

# TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR LEARNING ORGANIZATION ON SUFFICIENCY ECONOMY IN SMALL SCHOOLS

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## Abstract

The Ministry of Education, Thailand announced the major scheme for the implementation of Sufficiency Economy in Schools in the country along with the 1999 National Education Act Amendment in 2003. The purposes were to establish self immunization in human capital and develop learners to their full capacity. However, the inequality among schools in Thailand was one of the main problems in educational development. The small schools were among the disadvantage groups. There were not having sufficient learning resources, teaching personnel and teachers with major in special subject areas, the small schools needed help in their development programs as well as integrating sufficient economy into the learning and teaching situations. The purposes of this study are to develop teacher professional for learning organization on sufficiency economy in small schools as well as to develop principals and teachers' concepts about learning organization on sufficient economy. This study employs qualitative design by analyzing document and interviewing key informants. The research samples consist of five small schools under the Office of Khon Kaen Primary Educational Service Area. The findings reveal that the training strategy with the emphasis on brain storming, working in small groups, learning from success stories experiences of their peers and friendly supervision in the teacher professional development for learning organization based on the philosophy of sufficiency economy. Furthermore, the support from school administrators also created confidence among teachers in implementing the integration of the innovation based on the philosophy of sufficiency economy in a whole school system. Therefore, the project was implemented and progress under the same ideology in both administrators and teachers. Regarding the guidelines for teacher development for learning organization based on the philosophy of sufficient economy among small schools, the findings revealed that there are six steps of work procedures. The six steps comprise of (i) awareness creation, the research employed a study trip to visit good practice sites in sufficiency economy; (ii) professional development; (iii) consensus concept of creation of innovation based on sufficiency economy and classroom research; (iv) using community learning resources; (v) observation and reflection, and (vi) supervision and coaching. In conclusion, all teachers accepted and implemented the integration of sufficiency economy into their classroom. Moreover, they showed their ability for integrating the philosophy of sufficiency economy into their activities. Finally, most of the students showed their developments in achievement and attitude.

*Keywords:* Teacher professional development, learning organization, sufficiency economy, small schools

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## **1. Introduction**

The Thai government has created a philosophy of sufficiency economy as a guideline for living and practices for all the Thai citizens based on the national development plan under the King's philosophy of sufficiency economy. The main concepts of this sufficiency economy can be defined as sufficiency means moderation and rational means reasonable which covered self-immunity for sufficient protection from impact arising from internal and external changes. In order to achieve this, an application of knowledge related to due consideration and prudence of essential is urgently needed. In particular, utilization of theories and methodologies in planning and implementation stages of administration is crucial and need to be comprehensively and carefully carried out for every step. At the same time, it is essential to strengthen the moral fiber of the nation, so that Thai people not only adhere but also foremost to principles of honesty and integrity. In addition, the life ways of patience, perseverance, diligence, wisdom and prudence are indispensable in order to create balanced life and enable to cope appropriately with critical change arising from extensive and rapid socioeconomic environmental and cultural changes in the world (National Research Committee on Economy Branch, 2003).

The Ministry of Education also accepted the King's philosophy of sufficiency economy and taken as its policy and promoted it throughout all the schools in Thailand. This is to directly applying the sufficiency economy concept into the school context for the beneficial of social community. This policy has been convinced the public to change their paradigm of living conditions that is to live under sufficiency economy philosophy. The network for exchange the experiences were also encouraging to lead to sustainable development as the end results (Sumet, 2006). The aims of the school implementation were to mobilize the sufficiency economy philosophy under educational perspective. The educational perspectives include encourage the schools and educational personnel from various levels either formal or informal education system to integrate the mentioned philosophy into their administrative work and students' development appropriately.

According to the launch of the 2008 curriculum which targeting on learners' development so that they are equipped with standard knowledge, critical thinking, desired characteristics as well as their hard skills and soft skills. The curriculum also emphasized on desired characteristics corresponded to the philosophy of sufficiency economy. The Thai Ministry of Education has announced the second decade of educational reform (2000-2019) that focusing to develop: (i) quality of Thai citizen in a new era; (ii) new breed of teachers; (iii) school quality and learning resource encompassed formal, non-formal and informal education system as well as being a source of lifelong learning development, and (iv) new

approach for administrative management which emphasized on power distribution and the participation from parents, community, private agency and every involved sector. This is to promote an effective style of administrative management with good governance, transparent, justice and accountability. By implementing the new style of administrative management will enable to develop the change in leadership. All these functions are striving for the crucial goals that channeled to develop new generation of students to participate in ASEAN community (Office of National Education Commission, 2002).

