



17th International Conference
December 5-7, 2024 in Osaka, Japan

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATION BY EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATORS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Chanakan Kumnun

Student of Master in Educational Administration, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

E-mail: s66561802052@ssru.ac.th

Thada Siththada

Graduate school, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

E-mail: thada.si@ssru.ac.th

Abstract

This article presents the development of academic administration in educational institutions in the 21st century. It focuses on the skills of educational administrators and academic management, studying the skills of educational administrators and academic management within institutions to develop academic administration. For effective development in this area, educational administrators need to possess the skills, knowledge, and understanding of management, which contributes to enhancing academic administration in schools. This academic article compiles relevant research and is divided into three sections: the definition of educational administration, the definition of managerial skills, and the definition of academic management.

Keywords: school administrators' skills, academic management.

Introduction

Education is fundamental to human development, societal growth, and nation-building. It is a critical mechanism in cultivating a harmonious, quality workforce that can coexist within society, particularly in the rapidly evolving 21st century. Education is essential in strengthening a nation's competitive advantage globally, especially within dynamic economic and social systems. As a result, countries worldwide emphasize developing their educational systems, aiming to enhance human resources capable of responding to the transformations in national, regional, and global economies while maintaining their unique cultural identities.

Thailand's approach to education is unique, as it prioritizes the development of its citizens' potential and competencies to meet labor market demands and contribute to national development. This effort is particularly significant given the external pressures from globalization and the internal challenges arising from national crises. The ultimate goal is to improve the quality of life for Thai citizens, foster a society rooted in moral and ethical values, and enable the country to transcend the middle-income trap, advancing toward becoming a developed nation capable of adapting to the ongoing and future global changes.

As the world rapidly transitions into the 21st century, the education system, which serves as the primary mechanism for preparing the workforce, must adapt to the significant changes taking place. To equip students with the necessary skills for the 21st century, school administrators must possess strong competencies that not only enhance the learning environment but also support teachers' instructional capacities. School principals play a pivotal role in the development of education, teachers, and students, akin to generals leading their forces toward success. A competent leader can guide their institution toward achieving educational goals and ensuring overall success. According to Supachoke Piyasun (2022), academic management is central to educational administration, as it underpins the processes that ensure quality and standardization in education. Academic management involves various critical components, including curriculum development, teaching methodologies, intellectual

development, and fostering students' abilities to acquire knowledge, stay updated with global trends, and adapt to societal demands effectively. These processes ensure that educational goals are achieved with optimal efficiency. The significant role of school administrators as leaders in driving the advancement of Thai education is highlighted by Rungrachadaporn Wehachat (2023). It is clear that both administrative and academic management skills are crucial in supporting the development of education in Thailand, enabling it to respond to the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. These skills are essential in ensuring that the Thai education system remains competitive and relevant in a rapidly changing global context.

Definition of School Administration

School administration has been defined in various ways by different scholars.

Ratana Kanjanaphan and Sompis Hoengam (2006) provide a comprehensive view of school administration, describing it as a multifaceted process that involves managing, controlling, and organizing a wide range of activities integral to the educational environment. This includes overseeing the teaching and learning processes, managing the school's physical environment and facilities, handling communication and budgeting, managing public relations, and fostering relationships with the community. Their definition underscores the diverse and complex nature of the roles and responsibilities of school administrators.

This definition emphasizes that school administration involves the internal management of educational processes and the external operations that ensure the institution's effectiveness in achieving its educational goals and maintaining productive community relations.

Supak Yompuk and Wirot Jedsadalak (2015) define school administration as the comprehensive process of managing educational institutions. They emphasize that school administrators actively execute school operations and activities, collaborating with stakeholders to ensure that the institution's goals and objectives are effectively met. This definition highlights the importance of participatory management, where the involvement of various parties is essential to the successful administration and achievement of the educational institution's mission.

Good (1973) defines school administration as the process of diagnosing, directing, controlling, and managing the various operations of an educational institution.

