



The 14th National and International Conference
"Global Goals, Local Actions: Looking Back and Moving Forward 2021"
18 August, 2021

A Study for Developing a Training Package on Distance Supervision for Supervisors, Office of Non-Formal and Informal Education Promotion

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Abstract

The aim of this research was to study for developing a training package on distance supervision for supervisors under the Office of Non Formal and Informal Education Promotion, Specifically, objectives of the research were to study 1) current modes for distance supervision as employed in Thailand and other countries, 2) obstacles found in present supervision practices, and 3) methods for developing a suitable training package for distance supervision. This survey research was conducted making use of pertinent literature and collecting data from concerned parties. The first phase of the research involved studying and analyzing theories and research reports associated with local distance supervision and abroad. The second phase of the research was to study problems found in supervision activities and to investigate ways to develop a training package for distance supervision. The sampling population comprised 176 individuals who were in charge of supervision work in various capacities namely supervisors, directors or deputy directors, and related personnel. Multi-stage sampling technique was utilized for sampling purpose. Instruments used in the study were interview questions and questionnaires. Frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation figures were derived from data analysis. Results of the study were as follows: 1) There were 10 agencies responsible for distance supervision in Thailand. Synchronous and asynchronous media such as Line, Facebook, email, and web sites were used. Five agencies in other countries were found to employ distance supervision using synchronous and asynchronous media such as BlackBoard, Illuminate Live, WebCT and



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Adobe Connect. 2) Current obstacles found in distance supervision were mainly inadequate number of supervisors to handle the supervision work and that supervision activities were not continuously carried out. 3) In regard to methods for developing a training package for distance supervision, it was concluded that a suitable package should consist of data concerning a) objectives, b) curriculum content, c) media that can present texts, visuals, animation or video and audio, d) training activities, e) an appropriate internet-based interaction system to be used by those who served as supervisors and the target group receiving the supervision, and f) assessment.

Keywords: training package, distance supervision

Introduction

Concept concerning Thailand's National Education Plan indicates that education management is to hold to principles of education for all, inclusive education, sufficiency economy, all for education, and sustainable development goals: SDGs 2030. Furthermore, the National Strategy (2018-2037) has been adopted as framework for developing National Education Plan. The country vision as stipulated in the National Strategy is "for all Thais to receive quality education and life-long learning. Vision in the plan states that all Thai citizens are to receive quality education and life-long learning, have improved quality of life and sustainability in accordance with the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy and change in the 21st century (Office of the Education Council, 2017)

The Office of Non Formal and Informal Education Promotion has been set up as the central agency for promoting, supporting and coordinating efforts for Non formal and informal education activities. The agency is to yield support and develop quality academic work, promote opportunities for learners to think and decide for themselves, help people to be responsible for their jobs, and develop necessary learning activities so that such efforts are in accordance with people's needs and their being (Chanoknart Boonwatthanakul, 2016, p. 2). As such, it is necessary for teachers to have an important role and responsibility to manage these educational activities. They must be trained, improved and develop themselves so that they up to current professional standard. Teacher supervision is regarded as a process that gives assistance, support, and a means for developing these teachers. However, analysis of data made available by the Office of Non Formal and Informal Education Promotion showed that there was an inadequate number of supervisors to handle



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the given task. The study found that only one supervisor was available in each of the 22 provinces. In many provinces, only one supervisor was available to oversee a relatively high number of educational institutions (Supervisory Unit, 2019). This particular problem was seen as a major obstacle for these supervisors to effectively and continuously conduct their duty. In certain cases, supervisors had to travel over a long distance from place to place to do their work due to the fact that their given areas were geographically large. A large number of schools were located in wilderness areas while many were situated in marginal regions and risky southern border provinces. In addition, supervisors are also given other duties which made it extra burden and difficult for them to fulfill their supervisory role in a most effective manner. The quality of their work was thus at times compromised. As indicated in a report given by the Supervisory Unit, Department of Non-Formal Education, a relatively large number of teachers lacked necessary skills to design interesting learning activities and assess learning outcome that would be in accordance with specified teaching objectives (Office of Non Formal and Informal Education Promotion, 2016). As such, it was important for the supervisors to find new means to assist teachers to improve their instruction so that expected learning outcome could be sufficiently achieved. It is, therefore, believed that certain aspects of new technology could be implemented to increase supervisory effectiveness and lessen these difficulties as much as possible (Watchara Laowreandee, 2007, p. 8).

