

FOSTERING SYNERGISTIC RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN COMMUNITY AND PRIVATE SCHOOL IN THAILAND

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Abstract

This academic article presents information on establishing private school-community relations and presents concepts related to the management of private schools, the significance and value of the relationship between schools and the community, the strategies and tools employed to foster this relationship, and the role of private schools in fostering relationships with the community. Because schools are organizations that play an important role in organizing the teaching and learning process for students, having the participation and support of the community to develop human resources and drive society to progress in the further, the management of the relationship between schools and the community is work that must be done together and must be done according to the correct steps. In school management, administrators should give importance to community relations work. Schools should have more joint activities by providing services to the community in various aspects, with students being the medium of two-way public relations, meaning both the school and the community are both givers and receivers, providing support and assistance to the fullest. The purpose of building relationships between schools and the community, the important part, is creating benefits for both parties, both the school and the community, where all parties must have understood each other and can work together smoothly, which will result in good outcomes and benefits for all parties. Therefore, private schools, of which there are many in Thailand, play an important role in educational development. Private school administrators can use management principles to develop and build relationships with the community to demonstrate the potential of private educational institutions that all have the goal of developing people and society to progress further.

Keywords: Community, Private School, Institution in Thailand

Introduction

Private schools are educational institutions operated by private legal entities, focusing on providing education to specific groups using their own resources and management for educational services. Currently, private schools are overseen by the Office of the Private Education Commission (OPEC), a unit under the Ministry of Education's Office of the Permanent Secretary. The primary legal framework governing private schools is the Private School Act, B.E. 2550 (2007), as amended by the Second Amendment Act, B.E. 2554 (2011) (Chanruthai Panichsupaphon, 2014).

Educational institutions serve as central hubs that play a role in social refinement and community educational development, with a mutually supportive relationship between institutions and the community. Both the educational institutions and the community share joint responsibility for youth educational development. Additionally, educational institutions are essential social investment hubs, contributing to community development and preparing youth for societal integration (Prasit Phaiklin et al., 2014). This aligns with the findings of Tawan

Suarkasair (2013), which stated that private educational institutions play a crucial role in alleviating the government's burden, especially where public resources are limited. As a result, private education is an important system in Thailand's educational framework, contributing to developing positive qualities in Thai youth, promoting competition, and improving national education standards. It also plays a role in fostering both economic and social growth, while enhancing the quality of youth to become key contributors to national development (Office of the Private Education Commission, 2023).

At the same time, the number of private schools continues to increase, as they gain acceptance from both the government and parents. Private education plays a crucial role in providing educational opportunities to students, granting access to high-quality education standards, and offering tailored educational experiences to meet learners' specific needs. Furthermore, private schools have the flexibility in management and can mobilize resources from parents and students, allowing them to provide education of quality comparable to or even higher than public schools, while operating more efficiently with fewer funds (Office of the Permanent Secretary for Education, 2021). School management is a critical responsibility of school administrators, staff, and the local community, who must collaborate to ensure that school operations meet the agreed-upon goals, benefiting students to the fullest extent. According to Prasarn Hompoon (1993, p. 8), school management refers to a collective effort to provide educational services to society's members. This encompasses academic work, personnel management, student affairs, administration and finance, facilities management, and school-community relations. Furthermore, the Department of General Education (2001, p. 9) highlighted the importance of community involvement and established policies and action plans regarding school-community management in its ten strategic plans. The sixth point emphasizes participation, stating that schools should encourage involvement from all stakeholders, including parent networks and school boards, in various forms.

Nawin Klasemut (2019, p. 570) found that schools must maintain relationships with various agencies to benefit education. The community plays a vital role in supporting schools, aiming to provide members with access to education and shaping them into good and productive members of society. The community's contribution is significant in school development, as it assists the school, a community educational institution, through financial support, materials, equipment, and labor. This cooperation demonstrates the school's value as a communal asset. However, while the relationship between private schools and the community is acknowledged as crucial to effective school management, knowledge on this topic has been increasingly overlooked. Therefore, the author aims to propose appropriate management approaches to strengthen the relationship between private schools and the community and to foster sustainable cooperation with all stakeholders.

The management of private school

The private sector has played a long-standing role in education. Initially, the education of children took place within families, where parents were responsible for teaching reading, writing, and vocational skills. Over time, educational methods were developed to be more effective in response to modern changes. The Office of the Private Education Commission (1995, p. 43) summarized that the definition and characteristics of private schools, as outlined in the Private School Act of B.E. 2525 (1982), describe private schools as institutions managed by individuals or organizations. These schools utilize private funds and materials to provide education to more than seven students at any given time, below the bachelor's degree level. The individuals or legal entities requesting to establish a private school must meet certain qualifications as stipulated by Section 15 of the Private School Act of B.E. 2525, under the supervision of the Office of the Private Education Commission. School management is vital

for overseeing and controlling various services within the school, including teaching, learning, and the overall environment. This encompasses teachers, students, curricula, textbooks, equipment, and activities. The Department of General Education (2002, p. 35) stated that school management is crucial and must focus on providing educational services and meeting the needs of parents and students. This ensures that the school produces quality youth who will become key contributors to the country's development. Schools act as academic hubs and must ensure that parents, students, and the community have a positive perception of the school and view it as part of the community. People in the community must collaborate to develop both the school and the community, ensuring progress and growth.

The importance of the relationship between the school and the community.

