Development of Guidelines to Implement Quality Culture for Extra-large Secondary Schools: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract

This study was aimed to develop guidelines of quality culture implementation in extra-large sized secondary schools for school administrators. A total of 10 participants encompassing principals and teachers from extra-large sized secondary schools from northeastern region of Thailand participated in the structured interviews. A qualitative method exploratory research design was employed using interview guide as a research instrument. The researchers employed a purposive sampling technique to select the suitable participants according to the criteria that they have at least five years of experience and have involved in quality culture developmental programs. The researchers used face-to-face interviews to gather data and analyzed the interview data using thematic analysis. The main results revealed that the key factors of quality culture in descending order were found as quality leadership, continuous development, human resource management, teamwork to create quality and personnel values. After the researchers triangulated qualitative interview data and found they were aligned with the quantitative data results in the preliminary study. Therefore, the researchers suggested that the guidelines are consistent with the identified factors and indicators of quality culture and should be given necessary attention in developing quality culture. On top of that, results also indicated that a strategic and collaborative approach can develop a quality culture, namely leadership training, collaborative platforms, quality assurance systems, data-driven decision-making, recognition and rewards, and community engagement.

Keywords: *Extra-Large Sized Secondary Schools, Guidelines, Factors, Quality Culture Implementation.*

INTRODUCTION

A quality culture is characterized by a collective commitment to excellence, continuous improvement, and a student-centered approach. Therefore, quality culture implementation involves the active participation of all stakeholders, effective leadership, and the integration of innovative practices. By fostering a quality culture, school administrators can create an environment that supports high standards, enhances educational outcomes, and prepares students for future success (Stephens & Roszak, 2021). In the context of education, particularly in extra-large secondary schools, quality culture embodies the ongoing pursuit of excellence in teaching, learning, administration, and student outcomes. A strong quality culture is integral to the success and sustainability of educational institutions (Meethong et al., 2024).

Guidelines are found important to assist school administrators, particularly in extra-large secondary schools so that they can ensure consistent educational excellence, fostering continuous improvement, and promoting a supportive and inclusive environment for both students and staff to establish a quality culture in their schools. Extra-large secondary schools, due to their size and complexity, face unique challenges in maintaining high standards (Meethong et al., 2024). Guidelines for quality culture are essential tools for school administrators because the guidelines can provide a clear framework for fostering and maintaining high standards of excellence in education. These guidelines serve as a roadmap for creating a supportive, effective, and sustainable school environment (Hildesheim & Sonntag, 2020).

There are seven key reasons why guidelines of quality culture are important for school administrators such as clarity and consistency, improved decision-making, enhanced accountability, fostering a positive school climate, supporting professional development, enhancing student outcomes, and sustainability and continuity. Guidelines can provide clarity and consistency in expectations, processes, and outcomes across the school.

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Guidelines help to ensure that all staff members understand what is required to maintain a high-quality educational environment (Sattler & Sonntag, 2018). Benefits of this reason can ensure uniformity in practices and policies, so-called standardization. Clear expectations help teachers and staff understand their roles and responsibilities thus reduced confusion, minimizing misunderstandings and inconsistencies in implementation (Sattler & Sonntag, 2018).

Furthermore, guidelines for school administrators to implement quality culture can improve their decision-making ability. This is because guidelines offer a structured approach to decision-making, allowing school administrators to make informed and evidence-based decisions. School administrators can gain benefits in terms of framework for evaluation, data-driven decisions, and strategic planning. Framework for evaluation provides criteria for assessing programs, practices, and outcomes. Data-driven decisions can facilitate the use of data and feedback in decision-making. Strategic planning can aid in developing strategic plans aligned with the school's vision and goals (Stephens & Roszak, 2021).

Moreover, guidelines for quality culture implementation can establish clear accountability measures to ensure that all teachers and staff of the school community are responsible for upholding quality standards. School administrators enhance their accountability through performance metrics, responsibility, and monitoring and evaluation. Performance metrics refers to performance indicators and benchmarks. Responsibility clarifies who is accountable for various aspects of quality culture. Monitoring and evaluation enable regular monitoring and evaluation of progress and compliance (Hildesheim & Sonntag, 2020).

On top of that, guidelines for quality culture implementation help to create a positive school climate by promoting values such as collaboration, respect, and continuous improvement. Therefore, school administrators are benefited in these aspects, namely collaboration, trust and respect as well as continuous improvement. Hence, school administrators should encourage teamwork and shared responsibility, build a culture of mutual respect and trust among teachers, students, and stakeholders. In addition, school administrators should promote a mindset of ongoing development and learning, so-called continuous improvement (Tang, 2020).

Thawinkarn et al. (2018) emphasized the importance of guidelines for quality culture implementation to support professional development. According to Thawinkarn et al. (2018), guidelines highlight the importance of professional development, helping school administrators to plan and implement effective training and development programs. Following this line of reasoning, extra-large secondary school administrators can get benefits in terms of targeted training, growth opportunities, and improved competency. Targeted training identifies specific areas where teachers and staff need development. Growth opportunities can provide opportunities for teachers to enhance their skills and advance their career. School administrators can ensure that teachers are equipped with the latest knowledge and best practices as ways of improving their teaching competencies.

Ultimately, guidelines for quality culture can be used to improve student outcomes by creating an environment conducive to high quality teaching and learning. This includes student-centered approach, academic excellence, and holistic development to enhance students' learning outcomes. Student-centered approach implementation is to ensure that student needs and development are prioritized. Thus, quality culture guidelines promote high academic standards and achievement as well as support the overall well-being and growth of students (Thisopha et al., 2023).