This encompasses both the administrative aspects related to business management and the comprehensive oversight of all personnel within the institution. Additionally, school administration extends to activities that directly impact students, including teaching, counseling, and the organization of extracurricular programs. This definition underscores the complexity and diversity of school administration, which involves both operational and educational responsibilities aimed at supporting student development and institutional success.

According to Campbell (1979), educational administration was defined as the strategic planning of educational institutions to achieve genuine success per their established objectives and goals. In essence, educational administration involves the collaboration of stakeholders to foster students' development, enhancing their growth, knowledge, and competencies while cultivating their moral integrity to become valuable members of society. This is accomplished through the formulation of educational strategies, optimal utilization of resources, and the implementation of management processes that are coherent and appropriate for achieving the stated objectives and goals effectively.

In summary, educational administration encompasses planning, managing, and overseeing various activities within a school, with the primary objective of fostering students' academic and behavioral development to achieve the institution's goals effectively. This involves the comprehensive management of the school environment, resource allocation,

facilities, financial operations, public relations, and communication with the community. School administrators and relevant personnel must collaborate to design and implement instructional programs and activities that contribute to students' holistic development.

Educational administration extends beyond internal management to encompass the strategic implementation of measures aligned with the school's objectives. It aims to achieve success in academic outcomes and staff development. It also involves facilitating activities that promote student growth in academic learning, guidance, and extracurricular programs.

Definition of Administrative Skills

School administrators, especially in the context of 21st-century educational management, play a critical role in developing skills essential for organizational success. According to Dr. Avis Glaze (as cited in Witthaya Chansila, 2018), the following vital skills have been proposed:

1. Critical and Creative Thinking Skills
2. Communication Skills
3. Problem-Solving Skills
4. Technological and Digital Literacy Skills
5. Organizational Management Skills
6. Teamwork Skills
7. Personal Management Skills
8. Learning Innovation Skills
9. Setting Instructional Direction Skills
10. Adjustment Skills
11. Sensitivity Skills
12. Results Orientation Skills
13. Interpersonal Skills
14. Ethical-Moral Skills

These skills, when collectively possessed and utilized by administrators, enable them to effectively lead and manage educational institutions. This collective effort fosters both academic success and organizational growth, promoting a sense of unity and shared responsibility among the team.

Phimpaka Thammasit (2011) defined administrative skills as an individual's ability to perform tasks and responsibilities, both their own and those delegated by superiors. These skills encompass four key areas:

1. Technical Skills refer to the knowledge and abilities of administrators in applying specific processes, methods, and techniques essential for efficient management. They include:

1.1 Information Technology Skills: The ability to effectively use technology in administration to maximize benefits and teach others how to utilize tools, computers, and various media efficiently. This skill helps save time, reduce personnel's workload, and enhance operations' overall efficiency. Administrators must, therefore, continuously study and develop their technological competencies to enhance the quality of education through integrating technology in educational management, supervision, and teaching processes. Technologies include computers, telephones, fax machines, communication radios, and teaching aids.

1.2 Research Skills: The capability to conduct research and apply findings for improvement. Administrators must be able to gather, analyze, and use information to adapt to society's continuous changes.

1.3 Resource Management Skills: The ability to utilize limited resources efficiently, employing creativity and innovation to benefit management and teaching processes. The

ultimate goal of general management is to achieve organizational objectives effectively through the administration of four fundamental factors: people, money, materials, and management.

1.4 Management Skills: The capability of administrators to develop themselves and others for professional growth and career advancement, aiming to maximize their knowledge and abilities to produce evident results within and outside the organization.

2. Human Skills refer to the knowledge and ability of administrators to exercise discretion when working with others, demonstrating flexibility, and establishing positive relationships to foster mutual understanding. They include:

2.1 Group Process Skills: The ability to combine diverse experiences of various individuals in a voluntary and mutually satisfying manner to find solutions to problems. A successful group process is indicated by member behaviors such as acceptance of suggestions, discernment, and continuous review. Active participation in decision-making fosters a sense of shared ownership and responsibility.

