

**Executive Summary
of the Report**

on

**National Pilot Study :
Learning Reform Schools for Developing Quality of Learners**

School-Based Management : Thai Ways and Methods

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1. Introduction

Schools-Based Management (SBM) is an administrative concept originated in the United States of America, as the beneficiaries of the services provided were not satisfied with the education system and the lowering of the quality of education management. They have therefore adopted the new administrative strategy by initiating the SBM, which is linked to the education reform and decentralization of authority to schools, thus allowing them freedom for self-management. Such strategy is similar to innovations adopted by the business and industry sectors e.g. the Total Quality Management (TQM) etc. with emphases being placed on empowering the practitioners to take part in decision making; narrowing the gap between the practitioners and the executives for effectiveness and efficiency in performance; satisfaction of both practitioners and customers; and economical and efficient utilization of resources.

The SBM is therefore an educational administrative innovation, allowing educational institutions freedom in administration as well as management of teaching-learning activities. Other than the U.S.A., several countries have at present adopted the SBM e.g. Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong etc. Hong Kong has adopted the SBM strategy since 1991 on a voluntary basis at first. Once the success of the approach had been ensured, the Hong Kong authority announced its commitment to apply the SBM approach to all schools by 2000.

In the case of Thailand, Section 39 of Chapter 5 of the 1999 National Education Act requires the Ministry of Education to decentralize powers in educational administration and management regarding academic matters, budget, personnel and general affairs administration directly to the Committees and Offices for Education, Religion and Culture of the educational service areas and the educational institutions in the areas.

Section 40 also requires each institution providing basic education and that at lower-than-degree level to establish a board, comprising representatives of parents, those of teachers, community, local administration organizations, alumni of the institution and scholars, with

the director of the institution serving as member and secretary of the board.

The ONEC has been engaged in a National Pilot Study : Learning Reform Schools for Developing Quality of Learners as a R&D activity. The project is aimed at encouraging and providing support to educational institutions for adoption of whole-school reform approach. Recognizing that the learning reform, stipulated in Chapter IV of the 1999 National Education Act, is in fact at the heart of the education reform. It should logically begin in all schools through adoption of the learner-centred approach, which is the basis for internal quality assurance, regarded as an integral part of the continuous administrative process.

2. Objectives of the Study

1. To identify essential competencies of school principals for meeting education reform requirements and to report on the outcomes of development of competency indicators;
2. To prepare a learning kit for school developing principals for essential competencies of the meeting the education reform requirements;
3. To study the outcomes of competency development through the school principals' utilization of the learning kit;
4. To study the characteristics of the school principals' management method before implementation of the Study;
5. To study the relationship between the outcomes of the school principals' competency development and the characteristics of their management method, personnel development, learning process reform, action research, internal quality assurance and community development;
6. To study the SBM models for adoption by the pilot schools;
7. To study the feasibility of expanding the SBM; and
8. To submit policy recommendations on the SBM to the respective administrative authorities of the pilot schools, ONEC and ADB.

3. Research methodology

A total of 250 pilot schools nationwide participates in the Study. The school personnel responsible for the project at the school level includes the principal and a teacher serving as project co-ordinator. A total of 44 teams of local researchers, together with a number of ONEC' research teams, has provided the schools with advisory and monitoring services. The consultant, in collaboration with other researchers responsible for the Study as well as those outside, has visited a number of the pilot schools. For data analysis, therefore, the consultant has availed of information from the following sources :

1. Phase I and Phase II self-study reports of the participating schools;
2. Final reports of the participating schools;
3. Final reports of the 44 teams of local researchers;
4. School visits;
5. Regional seminars of principals school project co-ordinators and researchers; 2 seminars for each of the 4 regions;
6. Focus group interviews of selected principals and project co-ordinators;
7. Informal discussions with principals, teachers and other school personnel, students, community representatives, local organization leaders, Buddhist monks and Christian and Islamic religious leaders.

Content analysis is used for analysis of the data received.