## **2. Problem Statement**

If the philosophy of sufficiency economy was implemented at school level, the school administrators have to pay attention on curriculum development and its implementation in the classroom. This can only be accomplished while the participation from all parties is encouraging especially the teachers' participation. Paitoon (2011) and Fullan (2006) pointed out that teachers were the key factors affecting the change in schools. Therefore, teacher development is a key factor in order to organize learning substances to correspond to the mentioned philosophy. When teachers have sufficient knowledge in curriculum management, it would lead to improve students' quality.

The current situation in Thailand showed that there are 10,877 schools which have less than 120 students that categorized as small schools (The Office of Basic Education Commission, 2002). It was reported that small schools are facing many problems such as low quality students, lack of qualified teachers and shortage of teachers for the classroom. In addition, these schools are also facing problems like insufficient learning resources and effective administrative management. Most of the teachers insufficient in their profession, do not acquire new knowledge that related to pedagogy and content knowledge. Therefore, these teachers are unable to organize effective teaching and learning activities (Asian Development Bank (ADB), 2002). Hence, the development of teachers in small schools is very important for the change in teaching and learning as well as curriculum development (Direk, 2007).

## **3. Research Questions**

- i. How to develop teacher profession for learning organization based on the philosophy of sufficient economy in small schools?
- ii. What is the guidelines for teacher profession development emphasizing on learning organization in thinking ability on the philosophy of sufficiency economy in small schools?

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

In order to solve the above problems, this study has the intention to:

- a) To develop teacher profession for learning organization based on the philosophy of sufficient economy in small schools.
- b) To explore guidelines for teacher profession development emphasizing on learning organization in thinking ability on the philosophy of sufficiency economy in small schools.

#### **5. Research Methods**

This study utilized qualitative method using multi-case study as the research design. The target group was identified by using purposive sampling from the five sufficiency economy school project in Khon Kaen province. The school selection was based on their total voluntary participation as a whole school development. The key informants consisted administrators, 25 teachers from each substance and their students.

Sufficient data was collected to address the study's objectives using multiple methods of data collection. The multiple methods of data collection included in-depth interview, participative observation, classroom observation, focus group discussion, documentary analysis and field work study. Instruments used were structured interview questions form, check list for observation, video recorder and photographs. The research was conducted between this time duration, from June until September 2010. The obtained data after treated with triangulation checking, researchers were reviewing and analyzing the data. Content analysis is the method used to analyzing the qualitative data and presented them in descriptive manner.

Data collection procedures were carried out as follows: Firstly, researchers studied principles, theories and related literature in philosophy of sufficiency economy, teacher professional development, students learning management. construction integrated learning unit and school management; Secondly, investigation on the capacity and needs of target schools in region 1 to 5 and coordinated Provincial Education Service Areas in all the five regions for conducting the research; Thirdly, meetings with target schools were organized in order to clarify the objectives of the research thus created the informants' awareness; This was followed by meeting with Education Service Area supervisor, administrators and teachers regarding action plans; Then researchers conducted two sessions of two days workshop for 25 teachers from five identified research schools; After that, the target teachers undergone a closed supervision and monitoring of school administrators as well as classroom observation

by researchers and supervisors, participative supervision is the applied approach, and finally a reflective meeting was carried out to study the outcome of the study. The conclusion from the reflective meeting was used as guidelines for further development.

## **6. Findings**

### *6.1. Teacher professional development*

Findings indicated that the strategy employed for teacher professional development were training, brain storming, small group discussion, exchange success experiences and friendly supervision as well as school administrators' support, made teachers feel confidence in the implementation of innovation teaching activities accordingly with the philosophy of sufficiency economy. The whole school mobilized the approach together under the same focus.

The four cycles of training and workshop that emphasized key factors in changing the Basic Education Curriculum 2001 towards the 2009. Basic Education Curriculum and the curriculum development process as well as learning organization design based on the philosophy of sufficiency economy revealed that teachers lacked of background knowledge related to core concept of 2009 Basic Education Curriculum. On top of that, most of the teachers were also lacked of knowledge to create learning units which corresponded to key performance indicators as well as the integration of self-sufficiency economy into their lesson plans. However, teachers found to be improved after the four cycles of training, they were able to integrate key concepts of sufficiency economy really well into their learning activities which lead to the development of thinking skills and the learning activities also corresponded to students' living situations. The above findings were in line with Tissana Khammamee's (2005) statement. Tissana Khammamee stated that the thinking development activities have to correspond to students' daily life situations and students' characters.

