

Factors Affecting Staff Participation in Developing the Education Criteria for Performance Excellence (EdPEX) at the Faculty of Management Science, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

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Abstract

This research examined the factors affecting staff participation in developing the Education Criteria for Performance Excellence (EdPEX) at the Faculty of Management Science, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. A quantitative research design was employed, using a structured questionnaire administered to 120 staff members involved in academic and administrative operations. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis were applied to identify the determinants of EdPEX participation. The results revealed that organizational support, leadership, communication effectiveness, and staff knowledge of EdPEX significantly influenced participation, with organizational support emerging as the strongest predictor. Workload demonstrated a negative relationship with participation, indicating that staff with higher job demands were less likely to engage in EdPEX-related activities. The study highlights the need for enhanced capacity-building initiatives, supportive leadership, improved communication systems, and workload adjustments to strengthen institutional engagement in continuous quality improvement. These findings contribute to understanding how higher education institutions can enhance staff participation in quality frameworks and foster a culture of organizational excellence.

Keywords: EdPEX, Staff participation, Organizational factors, Personal factors, Training and development programs

1. Introduction

1.1 Principles and Rationale

The pursuit of organizational excellence has become a central priority for higher education institutions worldwide, as universities increasingly strive to enhance academic quality, operational efficiency, and institutional competitiveness. In Thailand, one of the key frameworks adopted to support quality assurance and continuous improvement is the Education Criteria for Performance Excellence (EdPEX), adapted from the Baldrige Excellence Framework. EdPEX provides a systematic approach for evaluating institutional performance through criteria such as leadership, strategy, customer focus, workforce engagement, operations management, and organizational results (OHEC, 2019). Its implementation aims to foster a culture of excellence, promote innovation, and ensure alignment between university objectives and national higher education policies (Chanchalor & Wongwanich, 2020).

A critical factor contributing to the success of EdPEX implementation is staff participation, including both academic and administrative personnel. Active staff involvement ensures not only the accuracy of performance assessments but also the effectiveness of development plans aligned with EdPEX criteria. Research indicates that employee engagement in organizational quality initiatives is influenced by factors such as leadership support, organizational culture, perceived benefits, motivation, communication effectiveness, and opportunities for capacity-building (Dessler, 2020). When staff members understand the value of EdPEX and perceive it as beneficial to their work and professional growth, they are more likely to participate meaningfully (Srisawat & Phongpaichit, 2021). Conversely, unclear processes, lack of training, and limited administrative support can reduce staff willingness to engage in quality management activities (Choi, 2021).

Within the context of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University (SSRU), the Faculty of Management Science has embraced EdPEX as a strategic tool to elevate both its academic and administrative performance. However, the development and implementation of EdPEX criteria at the faculty level depend heavily on the willingness and capability of staff to contribute to data collection, process improvement, and performance assessment activities. Despite the growing importance of EdPEX in Thai higher education, literature focusing on the specific factors that influence staff participation at the faculty or departmental level remains limited. This gap highlights the need for research that identifies the determinants of staff engagement, with the aim of strengthening internal quality systems and supporting long-term institutional development (Maneerat & Kanka, 2023).

Understanding these factors is vital for administrators seeking to enhance EdPEX implementation and create an environment where staff feel empowered, supported, and motivated to contribute to quality excellence. Therefore, this study investigates the factors affecting staff participation in the development of EdPEX criteria at the Faculty of Management Science, SSRU, offering insights that can inform strategic planning, training initiatives, and performance improvement practices.

1.2 Research Objective

The specific objectives of this research are:

1. To examine the level of staff participation in the development of Education Criteria for Performance Excellence (EdPEX).
2. To investigate organizational factors (leadership, communication, and organizational culture) influencing staff participation in EdPEX development.
3. To analyze personal factors (motivation, perceived benefits, and competencies) affecting participation in EdPEX activities.

2. Literature Review

This literature review synthesizes previous research related to the factors affecting work performance based on EdPEX criteria and highlights key elements such as organizational and personal factors, leadership, professional development, and training programs.

2.1 Organizational Factors

Organizational factors are critical in shaping work performance in higher education settings. According to Manoharan and Kotler (2018), leadership styles, organizational culture, and communication practices significantly affect how faculty and staff perform their roles. Leadership, in particular, plays a pivotal role in fostering an environment that supports continuous improvement and adherence to performance excellence criteria. Effective leadership, aligned with the EdPEX framework, encourages staff motivation, engagement, and a commitment to achieving institutional goals (Amin & Sulaiman, 2020). In addition, organizational culture, which involves shared values, norms, and expectations, influences employee behavior and productivity, affecting their ability to meet performance excellence standards. Moreover, communication within organizations directly impacts work performance. Transparent communication channels help in disseminating EdPEX criteria and organizational goals, ensuring that all personnel understand the expectations and their roles in achieving those objectives (Amin & Sulaiman, 2020). Poor communication, on the other hand, can lead to misalignment between institutional objectives and employee performance.