Distance supervision is recognized an appropriate and suitable means to alleviate the aforementioned problems. Although supervision activities in this framework lack direct interaction between supervisors and teachers, but various types of media can be utilized for delivering necessary content (Sanan Meesattham, 1993, p. 531; Bureau of Academic Affairs and Education Standards, 1996, p. 1). Certain types of media can be used for communication and delivering content. These media may be in the form of newsletters, distance supervision documents, operational handbooks, mixed media, and mass media or internet media (Kidanant Malithong, 2000, p. 8, 16; Sumon Amornwiwat, 2004, p. 13). Application of computer technology such as use of email for sending guidance and other forms of supervision is also an option. Through this computer application, real time communication as part of distance supervision is also possible. Such applications offer flexibility and increase effectiveness in dealing with a large number of teachers in faraway places (Watson, 2003).

Distance supervision is seen as a possible method that can be used in a setting where the supervisor and those receiving the supervision are in separate locations and these



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parties cannot be arranged to continuously meet in person. Through this mode of communication, Interaction is possible for all parties involved as if all were in the same place. A computer system and online social network needs to be selected to facilitate the supervision in this kind of setting. The researcher, therefore, saw an opportunity to develop a method for distance supervision for supervisors affiliated with the Office of Non Formal and Informal Education Promotion.

Research Objectives

1. To study modes of distance supervision as conducted domestically and abroad;
2. To study current state of problems associated with supervision work as carried out by the Office of Non Formal and Informal Education Promotion; and
3. To study methods for developing a training package for distance supervision for supervisors working for the Office of Non Formal and Informal Education Promotion.

Scope of the Research

1. Scope of the population:
The population involved in the distance supervision study consisted of supervisors, directors or deputy directors and personnel who worked for the Office of Non Formal and Informal Education Promotion in all provinces;
2. Scope of timeframe: between 2019-2021;
3. Scope of research area: Office of Non Formal and Informal Education Promotion in all provinces.

Research Methodology

The study is conducted as documentary and survey research. The project was carried out in two phases:

Phase I To study modes of distance supervision domestically and abroad

Related literature, documents, methods, theories and research reports in connection with distance supervision domestically and abroad were studied. Results from this initial phase of the study were to be applied and synthesized for developing a training package for distance supervision for supervisors working in the Office of Non Formal and Informal Education Promotion.



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- 1) Research instrument: form for analyzing documents
- 2) Data collection: data related to distance supervision carried out domestically and abroad was collected.
- 3) Data analysis: data was analyzed and presented in descriptive format.

Phase II To study state of problems in relation to current supervision work and suitable methods for developing a training package for distance supervision for supervisor, Office of Non Formal and Informal Education Promotion.

1) Population and sampling population

- a) The population consisted of 176 subjects who served as supervisors, directors or deputy directors, Office of Non Formal and Informal Education Promotion in all provinces;
- b) The sampling population was purposely selected and used as part of the interview process comprised five supervisors, Office of Non Formal and Informal Education Promotion from five regions
- c) The sampling population consisted of 120 individuals who were selected using multi-stage sampling technique. These samples were supervisors, directors or deputy directors, and personnel assigned to take part in supervision work, Office of Non Formal and Informal Education Promotion and involved in answering the questionnaire questions.

2) Research Instruments

- a) Structured questionnaires dealing with state of current problems and possible methods for developing a training package for distance supervision;
- b) Online five-level rating scale questionnaires dealing with state of current problems and possible methods for developing a training package for distance supervision;

3) Data collection: The researcher asked for support from Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University to send a letter to each Provincial Office of Non Formal Education to collaborate in the data collection process. Telephone calls were also made to agencies involved for further assistance so that appropriate data collection could be undertaken.

4) Data analysis: The data from the interview process and collected using the questionnaires mechanism was analyzed and presented in frequency, percentage and standard deviation figures.

Research Results

1. Results from the study concerning use of distance supervision as conducted in Thailand and abroad were as follows:



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Thailand There were a number of agencies involved in using distance supervision namely:

1) Office of Education Service, Area 1, Inspection Area 11, Kalasin. Radio broadcast was utilized for distance supervision purpose. The system enabled listeners to make telephone calls, express their opinions and inquire about various issues. Here, use of SMS was also a part of the system.

2) Office of Elementary Education Service, Lampang. Various modes of communication were employed here including use of printed matters, radio broadcast, television broadcast so that the target group could receive intended messages.

3) Office of Education Service, Area 1, Mahasarakham. Use of internet and telephone for sending information was mainly used for distance supervision. CD's were also distributed in this setting. Internet was found to have been used most often.

4) Office of Elementary Education Service, Area 2, Chiangrai. Media with digital platforms such as web sites and e=book which enabled presentation of texts, animation, stills and audio were found to have been utilized in this environment.

5) Suan Dusit University. Online two-way communication was employed for distance supervision purpose. Use of Skype for Business and smart phones was administered for communication purpose between the instructor and students who were engaged in professional experience activities at a Child Development Center.