The finding related to the target teachers were able to integrate key concept of sufficiency economy into their learning organization, seems to be complied with the key performance indicator of the core curriculum that emphasized intellectual, learning skills procedures and attitudes development. This result showed that the target teachers were able to develop their pedagogical content knowledge by integrated the philosophy of sufficiency economy into their teaching organization appropriately was parallel with Shulman (1987) and Van Driel et al. (1998). They described that the trait of effective teachers would be able to incorporate their pedagogical content knowledge in each topic as well as procedures with related aspects in learning organization. These effective teachers not only deal with content but also fix the nature and background of each student.

After the training sessions, findings from the classroom observations by researchers indicated that majority of the teachers showed their understanding and knowledge in sufficiency economy integrated it into their teaching organization effectively. For example, Ms Dokkaew who are teaching the topic of 'Live your life safely' in Health Education subject, by integrating self-immunity for accident and disease prevention. In other word, she is successfully promoted the knowledge and awareness of food consumption and health production purchasing. Meanwhile, findings from interviewing students who attending the lesson, revealed that they are able to express their concept based on their understanding on the mentioned linkage, such as "If I want to stay healthy, I have to do physical exercises".

Besides that, result also found out that the learning organization conducted by the target teachers not only contributed to their individual subject or their students' level but also had impact on other subject. For example, integrated sufficiency economy in Art education subject, thus related to Occupational and Technology, Mathematics and Thai language. The activity was picture frame construction. Students enjoyed learning by using bamboo in their locality to build picture frame. The main concept of integration sufficiency economy into learning content in various subjects indicated that the philosophy with various key concepts helps to create the students' awareness. They would be aware of the learning contents and their living environment. Furthermore, the learning organizations were able to promote students' thinking skills. For instance, teachers design learning activities concerning students' living environment so that students would have the opportunities to analyze, critique the problems raised and answer the related questions along their journey of the studies. In addition, students would be well equipped by creating awareness about the importance of learning contents. For example, teachers used recycle materials to construct teaching aids in order to provide the experience for student learning process. This situation would motivate the students to build their thinking skills and problem solving skills. This teaching approach assisted the teachers to avoid using rote learning in their classroom.

## *6.2. Guidelines for teacher profession development emphasizing on learning organization in thinking ability on the philosophy of sufficiency economy in small schools*

Findings revealed that the establishment of awareness and understanding among the school administrators and teachers by having meeting were the significant approach. The creation of guidelines for teacher profession development emphasizing on learning organization in thinking ability on the philosophy of sufficiency economy in small schools can be concluded as six steps in working procedures. The six steps are: (i) awareness creation, the researcher employed a study-trip to visit the good practice sites in sufficiency economy; (ii)

professional development; (iii) consensus concept of creation and innovation based on sufficiency economy and classroom observation; (iv) using community learning resources; (v) observation and reflection, and (vi) supervision and coaching.

## **7. Conclusions**

In conclusion, all the teachers accepted and implemented the integration of sufficiency economy into their teaching and learning activities. Moreover, they showed their abilities to integrate the philosophy of sufficiency economy into their teaching activities. Finally, most of the students showed their achievement and attitude development. This finding is in accordance with Wallapha Ariratana's (2006) findings. Her findings showed that change management for the students' quality has to focus on curriculum and learning organization development. The same development implied to the teachers, teachers need to create their knowledge in understanding and awareness through attending the training workshop and internal supervision. In addition, teachers need to always exchange experiences with their colleagues in schools. All these activities would yield the good results in professional development. This is supported by Hui Eadaoin (2002) and Tissanana Khammanee (2003). Their findings found out that changing by implementing whole school approach, would lead to quality in their production, management process and various factors that striving for a whole system development. And the key person to this change as mentioned earlier is school administrator. Because he or she is the one who lead, co-operate the work with various parties. In the end they would be able to make the change in teaching and learning, coordination and share resources from everybody who involved effectively.

Schools have to focus on management process effectively, specifically in policy setting and curriculum goal, learning and development personnel who corresponded to the change as mentioned above. In addition, Provincial Education Office, Service Area I should organize workshop in order to promote knowledge and understanding of teachers, administrators, and supervisors that related to curriculum development particularly on local curriculum. This is because the integration of the philosophy of sufficiency economy into the curriculum usually based on its practices on community learning resources and local wisdom, when it comes to learning implementation. Finally, the school administrators of small schools should work closely with the community in order to get coordination and support in every aspect including the contribution in learning resources.

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