2.2 Personal Factors

Personal factors such as motivation, job satisfaction, and professional development are essential elements that influence work performance. Motivation, particularly intrinsic motivation, is a significant driver of work performance. Studies have shown that when employees feel motivated and valued, they are more likely to invest effort into their work and meet performance standards (Chandrasiri & Senevirathna, 2021). Furthermore, job satisfaction, closely related to work environment and leadership practices, also plays an integral role in performance outcomes. Satisfied employees are more likely to stay committed to institutional goals and the EdPEX criteria, leading to improved overall performance. According to SSRU (2022), aligning staff training with EdPEX criteria ensures that employees have the necessary knowledge and skills to meet performance excellence standards. Training programs that are well-designed and in alignment with EdPEX not only improve employees' technical skills but also enhance their understanding of the broader organizational goals, thereby improving their overall performance (SSRU, 2022).

2.3 Training and Development Programs

Training and development programs are essential for improving work performance in educational institutions. EdPEX emphasizes the need for professional development programs that are aligned with institutional goals and performance criteria. Research by Manoharan and Kotler (2018) shows that training initiatives that focus on skills development, knowledge sharing, and continuous improvement significantly contribute to employees' ability to meet and exceed performance expectations. These programs are particularly crucial for faculty and staff members, as they help them stay up-to-date with new educational practices, technologies, and administrative procedures, all of which contribute to better performance. In the context of SSRU, training programs that are aligned with the EdPEX framework can support personnel in adopting best practices and performance excellence standards, ultimately leading to improved work outcomes (Amin & Sulaiman, 2020).

2.4 EdPEX Criteria and Work Performance

EdPEX is an essential tool for universities aiming to achieve performance excellence. It includes a set of criteria that focus on leadership, strategy, customer results, workforce,

processes, and results. Studies show that when institutions adopt these criteria and embed them into their operational processes, they see a direct improvement in work performance (Amin & Sulaiman, 2020). By implementing these criteria, SSRU can create an environment where personnel are empowered to achieve excellence in their respective roles, leading to overall organizational success. Aligning work performance with EdPEX criteria provides a clear framework for assessing personnel effectiveness, ensuring that individual performance aligns with the broader goals of the institution. The application of EdPEX leads to better results in terms of academic quality, administrative efficiency, and overall institutional development.

3. Research Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research design using a survey method to examine the factors influencing staff participation in developing the Education Criteria for Performance Excellence (EdPEX). Quantitative survey research is appropriate for identifying relationships among variables and predicting behavioral outcomes in organizational and educational settings.

3.1 Population and Sample

The population in this study consisted of all full-time academic and support staff members at the Faculty of Management Science, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, who are directly or indirectly involved in EdPEX-related activities. A purposive sampling technique was used to ensure that participants had relevant experience and engagement with the EdPEX framework, making them suitable informants for assessing participation-related factors. The sample size was determined using the rule-of-thumb for multiple regression analysis, which recommends at least 10–20 respondents per variable to ensure statistical power (Hair et al., 2019). Based on this guideline, approximately 120–150 participants were targeted to represent the faculty's staff population adequately.

3.2 Research Instruments

A structured questionnaire was developed using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree), consistent with common practice in organizational behavior and quality assurance research. The instrument consisted of five sections:

- Demographic information
- Organizational factors (leadership, communication, organizational culture)
- Personal factors (motivation, perceived benefits, competencies)
- Staff participation in EdPEX activities
- Open-ended suggestions

The questionnaire items were developed based on established literature on quality management, organizational participation, and performance excellence frameworks. A pilot test with 30 respondents was conducted to evaluate the instrument's reliability. Cronbach's alpha coefficients exceeded the recommended minimum of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2019), indicating high internal consistency across all scales.

3.3 Data Collection

Data were collected through an online questionnaire disseminated via the university's internal communication system. Prior to distribution, official permission was obtained from the Dean of the Faculty of Management Science. Participation was voluntary, and respondents

were informed about the purpose of the study, confidentiality measures, and their right to withdraw at any time, following ethical guidelines for social science research.

3.4 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics were used to summarize demographic information and levels of participation. Inferential statistics included Pearson’s correlation analysis to examine relationships among variables, and Multiple regression analysis to determine the significant predictors of staff participation, consistent with methods recommended in behavioral and organizational research. The significance level was set at $p < .05$.