6) Office of Elementary Education Service, Area 2, Nakho Ratchasima. Various computer application programs on 4G Suite platform such as Google Form, Google Sheet, Google Drive, and Google Site were found to have been used for distance supervision purpose.

7) Office of Elementary Education Service, Area 4, Buriram. Here, the supervisors developed a program to deliver information and knowledge to the target group via Google website.

8) Office of Education Service, Chumphon. Various types of information and knowledge with text, pictures, and animation were created delivered to the intended audience. Two-way communication was established so that questions could be answered through website and Line channel.

9) Office of Elementary Education Service, Area 1, Nakhon Pathom. A special set up was developed for distance supervision purpose. Here information and knowledge-based content was created and sent to the target group. Group Line, open chat Line and Facebook



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home page were set up so that administrators and teachers could make use of this technology for communication purpose.

10) Office of Secondary Education Service, Area 39, Facebook was used as a channel for communication so that distance supervision could be conducted. Various types of information, knowledge were delivered along with guidance and answers for specific questions.

Other Countries The investigation found that these agencies were involved in distance supervision:

1) Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy. Various modes of real time computer-based communication were employed by this organization. These modes included audio and video real time chat technology. Immediate feedbacks were made available for users. In addition, email and telephone were used as other means for communication.

2) The Monash University. Webcam and microphone arrangement was set up so that distance supervision could be made possible. Such a set up enabled the supervisor and students to exchange information and interact in a meaningful way.

3) American Counseling Association. For distance supervision purpose, a special set up called PIDIB Model was developed and used via programs such as BlackBoard, Illuminate Live, WebCT, GoToMeeting, and Adobe Connect.

4) Old Dominion University. At this institution, Adobe Connect, Webex, BlackBoard, Sugarsynch, Dropbox, SkyDrive, and iCloud programs were utilized for distance supervision purpose.

5) Swineburne University of Technology. Programs such as email, Illuminate, Skype, MSN Messenger were used for distance supervision purpose which made it possible for the supervisor and students to exchange information and hold meetings.

2. Results from the study concerning supervision problems encountered by the Office of Non Formal and Informal Education Promotion. Results from the two phases as conducted in the study were as follows:

2.1 Analysis of data collected through use of questionnaires

Essentially, there were problems in four areas: 1) planning based on needs of those who were expected to receive supervision; the process involved analysis of given



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policy which involved emphasis of function to be carried out by Department of Non-Formal Education, 2) supervisor preparation which required acquisition of appropriate content and knowledge needed for the duty, 3) supervision work requiring issues concerning policy and urgent matters; delivery of lectures or use of workshop was to be conducted, and 4) assessment of supervision; assessment was expected to be carried out after each supervision outing.

In summary, these problems concerning supervision work were currently faced: 1) inability to conduct the supervision work due to other urgent matters to be taken care of, 2) there were too many supervision issues to be dealt with inadequate number of supervisors, 3) coordination problems especially in mountainous areas, 4) lack of sufficient number of supervisors; such a constraint made it necessary to conduct the supervision work in a small group setting instead of individual face-to-face environment, 5) inappropriate ratio of numbers of schools and supervisors for the supervision to be carried out; such issue forced the supervisor to deal with too many topics at any given location, and 6) inability to make appropriate supervision report showing overall picture of the situation due to the fact that the supervision work could not be carried out for all schools.

2.2 Analysis of questionnaire data

This part of the research was intended to gain data concerning problems currently faced by supervisors. The picture of various problems of the overall situation was deemed to be at 'high' level. Tools used for supervision were mostly in the form of document and video files. Activities implemented during the supervision were in various forms including meetings and observations. Documents were also presented by teachers during these supervision sessions. Problems seen were inadequate number of supervisors resulting in having to assign each supervisor to oversee too many schools. The dilemma thus caused discontinuity associated with the supervision work. Due to too much work and extra burden given to supervisors, supervision calendar was also often changed.

3. Results gained from study of possible methods for developing a training package for distance supervision

3.1 Analysis of interview data to gain insight into a method for developing a training package for distance supervision

Summary of data gained from interviewing the sampling population indicated that 1) supervisors had basic understanding of supervision work but lacked in-depth or clear knowledge of the task, 2) areas needed for further supervision understanding included ways



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to properly conduct distance supervision, media needed for supervision, efficient communication between the supervisor and teachers, and assessment of distance supervision, 3) distance supervision plan ought to be basically the same as regular supervision; the difference could be provision of proper channels for interaction as opposed to face-to-face encounters, 4) if distance supervision were to be implemented, electronic media was seen as a desirable technology so that the information sent by the supervisor could easily and conveniently reach the teachers, and 5) steps for supervision should be basically the same regardless of whether it was the traditional or distance supervision; channels for communication could be video and audio conferencing, use of email, Line and Facebook technology; such interactive sessions could be online or offline as deemed appropriate, 6) internet was seen as a most desirable mechanism for interaction between the supervisor and teachers which could be in large numbers; such practice was believed to be economical and that the communication could be administered continuously, 7) assessment of distance supervision should be carried out in online mode; tests and questionnaires, interviews, reports and so on could be sent or conducted using this modern technology.