2.2 Interpersonal Skills: The ability of administrators to build positive relationships with colleagues to motivate them towards achieving organizational goals. Effective administrators establish trust and credibility, which inspire and support goal accomplishment.

2.3 Motivational Skills: The ability to create satisfaction in the workplace. When administrators motivate employees, they promote behaviors aligned with organizational expectations and enhance job satisfaction.

3. Conceptual Skills refer to the administrators' understanding of the interrelationships between different parts of the organization. They recognize how changes in one area affect others, such as individuals, communication, politics, society, and the national economy. This understanding allows administrators to work towards the organization's progress and well-being. They include:

3.1 Visionary Skills: The ability to foresee the future, utilizing accumulated knowledge and experience to shape a unique vision. This skill can be developed by remaining open-minded, seeking new knowledge, analyzing information, and accurately distinguishing and summarizing key points.

3.2 Decision-Making Skills: The ability to exercise judgment in selecting the best course of action based on available information and resources while aligning with organizational goals and considering the relationships among different factors.

4. Leadership Skills refer to the administrators' ability to exercise leadership to gain acceptance and trust. As organizational leaders, administrators must foster cooperation among members, as effective leadership is crucial for organizational efficiency. They include:

4.1 Conflict Management Skills: The knowledge and ability to promote unity within the organization and reduce conflicts at the organizational, group, and individual levels. Administrators must lead all parties toward collaborative efforts for the organization's success.

4.2 Teamwork Skills: The knowledge and ability to lead a team, encouraging group collaboration and involvement in decision-making, policy formulation, planning, and execution. Administrators must also support members' taking turns leading based on situational needs to enhance work efficiency.

Phimonphan Phetsombat (2018) defined the skills of school administrators as the knowledge and abilities demonstrated by school administrators in five key areas: conceptual skills, human relations skills, technical skills, instructional skills, and cognitive understanding skills. These skills are defined as follows:

1. Conceptual Skills refer to the administrators' ability to comprehend the structural system of personnel, positional hierarchies, educational policies, and administrative systems within the institution. These skills are crucial for effectively achieving the objectives of educational administration.

2. Human Relations Skills, the catalyst for a harmonious school environment, refer to the knowledge and capabilities of school administrators in achieving outcomes through group processes that foster cooperation within the school. These skills, including coordinating and providing guidance to colleagues, are the bedrock of a collaborative school culture.

3. Technical Skills, the engine that drives efficient school operations, refer to the administrators' knowledge and abilities related to methodologies, operational processes, and techniques used in organizing activities, as well as their proficiency in utilizing various tools. These skills are the key to streamlined and effective school management.

4. Instructional Skills refer to the knowledge and abilities of school administrators in using educational media, speaking and explaining concepts to enhance learners' understanding, creating a positive working environment, and building rapport with those around them. Administrators should also be able to demonstrate best practices to teachers, such as gaining trust and acceptance.

5. Cognitive Understanding Skills refer to the knowledge and intellect of school administrators in developing practices at different levels to achieve organizational effectiveness.

The Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) defines administrative skills as the ability to organize learning activities based on the principle of learning from familiar surroundings that students know and recognize. This involves utilizing physical and biological resources and community practices to create situations that stimulate questioning, curiosity, and hypothesis formation, employing observational skills based on scientific methods.

Katz (1955) identified three types of skills, known as the "three-skill approach," which every administrator must possess:

1. Technical Skills are not just about understanding and proficiency in specific activities but also about their practical application. They involve in-depth knowledge of a particular field, analytical abilities, and the capacity to use tools and techniques within that field.

2. Human Skills are crucial for an administrator's role as a team leader. They refer to the ability to work effectively with others and build cooperation within the team. This skill involves understanding and accepting the attitudes, feelings, and perspectives of others and communicating what needs to be understood in the context of the other person.