4. Research findings

Principals' essential competencies for meeting requirements of the education reform and outcomes of indicator development for competency assessment

In identifying the principals' essential competencies, the researcher has analyzed the main functions of the principals as stipulated in the 1999 National Education Act together with those affirmed in the theories of education administration. When the essential competencies had been identified, specifications regarding the indicators for competency assessment were made. These competencies and indicators were

subsequently brought to the attention of the principals of 15 pilot school under all administrative authorities for consultation purposes. A seminar of scholars was consequently held for selection of relevant competencies, in conjunction with focus group interviews of principals and project coordinators selected from all the 4 regions for considering the competencies and indicators and prioritizing these competencies. The findings are as follows :

(a) Essential competencies of principals for meeting requirements of the education reform

1. Faith of colleagues;
2. Ability for teamwork;
3. Intellectual leadership;
4. Vision;
5. Creativity;
6. Good human relationship;
7. Knowledge and ability in management;
8. Resolve in decision making and taking responsibilities;
9. Integrity and transparency;
10. Attributes of a good co-ordinator;
11. Democratic outlook;
12. Supportive attitudes; and
13. Serving as a desirable model.

(b) Indicators of SBM approach adopted by the principals

1. Express opinions in planning for school development for the students' benefit;
2. Avail of analytical thinking for translating concepts into effective practice as envisaged;
3. Adopt a democratic approach by taking account of the opinions of all parties concerned;

4. Resolute in making decisions and initiating changes for work development;
5. Serve as good examples in discharge of duties;
6. Establish good relationship with colleagues, parents, and community members;
7. Arrange for teachers to efficiently work together;
8. Collaborative teamwork with all personnel involved;
9. Encourage all teachers to propose models for administration of the schools' academic affairs for developing the students' quality.
10. Prepare an administrative plan, conducive to developing the learning processes of the students, teachers and principals;
11. Encourage all teachers to be cognizant of and participate in distribution of school resources;
12. Encourage community members to participate in learning process development;
13. Encourage all teachers to participate in monitoring and following up of the school functioning;
14. Disseminate and utilize assessment outcomes for work plan adjustment; and
15. Encourage all teachers to participate in the improvement and auditing of the school financial system.

Management situation and principals' characteristics before launching of the Study

Based on the Phase I self-evaluation reports submitted by the participating schools, data from school visits, and those from seminars of principals, project co-ordinators and researchers, the consultant has found that the pilot schools, regardless of the jurisdiction of their respective authorities, sizes and locations, can be divided into 2 groups :

- Schools with previous experience with other projects or those with honours/awards; and
- Schools engaged in the Study for the first time.

These schools differ regarding their readiness in various aspects, enthusiasm, flexibility and rapidity in adopting new approaches. The majority of the schools in the first category has been found to be at an advantage, thus affecting the management style. It has been found, however, that before participating in the project, decentralization of authority in most schools was not at the extent desired. Rules and regulations still governed administration, which was top-down rather than decentralizing authority for decision-making to various organs. The principals still held the central power, the degree of which depended on the structure, management methods and rules of the respective authorities. Regarding the principals' competencies, it has been found that, prior to project implementation, some competencies of most principals were not at the level desired.

Working method adopted for preparation of principals' learning kit for competency development and outcome

Following a seminar of scholars to identify the essential competencies of the principals and the relevant indicators for measuring these indicators, the consultant prepared a learning kit entitled "School-Based Management", which was subsequently submitted to another meeting of scholars for further suggestions and approval. The kit was accordingly distributed to all participating schools. A follow-up on the application of the kit was made during school visits by the consultant and research team as well as during the seminars attended by the principals, project co-ordinators and teams of researchers. A suggestion was made for preparation of a video tape of successful cases of SBM approach. A project proposal together with a relevant script prepared in consultation with the principals with successful experience with the SBM and with the approval of the research team and ONEC's researchers, was duly submitted to the ADB Project Co-ordinator.

Development of principals' competencies resulting from dissemination of the learning kit

For the data analysis, information has been gathered from the Phase I and Phase II self-evaluation reports of the schools, school visits, seminars of principals, project co-ordinators and researchers as well as focus group interviews of the first two categories of personnel. The data thus analysed are consistent with those gathered from the pre-test and post-test self-evaluation reports of the principals i.e. all prevailing competency indicators are higher than all pre-test indicators. The mean of all SBM competency indicators at present also proves to be higher than all pre-test

indicators, with a difference at the level of 0.01 of statistical significance for all competencies.

