailand was also rated at a high level because of the following reasons. The schools actively improved themselves and solved problems in a timely manner. Their students could graduate and enter a higher education institution, while the teachers constantly adapted themselves to the ever-changing school environment. There were activities or projects aiming for enhancing students' academic performance and promoting character education specifically. According to Praphai Udomphol [11], efficiency refers to educational institutions can produce high-achieving students who positively contribute to the development of both internal and external environments, problem solving, and teachers' job satisfaction. This is consistent with a study conducted by Chulawan Suwansri [12] which scrutinizes the relationship between participatory administration and school achievements in the Educational Zone 2, Sakon Nakhon Province; the study shows that there was a high level of efficiency of schools from the school administrators and teachers' point of view. The findings also agree with another study carried out by Chanokporn Manus [13] which discovers a strong relationship between participatory administration and achievements of schools under the Office of Non-Formal and Informal Education, Pathum Thani Province.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In terms of policy recommendations, the schools under the High-Quality School Project should pay more attention to the involvement of school faculty and staff in the school administration structure and allow them to engage in the improvement of such structure. The delegation process should be merit-based in order to enhance the effectiveness of school administration. Additionally, the schools should give importance to student development and

design a curriculum which is acknowledged by parents and local communities. This is expected to produce high-achieving students who can pursue higher education and contribute to the society.

For future studies, other factors affecting school efficiency should be explored in relation to the current situations of Thailand. A qualitative research should be conducted to obtain more in-depth data on participatory administration and efficiency of schools in Thailand. A case study research should be carried out to gain beneficial insight about the development of participatory school administration skills.

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