The connection between the community and private schools is a key factor influencing the development and effectiveness of education. Thus, community involvement in school management is essential. School administrators must establish community-related policies, engaging with the community to jointly set the goals and policies of the school, and collaborate in developing education within the school to benefit the community. The community is not only a source of financial resources but also a valuable source of intellectual, cultural, and real-life experience resources that can enhance teaching and learning. The community can also contribute to shaping the educational approach by providing feedback on curricula that align with local culture and needs. Aranya Suksawasdi (2010) emphasized that fostering a good relationship between schools and the community is crucial because both parties play the role of givers and receivers. Schools serve as knowledge centers and support various community activities, while the community actively participates in supporting school activities. Both sides understand each other's needs and collaborate in development efforts, showing that community development also leads to school development.

Similarly, Rungtip Khemthit (2016) found that building relationships between schools and the community involves planning, management, and collaboration with parents and community members. It is essential to create an understanding between the community, school administrators, and teachers, fostering a genuine sense of school ownership within the community. Schools should encourage and provide opportunities for community members to participate in activities organized by both the school and the community, creating mutual benefits in educational development. In line with this, Wasana Chusaeng (2014) proposed that the relationship between schools and the community is a process by which schools build mutual understanding with the community and offer opportunities for community participation in school development. This collaboration includes setting goals and policies, as well as providing support in terms of resources, manpower, and funding, to achieve the school's objectives while ensuring mutual progress and benefits for both the school and the community.

Establishing strong relationships between private schools and their communities has a direct impact on the success of teaching and learning. Community involvement promotes sustainable development for both learners and the school's educational system in the future. It helps schools understand the problems and challenges faced by the community, which allows schools to design curricula that respond more effectively to the real-life situations students encounter. Furthermore, community participation fosters pride and cooperation among parents and community members in supporting education, creating an atmosphere conducive to sustainable development at both the school and community levels. The study by Aranop Khunset (2013) found that managing school-community relationships requires schools to play a role in organizing activities and practices that promote community understanding of the school. This should be done consistently, both inside and outside the school. The management of school-community relationships can be divided into six areas: (1) providing community

services, (2) receiving support from the community, (3) involving the school's basic education committee, (4) organizing activities to build school-community relations, (5) establishing groups, clubs, associations, and alumni networks, and (6) public relations.

Administrative principles for building relationships between schools and communities

Similarly, Wasana Chusaeng (2014) suggested several principles for building relationships between schools and communities: Schools should understand the fundamental aspects of the community to adjust their approaches in a way that fits the local context. Public relations should be comprehensive, ensuring that both the school and the community share a mutual understanding. Information should be easy to understand and aligned with current situations. Activities should be continuous, both within and outside the school, and should be flexible and responsive to changing circumstances, using friendly and simple approaches with community members. Schools should listen to and accept feedback from community members.

Kanokwan Sarapo (2013) concluded that key principles for building relationships with the community include comprehensive public relations, community involvement in activities, community services, and aligning education with the needs of the community. The most crucial aspect is studying the community's structure, culture, traditions, attitudes, and beliefs in detail. This aligns with the findings of Wipha Konhan (2016), who noted that building school-community relationships requires sincere collaboration, goodwill, and simplicity. Whether bringing school activities to the community or involving the community in school operations, both parties must be satisfied, fostering unity and mutual benefits.

The role of private schools in building relationships with the community

To establish a strong relationship between schools and communities, school administrators, teachers, and staff must understand the community's context and hold a positive attitude towards it. This allows the school to engage in a variety of creative activities that align with the community's needs. Moreover, the community should participate in setting the direction for local educational development through networks that encourage knowledge sharing. Private schools play a crucial role in education, offering flexibility in management and adaptation to the needs of the community where they are located. Building good relationships with the community is essential for enhancing students' learning and potential. Strong school-community ties support efficient school operations and promote long-term development of the local educational system. Sarayut Changngam's (2022) study emphasized that private school management for community relations should focus on building cooperative networks and promoting transparency about the school's social responsibility. This can involve implementing policies that demonstrate accountability to society, such as the school's vision, development plans, and annual operational plans, which include environmental conservation efforts and engagement in improving the quality of life in the community. Private schools should collaborate with local enterprises, community businesses, or local experts to provide students with vocational training and encourage them to participate in socially responsible activities. These guidelines can be synthesized into a general framework for managing private schools to develop school-community relations, as they cover four key areas of private school administration: academics, budgeting, personnel, and general administration. The scope of community relations management includes governance, equality, fairness in personnel management, environmental care, student and parent involvement, and active community participation for mutual development.

Conclusion

Building strong relationships between private schools and their communities plays a vital role in fostering sustainable and effective educational development. Collaboration between both sides not only enhances the quality of students' learning but also strengthens unity and resilience within the community. School administrators should prioritize cultivating relationships between the school and the community. Administrators must have a positive attitude, an understanding of the community, self-acceptance, and full participation within the community. Additionally, all parties and school personnel should continuously develop their roles to ensure greater efficiency. Developing relationships between the school and the community in various aspects—such as community services, receiving community support, strengthening relations with the community and other organizations, involving school boards, establishing clubs and associations, and conducting public relations—requires a comprehensive approach. Focusing on development in all these areas will ensure that the operations of the school and the community are aligned, which will foster unity and bring mutual benefits to both the school and the community. Private school administrators can apply management principles to develop and strengthen relationships with the community, demonstrating the potential of private schools to achieve their goals. This includes the development of students, personnel, and the organization as a whole, ultimately contributing to the advancement of society.

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