

## **The Empowerment to Strength in Education Service Area with Systematic Approach in Thailand**

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**Abstract:** The objectives of this study were to develop the working system, the Office of Mahasarakham Educational Service Area 2, facilitating the educational management support of schools and to evaluate and reflect the system usage of staffs and educational personnel. The target group included 83 staffs working in the Office of Mahasarakham Educational Service Area 2 during 2007-2008 school year. The informant group consisted of 263 school administrators in the area. There were 4 phases of research methodology: development in work system of the office by the leading team of office; development in understanding of system for the office staffs; development in awareness for school administrators and trying out and system evaluation. The research methodology included the workshop, supervision and follow up and sharing. The research instruments using in this study consisted of the minutes and observation. Data analysis were presented in descriptive form.

**Key words:** Organizational strength, system development, educational service area, Thailand

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### **INTRODUCTION**

National Educational Act 1999 in Thailand specified the decentralization of educational administration and management regarding to the academic, budget, staff management and general management to the Office of Educational Service Area so that the educational management would be flexible and various in practicing with appropriateness and congruence to the context and necessity. So, major role of the Office of Educational Service included to put the government's educational policy into practicing, monitoring, empowering, supporting for the educational management of the office area to be able to manage the education for achieving the objectives, leading to the students' output accomplishing educational standard as well as student development with happiness appropriately to their age (National Educational Commission, 2007).

The Office of Educational Service Area was a work unit as principal foundation of Primary Educational Management according to the rule of Ministry of Education, it had to be an organization with sufficient potentiality and fluency including team work culture as the organizational culture with pattern of behavior by staffs of organization under the belief, value, norm, rule and regulation from the past. It was a learning organization being able to work with other units efficiently, study together with body of knowledge caused by work practice. For persons in the Office of

Educational Service Area, needed to have vision, far vision, love to study for additional knowledge, evaluate future situation and prepare the strategy to be ready to face with the coming problem in advance and improve work practice regularly.

These characteristics were major attributes of the Office of Educational Service Area with strength facilitating the empowerment of quality schools, systematic administration and management. The outcome of quality school management included the students had quality based on the specified educational standard. If the Office of Educational Service Area could not be able to manage its work according to responsibility and duty efficiently, it would be difficult to have educational reform with quality serving to intention of National Educational Act.

In order to lead the Office of Educational service Area to be organization with strength, it was indispensable to be systematic including work quality and steps being recognized and perceived which was caused by staff collaboration in related contexts that: what system it would be included? what step it would be consisted of? It needed to be based on various factors of success for instance, communication, monitoring and following up and collaboration from every one from the belief that every body had one's knowledge or treasure. If one could share as well as apply the good guidelines of practice with other organizations, the system would be have better quality (Institute of Research and Learning Development,

2004). It was support with the approach of successful organization with strength, 3 aspects of organizational attributes needed to be changed: the structure, the system and the culture.

For the system, it required a large number of information technology in work practice, especially in searching for information of the customers circulating the information in work practice extensively as well as the administration training (Kotter, 1996).

For educational development starting by developing the Office of Educational Service Area with success, in addition to depend on related work unit in education, every related work office in educational management in locality was an importance for empowering and supporting the educational management to achieve the required quality. Each organization would play its role in empowering the educational management differently which might be based on major driving force from the local administrative organization or community regarding to the grant or fund as well as local experts as a monitoring team of schools in order to be quality education as the expectation of organization.

The Office of Mahasarakham Educational Service Area 2 (2008) implemented educational development continuously based on intention of educational management. But it still found that there were major problems which couldn't be solved. Specifically, the students' educational quality. According to the seminar and brainstorming of the staffs, there were 2 major issues as: the imbalance of educational management of the Office of Educational Service Area and the inefficient administration and management of schools. It could be stated that the management still lacked of quality system (The Office of Educational Service Area).

According to conceptual framework of development and problem situation as the earlier, the research team were interested in developing the strength of the Office of Educational Service Area based on framework of development in ToPSTAR system which would be factors leading to success so that the Office of Educational Service Area would have strength and good culture of development as well as educational quality development in future.

#### **Objectives:**

- To develop the work system of the Office of Mahasarakham Educational Service Area 2, facilitating the educational management support of the school
- To evaluate and reflect findings on system use of the school personnel and administrators, under the Office of Mahasarakham Educational Service Area 2

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The research participants, key informants and target group. The research participants consisted of: the instructors, Faculty of Education, Mahasarakham University (10 persons), the leading personnel of the Office of Educational Service Area (16 persons).

The key informants consisted of: the scholars from Institute of Research and Learning Development (2 persons), the school administrators, under jurisdiction of the Office of Educational Service Area 2 (263 persons). The target group consisted of 83 staffs under jurisdiction of the Office of Mahasarakham Educational Service Area 2 practicing in every division, total of 83 persons including: Assistant Director, the Office of Mahasarakham Educational (10 persons), the leading staffs in each division (16 persons and the staffs of the Office of Educational Service Area (57 persons).