3. Conceptual Skills refer to the ability to see the organization as a whole, including understanding the relationships between different functions and recognizing the impact of changes in each part. These skills enable the administrator to take actions that promote the organization's overall success.

This approach suggests that effective administration depends on the development of these three skills. This eliminates the need to identify specific traits and may provide a helpful way of understanding the administrative process. This concept emerged from observing executives in conjunction with field research in administration.

The following sections aim to define and demonstrate these three skills, highlighting that their relative importance may vary depending on the level of administrative responsibility. They also address the implications of these differences on the selection, training, and promotion of administrators and propose ways to develop these skills effectively.

Definition of Academic Administration

Academic administration is at the core of school management and forms an essential aspect of educational administration that requires the awareness and prioritization of school administrators. It encompasses all activities within the school, especially those aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning, which is the primary objective of educational

institutions. The effectiveness and ability of administrators to support and enhance academic functions are critical indicators of their success in achieving curricular goals.

According to the Ministry of Education (2009), the National Education Act (Amendment No. 2) of 2002 and (Amendment No. 3) of 1999 mandates the decentralization of administrative and educational management authority, including academic affairs, budget management, personnel administration, and general management, to educational service area committees and offices, as well as directly to schools within the educational service area. In line with this, the Ministry of Education issued a ministerial regulation on the criteria and methods for decentralization of administrative and educational management in 2007, specifying 17 areas of academic administration as follows:

1. Development or implementation of local curriculum content and providing feedback on its development.
2. Academic planning.
3. Management of teaching and learning within the school.
4. Development of the school's curriculum.
5. Enhancement of the learning process.
6. Assessment, evaluation, and credit transfer of learning outcomes.
7. Research is needed to improve educational quality within the school.
8. Development and promotion of learning resources.
9. Educational supervision.
10. Student guidance and counseling.
11. Development of internal quality assurance systems and educational standards.
12. Promotion of community strength in academic matters.
13. Coordinate academic collaboration with other educational institutions and organizations.
14. Promotion and support of academic activities for individuals, families, organizations, agencies, businesses, and other educational institutions.
15. Formulation of regulations and guidelines related to the school's academic administration.
16. Selection of textbooks and educational materials for use within the school.
17. Development and utilization of educational technology and media.

Sathiraphon Chaowchai (2024) defined academic administration in schools as the processes related to enhancing the quality of student learning through the active involvement of school administrators, teachers, parents, and stakeholders, aiming to maximize student potential.

Sukanya Chamchoi (2023) stated that academic administration refers to the management of education to achieve desired learning outcomes for students. This encompasses curriculum design, instructional management, and evaluation. School administrators must possess academic administration knowledge, understanding, and skills to serve as academic leaders. They are responsible for guiding teachers and stakeholders in planning educational management, which includes curriculum development and implementing educational plans into instructional practices. Evaluation is also essential to reflect and improve the educational processes in alignment with the curriculum through collaborative efforts with teachers and stakeholders.

Chaiya Phawabut (2022) defined academic administration as executing all factors that align the school's core mission with the educational philosophy, principles, and concepts related to comprehensive student development. The goal is to foster students' reaching their full potential and becoming well-rounded individuals who are virtuous, competent, and capable of living happily within society.

Priyaporn Tangkunanun (2020) described school academic administration as a collaborative effort involving individuals within public or private organizations with the authority to provide education. It involves activities or operations to educate or train individuals of all age groups, with clear objectives, operational systems, techniques, and administrative factors. The ultimate aim is to develop students' knowledge, skills, and desirable characteristics, fulfilling the institution's vision and mission.

In summary, academic administration is at the heart of school management, focusing on organizing and enhancing the teaching and learning processes to develop students' potential fully. It encompasses the management of learning activities, curriculum development, assessment and evaluation, research for educational quality improvement, promotion of learning resources and technology, and the development of internal quality assurance systems within the institution.

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