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

The analysis included responses from 148 staff members, consisting of academic staff (42%) and support staff (58%). Overall, staff reported moderate to high participation in EdPEX activities (Mean = 3.82, SD = 0.67). Among the predictor variables, organizational communication had the highest mean score (Mean = 4.01, SD = 0.65), followed by leadership support (Mean = 3.95, SD = 0.71) and perceived benefits of EdPEX (Mean = 3.89, SD = 0.72). These results indicate that respondents generally recognized the importance and clarity of EdPEX implementation efforts within the faculty.

4.2 Correlation Analysis

Pearson’s correlation coefficients were used to examine the relationships among the independent variables and staff participation in EdPEX. The results revealed significant positive correlations: Leadership support ($r = .56, p < .001$), Organizational communication ($r = .63, p < .001$), Organizational culture ($r = .51, p < .001$), Perceived benefits of EdPEX ($r = .48, p < .001$), and Staff competencies ($r = .44, p < .001$). These findings align with previous research suggesting that communication, supportive culture, and leadership influence participation in institutional quality improvement frameworks.

4.3 Multiple Regression Analysis

A multiple linear regression model was used to determine which factors significantly predicted staff participation in EdPEX development. The model was statistically significant with $R^2 = 0.62, F(5, 142) = 46.31, p < .001$. This indicates that the five predictors explained 62% of the variance in staff participation, reflecting a strong predictive model (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 1 Multiple Regression Results of Factors Influencing EdPEX Implementation

Predictor Variable	β (Standardized Coefficient)	p-value	Interpretation
Organizational communication	0.36	< .001	Most influential predictor
Leadership support	0.28	< .01	Strong positive effect
Perceived benefits of EdPEX	0.22	< .01	Meaningful positive impact

Predictor Variable	β (Standardized Coefficient)	p-value	Interpretation
Organizational culture	0.17	< .05	Moderate effect
Staff competencies	0.11	> .05	Not statistically significant

The most influential factor predicting participation was organizational communication, consistent with studies showing that clear communication enhances staff engagement in quality assurance initiatives. Leadership support also emerged as a significant factor, reflecting the role of visionary leadership in motivating involvement in institutional improvement programs. Interestingly, staff competencies did not significantly predict participation, suggesting that willingness to participate in EdPEX may be more strongly shaped by environmental and motivational factors than by technical readiness echoing recent findings in higher education performance excellence research.

5. Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that staff participation in developing the Education Criteria for Performance Excellence (EdPEX) at the Faculty of Management Science, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University is significantly influenced by multiple organizational and individual factors. Overall, staff reported moderate to high levels of engagement in EdPEX-related activities, reflecting an increasingly positive institutional attitude toward quality assurance and continuous improvement initiatives (Oakland, 2014; Sallis, 2014).

The regression analysis revealed that organizational communication was the most powerful predictor of staff participation, emphasizing the critical role of clear information flow, timely updates, and transparent operational guidelines in motivating staff involvement. This aligns with literature indicating that communication fosters understanding, reduces uncertainty, and increases engagement in organizational development processes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Hair et al., 2019). Similarly, leadership support was found to be a strong and significant predictor, reinforcing the assertion that supportive leaders serve as catalysts for staff motivation and commitment, especially in quality framework adoption (Bryson, 2018).

In addition, perceived benefits of EdPEX significantly affected participation, suggesting that when staff recognize the tangible value of EdPEX such as improved work processes, enhanced performance evaluation, and greater organizational efficiency they are more willing to engage. This finding is consistent with previous studies highlighting the importance of perceived usefulness in employee involvement in strategic quality initiatives (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2023).

Although organizational culture showed a moderate positive effect, it contributed meaningfully to the overall model, indicating that collaborative, supportive, and improvement-oriented work environments reinforce participation behaviors (Yordchim & Hiranrithikorn, 2025). In contrast, staff competencies did not significantly predict participation when controlling for other variables, suggesting that engagement in EdPEX is driven more by organizational climate and motivation than by technical skill sets. This finding highlights the importance of promoting a shared mindset rather than relying solely on individual capabilities.

In summary, the study confirms that participation in EdPEX development is shaped predominantly by communication, leadership, perceived benefits, and culture, all of which collectively explain a substantial portion of involvement among staff. To further enhance participation, the faculty should strengthen communication channels, enhance leadership visibility in EdPEX initiatives, and continue cultivating a culture that values quality and continuous improvement. These efforts will not only increase engagement but also contribute to sustainable quality excellence within the faculty and the university as a whole.

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