3.2 Analysis of questionnaires data to gain insight into a method for developing a training package for distance supervision

The area receiving the highest levels of importance was persons involved must have clear understanding of distance supervision practice including objectives, steps to be carried out, distance supervision assessment; all these issues ought to be done using internet technology. Electronic media that could show texts, audio, stills, and video should be used and that real-time interaction technology such as Line and Facebook should be a part of the communication system. However, email and web board could be used in situations where both parties might not be available at the same time. Guidance could also be given using programs such as Line, Facebook, email and blog.

Discussion

1. Distance supervision in Thailand and other countries

Results from the study revealed that distance supervision in Thailand was conducted mainly for delivering information, knowledge, guidance and recommendations to the target group, to as many people and cover the assigned area as much as possible. Selected types of media capable of sending texts, visuals, video and audio were



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implemented in the communication process. Online computer programs such as Line, Facebook, web sites, Google application and email were used due to the fact that it was convenient and quick to send or exchange information for both the supervisor and teachers regardless differences in time and locations.

Distance supervision found in other countries was for giving guidance and recommendations to the target group using the internet as a channel for communication. Interaction in synchronous and asynchronous modes was found to have been administered for communication purpose. A number of computer programs such as BlackBoard, WebCT, email, Adobe Connect were found to be popular with these users. Such finding was in line with Watson (2003)'s study in cyber supervision which indicated that distance supervision in cyber mode was desirable as such procedure provided ease of management and setting up timetable for supervision visits and continuity for supervision using both synchronous and asynchronous methods for this purpose.

2. Study concerning state of problems in relation to supervision work as faced by the Office of Non Formal and Informal Education Promotion

For each fiscal year, supervisors working in various parts of the country, with policy and main objectives as announced by the Office of Non Formal and Informal Education Promotion, had to make supervision plans so that related action could be carried out. Supervisors had to prepare needed information mostly obtained from the Office so that it could be used in their supervision activities as indicated in their plan. Lectures and workshops were provided to the target group in a face-to-face setting. Representatives from schools were at times assigned to attended these meetings because it was not possible to train such a large number of people at the same time. Guidance and other forms of assistance given to individual teachers were often delivered through telephone mode. Supervisors were not able to give needed supervision with continuity because they were often tasked with other added duties. A study concerning development of distance supervision process for improving quality of educational institutions located in Educational Service, Area 1, Roi Et, conducted by Suwattanapong Romsri (2011) showed that there was an inappropriate ratio of numbers of supervisors and schools in the supervision assignment. Furthermore, the given supervision was based on instruction or policy given by the central agency in Bangkok instead of actual teachers' needs.



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3. Study of methods for developing a training package for distance supervision for supervisors, Office of Non Formal and Informal Promotion

A suitable training package ought to make use of knowledge in regard to definition of distance supervision, objectives for distance supervision, steps and procedure for distance supervision, and pertinent assessment. Interaction between the supervisor and the target group should be carried out using real-time communication mechanisms such as Line, Facebook and asynchronous form of content delivery such as email and web board. Media to be used for distance supervision should be capable of distributing texts, audio, visuals and animation. Assessment of distance supervision activities pertaining to tests, use of questionnaires, and interviews should be carried out using internet technology. Suwattanapong Romsri (2011) in his research study revealed that, in regard to media for distance supervision, media capable of delivering two-way communication should be adopted and seen as an important element in the system. A web site should be created so that body of knowledge could be stored and made available for distance supervision purpose.

Recommendations

1. Application of research results

1.1 Method for developing a training package for distance supervision for supervisors, Office of Non Formal and Informal Education Promotion as developed in this research study can be applied by the Office of Non Formal and Informal Education Promotion and supervisors working in other educational agencies for developing teachers or other personnel so that the staff involved would be knowledgeable about distance supervision.

1.2 Supervisor may assist teachers to conduct their knowledge management by using findings in this study for developing a training package for teaching improvement. Teachers could, therefore, further develop themselves without time and location constraints.

2. Recommendations for further study

2.1 Additional study concerning distance supervision should be taken. Use of other forms of media should be explored in addition to those mentioned in this study.



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2.2 Study on application of the developed distance supervision training package for internal use in any given institution could be administered. Selected teachers could serve as supervisors.

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