**Research implementation:** There were 4 phases of research implementation as follows:

**Phase 1:** Development on working system of the office with leading team. Participatory workshop was implemented to organize the development system of the Office of Educational Service Area, during 8-10 March 2007 at the Conference Room 5309, the third floor, Faculty of Education Building, Mahasarakham University. The activity participants were 10 researchers from Faculty of Education, the leading team of the Office of Educational Service Area, including 10 assistant directors from the Office of Mahasarakham Educational Service Area 2, 16 researchers from the Office of Educational Service Area 2 and the lecturer from the Office of the Institute of Learning Research (Ajan Jongkon Sapsomboon). There were activities relating to issues in developing the quality awareness, quality management, analysis of Macro Flowchart Top-Down Flowchart, design of new system, using instruments in collecting data from the minutes form.

**Phase 2:** Development of comprehension in staff system in work office. Participatory workshop was implemented for organizing the development system for the Office of Educational Service Area during 9-11 April 2007 at Ed. 301 Room, Octagon Building, Faculty of Education, Mahasarakham University. The activity participants were 4 researchers from the Faculty of Education, 11 Assistant Directors of the Office of Mahasarakham Educational Service Area 2, 73 staffs from the Office of Mahasarakham Educational Service Area 2 and one scholar from the Institute of Learning Research (Doctor Yongyut

Wongpiromsan), managing activity based on the same issue as Phase 1. In addition, every staff participate in presenting the new system of the Office of Educational Service Area.

The instruments for collecting data from the minutes and the presentation record form of the Office of Educational Service Area were used. Later on, the staffs in each work system improved the system handbook during April to May 2007.

**Phase 3:** Development of Awareness for the School Administrators. The lecture was implemented. Brainstorming and reflection in system handbook during 24-25 May 2007 were held at Central Room 1, Faculty of Education, Mahasarakham University. The activity participants were 4 researchers form Faculty of Education, 10 assistant directors from the Office of Mahasarakham Educational Service Area 2, 12 researchers from the Office of Mahasarakham Educational Service Area 2 and 263 school administrators. The lecture in the approach of system management, quality system management in organization, presentation of handbook for system in the Office of Mahasarakham Educational Service Area 2, consideration in handbook for the Office of Mahasarakham Educational Service Area 2. The instruments in collecting data from the conclusions of minutes and questionnaire on opinion towards the handbook were administered.

**Phase 4:** Trying out, evaluating and reflecting the system. It included the trying out in work practice which every sector agreed to try out the systems of supervision, following up investigation and evaluation during 2008 school year. The study, evaluation and reflection in using the system through conference for sharing knowledge

management. The target group included the every staff in the Office of Educational Service Area. Data were collected by recording, observing, interviewing and evaluating the document.

**Data analysis:** Data were analyzed by qualitative data analysis obtaining from the observation, recording and interviewing and calculated for the mean. The handbook was evaluated.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For system development findings found that the Office of Educational Service Area were able to design its own working system facilitating the empowerment in educational management of schools. The handbook was developed including 3 major systems, 7 sub-systems, information technology as a mediator of various systems as shown in Fig. 1.

The findings of the quality caused by staffs' participation in the Office of Educational Service Area including the agreement in 3 major necessary systems including: the system in supervision, following up and evaluation, the management system and the development and quality assurance.

The information technology system was the information of feedback leading to the system improvement in the Office of Mahasarakham Educational Service Area 2. The staffs in the Office of Educational service Area would comprehend and be aware of the importance of team working by using the system as a driving force and view that the work analysis technique could be able to develop the quality of the Office of Educational Area as well as know the value of systematic work analysis more than in the past and approve to

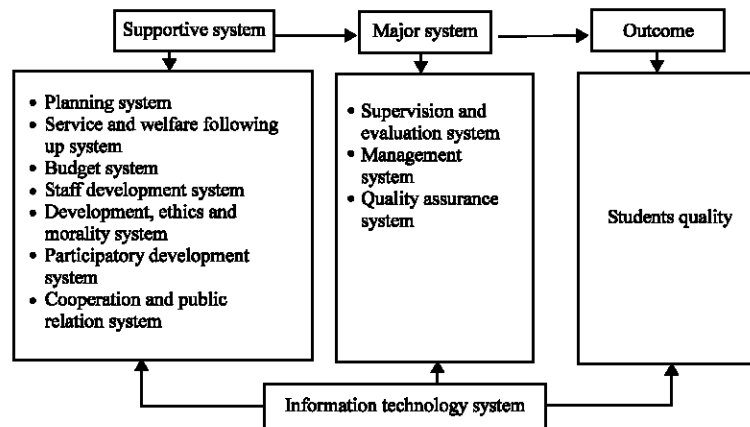


Fig. 1: Quality system in the Office of Mahasarakham Educational Service Area

develop the major system and supportive system view the problem of their own Office of Educational Service Area by reflecting themselves which would lead to self acceptance and collaboration in designing the systematic development.