Relationship between outcomes of the principals' competency development and the characteristics and style of management, personnel development, learning process reform, action research, internal quality assurance and community development

From the data of the research team reports, Phase I and Phase II self-evaluation reports prepared by the schools and the information received by the consultant during school visits, seminars of principals, project co-ordinators and teams of researchers, informal interviews and focus group interviews of principals and project co-ordinators, a relationship has been found between the outcomes of the principals' competency development and the characteristics or management style. Orientation meetings have become more frequent. An increase in the decentralization of administrative authority in the schools has become evident. Increases have also been seen in encouragement of teachers to attend meetings and seminars as well as training for professional development, and formulation of projects in support of the learning reform. The budgetary requirements have been prepared with greater attention being paid to a wider range of projects. Meetings have been held for proposes of briefing and assignment of responsibilities for various projects to the personnel concerned. Periodic meetings have also been organized for follow-up on the approved activities as well as assessment at the completion of the project. Meetings of the boards of institutions providing basic education have more frequent. Although most agenda items still concern assistance or donation of funds, materials and labour, there are some school boards, community representatives and parents, who provide useful suggestions for development of the institutions as well as urge them to undertake the reform in consonance with the provisions of the 1999 National Education Act.

• **Personnel development** Programmes for development of the school personnel, with clearer objectives have been prepared; the collaborative action research has generated enthusiasm among teachers who are provided with enhanced knowledge and understanding. Regarding the mechanisms for personnel development, it has been found that, other than *ad hoc* seminars and training sessions, availing of other mechanisms has been increased e.g. workshops, observation tours to places outside the schools, short-term training courses and encouraging further education at higher levels.

• **Learning process reform** A variety of teaching-learning activities have been organized, with emphasis on the learner-centred approach in instructional planning. Regarding the teaching-learning activities, an integrated approach and student participation in the planning for such activities have been allowed. The teachers have availed of instructional media and have allowed the students to undertake practical work for actual experience. The “project” approach has also been adopted, allowing the students to present their achievements. The students have been allowed freedom to change their learning methods, with increased opportunities for self-study. The principals and teachers have taken part in collective consultations for enhancing the teaching-learning activities. Invitations have been extended to local resource persons as well as parents to serve as resource persons. The personnel could also avail of the services of supervising teachers serving as mentors. The local curricula have been developed, with the students being allowed access to learning sources both within and outside the schools.

• **Action research** Action research activities have mostly been under the responsibility of teachers, with prominence being given to classroom research. The action research has, as a result, enabled the teachers to understand more and identify additional methods for developing teaching-learning activities. The students have been allowed opportunities to voice their opinions and participate in identification of learning innovations. The teachers themselves have come to enjoy better relationships with the parents, better understanding of the students as well as greater access to learning innovations. The research findings have been availed of to better serve the needs for enhancing and developing the teaching-learning activities. The SBM strategy for the action research has resulted in a work process through co-operation among various persons and organizations e.g. teachers, students, principals, school boards, community members, local administrative organizations etc. All these have joined efforts in target setting, planning, implementing and evaluating for plan improvement as well as problem solving through the PDCA Cycle. The findings reveal that the SBM learning reform through the whole-school approach can lead to effectiveness in the learning reform.

• **Internal quality control** Supervisory committees for internal quality control have been established resulting in changes in the teachers’ work behaviour. A systematic filing of supporting documents has been encouraged. The teachers have indicated their enthusiasm for self-development. Many schools are preparing internal quality control manuals, with the establishment of the relevant assessment committees.

As a result, many schools feel confident of their readiness for external quality evaluation. The communities' confidence in the schools' capabilities to organize teaching-learning activities has consequently been enhanced.

• **Community development** With the change in work behaviour of the teachers and the principals concerned, and with the increased community role in education provision, most communities have lent ready co-operation; their participatory role, however, has not been fully appreciated. Some communities, due to the exigencies of earning their living, have been deprived of opportunities for full participation. The achievements attained so far have nevertheless provided increased confidence in the schools' performance. With greater opportunities for appreciation and involvement in the schools' functioning, direct and indirect influence on community development will undoubtedly be reached.

