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Building a capability development model for professional school leaders in Thai education

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**Building a Capability Development Model
for Professional School Leaders
in Thai Education**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the award of the degree

Doctor of Education

From

University of Wollongong

By

Koolchalee Chongcharoen

Bachelor of Education, Master of Education

Faculty of Education

2008

Thesis Certification

CERTIFICATION

I, Koolchalee Chongcharoen, declare that this thesis, submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of Doctor of Education, in the Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong, Australia, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledge. The document has not been submitted for qualification at any other academic institution.

Koolchalee Chongcharoen

3 September 2008

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Finally, I dedicate this thesis to my father Lieutenant Colonel Chong Chongcharoen and mother Sangwan Chongcharoen. My thanks to you both is boundless as my successful completion of this degree is due largely to your continued love and mental support.

ABSTRACT

This study explores questions of how Thai school leaders can be better prepared to respond to reforms that propose decentralization, devolution of authority and organizational structures that favor school-based management (SBM) (See Caldwell & Spinks, 1988). The implementation of SBM is a substantial departure from the historically hierarchical and centralized Thai education bureaucracy. The research explored what capabilities are required for this new environment and suggests a capability development model for professional school leaders in Thailand. The research explored literature on self-managing schools, school-based management and educational reform and found that successful reform was dependent on several factors. This included collaboration, participatory practices, leadership that utilized skills in involving staff, students and community. There is also a need for the system to recognize the need to support devolution and SBM. The research recognized the importance of systemic change and individual agency and used Anthony Giddens' notion of structuration as a theoretical tool to explore how leaders should be prepared to respond to systemic and professional changes.

The study uses a qualitative methodology using interviews, focus group and reviews of documentation to answer two research questions, 1) What are the key capabilities that Thai school leaders should have in relation to the values and visions of multiple stakeholders in Thai education? 2) What forms of professional development are required for a capability development model which can sustain multiple stakeholders in a global world? The purposive sampling was employed to select fifty participants who were experts and the stakeholders.

Consistent with the notion of structuration, the data indicated that the structural changes associated with education reform are strongly related to changes of the power and the responsibility of the individuals in the system. The data suggests that there is a need for shifts in behaviors that favors collaboration, participatory practices, visionary leadership and involvement of teachers and the community in school management. This is contradicted by a culture of compliance to superiors and a culture of deference that

makes involvement difficult. The findings also showed that bureaucracy and strong hierarchies, which have characterized Thai public institutions, has had a strong influence on the national culture which in turn is a key influence on personality and character for Thais. This feature is seen in this study as an ongoing tension and future concern for Thai school leaders' capability development.

The research found that there is strong support for SBM and that the need for reform is appreciated, there exists strong reservations about the capabilities required to implement change and SBM. The research focused on identifying the capabilities across the system as suggested by leaders, teachers and administrators and the research also looked at what capabilities were needed by these groups to implement SBM.

The research also identified the need for more democratic and participatory structures that enabled school leaders to develop a wider repertoire of skills and capabilities. The research proposes a model of capability development, which identified areas for systematic and individual development.

The data indicated that the three specific roles were considered essential for Thai school leaders, which are educational strategic thinking, building and managing a collaborative school culture, and providing educational leadership in school in these circumstances. The key findings showed that the nine domains of professional capability were required to support these new roles namely: change management; strategic thinking; pedagogical content knowledge; facilitating continuous learning and development; working collaboratively with others; communication and interpersonal skill; student and customer focus and quality; self efficacy; and personal integrity.

The research identified the need for continuous professional development that included work-based learning, mentoring and features a modeling collaborative and participatory practice using communities of practice and authentic learning tasks. This is in contrast to current practice, which lacks professional development or favors passive modes of learning.

The research finds that to foster and sustain capability development in this model, it requires the system development to create the ways or methods for school leaders' growth. Finally, the thesis suggests that the Thai government should establish the national program for school leaders' development, which works with the existing leadership-training providers in a networking system. Such a proposed network should focus on the development of the curriculum for serving the individual's needs and the techniques for school leaders' capability development in the attainment of such capabilities. Such programs should utilize a framework proposed in this research.

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List of Abbreviations

ACT DET	Australian Capital Territory Department of Education and Training
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CSW	Commercial Sex Work
ERO	Education Review Office
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HEADLAMP	The Headteacher Leadership and Management Programme
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOPH	Ministry of Public Health
MPB	Metropolitan Police Bureau
NEA	National Education Act
NIDA	National Institute of Development Administration
NIDTEP	National Institute for Development of Teachers, Faculty Staffs and Educational Personnels
NSW	New South Wales
NSW DET	New South Wales Department of Education and Training
ONEC	Office of the National Education Commission
SBM	School-based management
SOTCT	Secretariat Office of the Teachers' Council of Thailand
STDs	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VIC DET	Victoria Department of Education and Training

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