Each one appreciated the other's attempt to reflect the problem as well as system development causing the strength of organization further. The organization would have strength when it was indispensable to have hierarchical systems with clear technique and recording of standard. For good design of good system development, needed to be caused by participation from every sector relating to that organization. How would be the details, step or process in designing, it was caused by every one in organization to collaborate in developing. It should be believed that the developed system would lead to strength of organization or objective by defining clear framework of each person because in the organization consisted of various system including major systems and supportive systems. So, the obvious framework needed to be specified in order to prevent the confusion for practicing. It was supported by the approach of TopSTAR caused by every one in work office viewed the problem and thinking over. Later on, planning was performed by bring the necessary systems for organization which would lead to the design of step in the system. In each system, the Flowchart would be obtained. For work practice, each system was controlled by standard indicator of success or criterion for recording the clear standard and responsibility occurring from every sector's participation or team based on the assessment and reflection by related persons with developed system (The Institute of Research and Learning Development, 2004) as well as the approach of organization with strength which needed teamwork at the top. So, the administrators had to focus on team working as necessary thing in Organizational Transformations (Kotter, 1996). In addition, the approach in the successful organization, needed to be based on systematic thinking including information technology in the work practice, creative and communicative vision as well as no unnecessary interdependence.

For the systematic trying out and evaluation found that the supervision, following up and evaluation systems were good which was recommended to be used continuously. The school administrators were aware of and view the importance of systematic work development leading to strength of organization and collaborated in trying out and reflecting the systems. It was supported by the approach of systematic development in organization with clear job description which played an important role in causing the systematic development. There were 3

teams: the leading team, the team played its role in directing and determining direction in development, consisted of the assistant director in the Office of Educational Service Area, the quality development team with their role in strategic cooperation and implementation for good system including the head in each working group and the practicing team played their role in developing the sub-systems, included every staff in the Office of Educational Service Area as well as approach in planning the good system including the determination of steps as standard process in each step and recording different steps recently which could be investigated by the others. When many systems were combined, there was total quality of the Office of Educational Service Area (The Institute of Research and Learning Development, 2004). Those developed systems affected the strength in the Office of Educational Service Area according to the approach that there were 3 aspect in the changes of organization including: the structural, the systematic and the cultural aspects which led to the strength. There were following characteristics: structure was not be bureaucratic system, a little number of rule and regulations as well as officers and few levels. For organizational management was performed by expecting that the management division would lead, the officers in lower level would manage.

The characteristic was determined by policy and process causing the least internal interaction which was necessary for customer service only, systems was depended on information technology system in a large number of practice. Specifically, to provide the customer information would spread information in work practice extensively whereas the administration and management training as well as supportive system for many officers and culture, the outside power had to be emphasized on including the empowerment, quick decision making, openness and sincerity and endurable for risk (Kotter, 1996). However, it found that the very important thing affecting the development of this study, including the problem in unclear structure of the office since there were changes in the Office of Mahasarakham Educational Service Area 2.

As a result, it was very much affected since many staffs had to move to other areas which was an obstacle for using those systems. Furthermore, at the beginning of system usage found that the related staffs were not enthusiastic and gave little cooperation in work practice according to the systems. The implementation technique in some steps of systems was not as specified by systems. Moreover, duration of practice in each step of some systems were not clearly determined. Consequently, it could not be able to specify the duration of

implementation according to overall system. It was supported by research study of Institute of Research and Learning Development for developing the overall quality of education in Thailand based on systematic approach found that the important successful factors were the leadership sharing with the other organizations as working together of team for analyzing and developing new work systems.

Besides, the research study of Jubjitt (2007) in "Development of Training Curriculum and Strength Development" in the Office of Educational Service Area through the internet found that the organization would have strength when it was based on 3 aspects of changes including: the structural, the systematic and the cultural aspects as major things.

### **CONCLUSION**

The research findings found that the Office of Educational Service Area were able to design its own working system for total of 3 major systems, 7 sub-systems with information technology as a mediator of different systems. The systems of supervision following up investigation and evaluation were good systems including the recommendations for using other systems continuously as well as reflecting the system work development would lead to sustainable strength of the Office of Educational Service Area.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recommendations for application:

- The Office of Educational Service Area should apply the system for usage and develop and modify the phases based on the staffs' consensus
- The leaders had to see the importance of those systems so that they could successfully use the systems
- The handbook of every system should be developed. It should be disseminated and create the common awareness of every one involving and by using various techniques
- The developed system was a mechanism for developing the staff development organization. The organization could apply it in staff development with evaluation in each cycle of work practice

Recommendations for conducting the research study:

- Benchmarking research studies should be conducted between organizations regarding to the strength developed by different system techniques
- The research studies searching for the cause of success using to facilitate the organizational strength
- The research and development for developing the strength of other educational work units such as the Office of Secondary School, the Office of Local Administrative Organization or school etc.

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