School-based management models

An analysis of the data available has revealed the SBM models of the pilot schools. Before presenting the models, however, the consultant would like to clarify the models as meaning ways or methods adopted by the reform schools for learning reform. These guidelines comprise the following elements :

1. Conceptual framework The conceptual framework for the SBM strategy comprises decentralization of authority, stakeholders' participatory role, principals' benevolent leadership, whole-school reform; self administration and management and transparency for accountability.

2. Actors concerned The actors involved in the administration and management include principals, teachers, school boards and community members.

3. Process means the steps for the schools' work process through the quality PDCA Cycle. The process for each step may differ depending on the schools' readiness and contexts.

4. Supplementary factors comprising the culture of each school, including local culture, readiness of the factors, work methods etc. the supplementary measures can contribute to facilitating or interfering with the school functioning.

5. Output means the school achievement. Based on the Phase I and Phase II achievements together with the final reports of the local researcher teams as well as the 250 schools' own final reports, the models adopted can be thus summarized:

• **Model 1 : The Triarchical Leading Model**

The principals, teachers, school board and community members are ready with the project thus facilitating its implementation and needing little time for preparatory measures. Success is therefore more or less ensured. This model ranks third among the various models adopted.

• **Model 2 : Principal-Teachers Leading Model**

While the principals and teachers are prepared, members of the school boards and the communities still lack understanding and readiness. The project implementation is not facilitated, depending on the principals' and teachers self-determination and sustained efforts. Following the former's increased co-operation, the success of the operation will be ensured. This model ranks first among the various models adopted.

• **Model 3 : The Principal Leading Model**

The principals are sensitive and dedicated to the school improvement. Consultative meetings have subsequently been held together with the teachers. With the latter's lack of confidence in the principals' leadership and expected outcomes, this work process will be rather time consuming before the proposal can be submitted to the basic education school boards and communities for collaborative actions. The outcomes will be slow and time-consuming. Without the dedication and sustained efforts of all parties concerned, its success is hardly ensured. This model ranks second among the models adopted by the schools.

• **Model 4 : The Teachers-Community Leading Model**

The principals have been transferred from elsewhere while the project is being implemented under the responsibilities of the teachers, members of the basic education school boards and communities. This model will take some time to allow the principals to appreciate the project and make relevant decisions, thus having repercussions on the building of faith among their colleagues to continue with the efforts already taken and ensuring their success. This model ranks fourth among the models adopted by the schools.

From the data analysis, it has been found that the school size, location and respective administrative authority constitute the key variables for the project implementation. The prime importance, however, has been attached to the faith in the principals' leadership, which figures among the principals' essential competencies. Public relations both within and outside the schools are mandatory. Any changes introduced both inside and outside the schools also requires conformity with the customs, traditions and culture of the local context as well as those at the national levels.

Problems and obstacles and factors affecting successful administration and management

1. School policy The policy represents the joint agreement of all personnel concerned to carry out the necessary tasks on a continuous basis. Nothing is personal; changes in the positions or incumbents by no means affect the policy which belongs to the schools. Policy formulation must also suit their own contexts and lead to quality assurance.

2. Principals are the key factors for the smooth project implementation. Creativity, vision and intellectual leadership are required of the principals who will provide full promotion and support in all aspects to the teachers regarding learning reform. The principals' close attention will generate among the teachers the necessary enthusiasm and confidence. They will consequently change their work methods to the better and to become more systematic. Each pilot school, however, has different strengths and administrative methods. The principals must necessarily follow the path of decentralization of authority. Not being attached to their own status, they work side by side with other teachers; devote themselves entirely to the schools. Most important of all are the personnel's faith and confidence in the principals.

3. Teachers regarded as key factors who need continuous self-development through studies, research, training and participation in seminars or study tours for constant improvement of their work. The teachers have been found to take part in policy formulation regarding organization of teaching-learning activities and others. The teachers have been found to increase their co-operation and lend mutual support. There has been internal supervision for remedying weaknesses through a variety of methods. The teachers themselves have been found to be on friendlier terms with their students.

4. Method of decentralizing authority Decentralizing the principals' administrative authority to a group of persons is likely to be more effective than to a deputy principal or a particular teacher. Devolving responsibilities to a large group of personnel provides them with a sense of trust and acceptance, resulting in enhanced effectiveness and efficiency in discharging their assignments.

5. Transfer of principals is an important problem facing the SBM, the continuity of which is disrupted, particularly in the case of a school which has recently joined the National Pilot Study. A new principal might need some time for appreciation of the work concept and self-adjustment.

6. Respective administrative authorities play highly important roles in providing the necessary promotion and support for the schools to continue with their work. From the information received, it is clear that all schools, regardless of their administrative authorities, have enjoyed considerable advancement. Both the principals and teachers, on their part, are prepared to continue with the project even though it has come to an end. All they expect are authorization of the respective authorities which should provide them with intellectual and budgetary support together with the necessary materials and documents and occasional visits for moral support. The respective authorities, however, must have a clear policy regarding the supportive role of the learning reform to the SBM. Many principals, however, are not so certain of the extent to which the above policy is appreciated by the respective authorities or whether the schools will continue to receive the necessary support even after the completion of the project.

Possibilities of scaling up the SBM approach

Regarding the feasibility of scaling up the SBM approach, from the study of information received, especially from informal interviews with the principals, project co-ordinators, and local researchers as well as focus group interviews, confirmation in the positive has been made with provision of guidelines for subsequent actions as follows :

1. Public interviews about the project and dissemination of information on schools' achievements through different media;
2. Expand the network by including schools not yet part of the network as appropriate by providing intellectual and documentary support;
3. Co-ordinate the plan and policy with the respective administrative authorities; and

4. Steps should be taken for networking with higher education institutions for teacher education to serve as resource centres for personnel and for enhancement of co-operation for teaching profession development.

Policy recommendations on administration and management

Administrative authorities of respective schools

An analysis of the findings has revealed that all schools participating in the study, regardless of their administrative authorities, have appreciably developed in all aspects – administration and management, provision of learning etc. The principals, teachers, basic education school boards and communities share their enthusiasm in developing their schools in consonance with the spirit of the 1999 National Education Act. Having seen the noticeable achievement, the principals and the teachers are willing to continue with their school reform efforts. The respective authorities are therefore encouraged to continue with their support for the reform. Different authorities, however, may have different work methods, which might result in confusion and misunderstanding among the staff members concerned. Different practices in giving awards by various authorities as well as the promotion methods adopted might have repercussions on the performance of the principals and teachers. Should there be proper co-ordination with the ONEC regarding these aspects, enhanced effectiveness will undoubtedly result.

Office of the national Education Commission (ONEC)

The ONEC, as the national body responsible for formulation of policy on provision of education, must assume a co-ordinating role for reconciling the policies of the following administrative authorities and agencies concerned :

1. **All administrative authorities** need to co-ordinate their methods of work to achieve co-operation and practices in the same direction. Different guidelines or different requirements will only lead to hesitancy and uncertainty among the personnel concerned.
2. **All teacher education institutions** should continue with the project on a sustained basis. Consideration should also be given to development of future teachers, considered as an important mission of the teaching profession institutions, so that the links, support and assistance will be continued. In the production of teachers by these institutions, the teacher education students should be given optimal

opportunities to learn from the schools, which will be their work places after the completion of their education. Learning from an authentic situation, these students will learn in a systematic way with theoretical part alternated by practical work from real situations, which might be presented through a project offered by the schools.

- 3. Education institutions for production of educational administrators** The research findings confirm the requirement of 13 competencies of educational administrators. Education institutions providing courses on educational administration must necessarily be informed of such data for the preparation of the curriculum and organization of teaching-learning activities in consonance with the attainment of such competencies. If necessary, the schools can serve as the bases for present and future principals. In this regard, the Council of the Deans of Faculties of Education of Thailand in conjunction with the Council of Administrators of Educational Management of Thailand could lend support for enhanced effectiveness.