The final reason why school administrators need to have guidelines are to ensure the sustainability and continuity of quality initiatives, even during transitions in leadership or staff changes. This influences institutional memory, consistency in leadership, and long-term planning. School administrators are encouraged to preserve best practices and lessons learned, maintain consistent leadership practices and quality standards. Consequently, school administrators should support long-term strategic planning and development (Tang, 2018). Based on the literature review above, this study was aimed to develop guidelines of quality culture implementation for extra-large secondary school administrators in Thailand as the results of this study could provide a structured approach to fostering excellence in education after the researchers took into account in terms of clarity, consistency, and accountability, while also supporting professional development and enhancing

student outcomes. By following these guidelines, extra-large secondary school administrators can create a positive and sustainable school environment that promotes continuous improvement and high standards of quality.

Preliminary Study Report

The origin of this study encompassed three phases, but the researchers intended to report only the final phase of the study in this paper. In the first phase of this study, the researchers conducted a thorough document analysis to analyze relevant literature, reports, policies, and other documents to identify existing theories, frameworks, and key factors associated with quality culture. This document analysis would help the researchers develop a theoretical foundation for the quality culture model (Morgan, 2022). The researchers screened and selected relevant documents to determine their relevance to quality culture as the first phase research objective, namely the identification of quality culture factors and indicators. Subsequently, the researchers obtained the full text of potentially relevant documents for a more thorough evaluation (Morgan, 2022).

Meethong et al.'s (2024) initial document analysis results revealed that there are five factors of quality culture, namely quality leadership, continuous development, human resource development, teamwork to create quality, and personnel values. In addition, Meethong et al. (2024) found out that there were 14 indicators derived from the five factors as follows: (i) Quality leadership factor has three related indicators, namely quality vision, commitment to quality, and quality communication; (ii) continuous development factor has three indicators, namely quality assurance, work process improvement, and using evaluation results for development; (iii) human resource development factor has three indicators, namely personnel development, motivation, and performance appraisal; (iv) teamwork to create quality factor has three indicators, namely personnel participation, strengthening good relationships, and clearly defining responsibilities, and (v) personnel values factor has two indicators, namely mutual confidence and common practice. Furthermore, Meethong et al. (2024) arranged the factors of quality culture indicated that the highest mean score was quality leadership ($\bar{x}$ = 4.20; SD = 0.29). This was followed by continuous development ($\bar{x}$ = 4.18; SD = 0.74), human resource management ($\bar{x}$ = 4.15; SD = 0.69), and teamwork to create quality ($\bar{x}$ = 4.14; SD = 0.76), in that order. The personnel values were found to be the least capacity ($\bar{x}$ = 4.07; SD = 0.75).

In the second phase, the researchers started to develop a quality culture model based on the results of the first phase. This quality culture model was represented by the identified five factors and 14 indicators through arranging them in a logical manner to reflect their interrelationships. Hence, this model would provide a comprehensive and structured overview of the ethical considerations relevant to quality culture within the researchers' selected scope. The intercorrelation results of the 14 indicators showed that all the indicators were positive correlations for all the relationships between pairs of 14 indicators. Moreover, the magnitude of the correlation coefficients ranged from 0.442 to 0.791 revealing the strengths of the relationships from moderate to strong, with values closer to 1 representing a stronger correlation and all the relationships are statistically significant at 0.01 level. On top of that, findings also showed that the association between the personnel participation indicator (TQ1) and performance appraisal indicator (HR3) (r = .791; r<.01) was the highest magnitude of the correlation coefficient. On the other hand, the lowest magnitude of the correlation coefficient was the motivation indicator (HR2) and commitment to quality indicator (QL2) (r = .442; p<0.01) (Meethong et al., 2024).

Then, the researcher continued to obtain estimates of the parameters of the quality culture model by validating the identified factors and their factor loading. The Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used by the researchers at the second phase to assess the quality culture model by testing the construct validity of a theoretical model. The CFA results indicated that the co-variance with the quality culture factors ranged from 63.30 to 96.10 percent. The factor with the highest factor loading value was quality leadership (QL). This was followed by continuous development (CD), human resource development (HR), and teamwork to create quality (TQ). The factor that had the least capacity for factor loading value was personnel values (PV). Therefore, the researchers concluded that all the key factors are important constructs of quality culture for school administrators of secondary schools with extra-large size. The researchers looked for values above a certain threshold, such as 0.3, to assess the significance of factor loading (Meethong et al., 2024). On the other hand,

results of the co-variance with the quality culture indicators are found in the range of 49.50 to 93.50 percent. Thus, the factor loading of all the quality culture indicators ranges from 0.439 to 0.810 and was statistically significant at 0.01. Therefore, the researchers concluded that all the identified indicators are considered essential constructs for the quality culture model (Meethong et al., 2024).

The main results of the second phase of this study where the quality culture model has a goodness of fit with the obtained data of $\chi^2 = 26.613$, df = 19, $\chi^2/df = 1.400$, *p*-value = 0.1140, RMSEA = 0.032, SRMR = 0.018, CFI = 0.999, TLI = 0.996. Following this line of reasoning, the researchers concluded that the quality culture model agrees with the empirical data. As a result, the quality culture model was accepted and could establish specific path of structural equation modelling were significant.

Materials And Methods

Research Design

An exploratory research design was employed by the researchers to investigate how to implement quality culture in extra-large sized secondary schools. This research design was found suitable for this study because there are no earlier studies to refer to or rely upon to predict an outcome of quality culture. This research design is a flexible and open-ended approach that allows the researchers for a deeper understanding of the quality culture issue at hand. According to Hunziker and Blankenagel (2021), qualitative approach is the most effective to compare multiple cases to identify patterns, similarities, and differences, ultimately leading to provide comprehensive guidelines. This exploratory research design enables researchers to gather in-depth insights from experienced principals and teachers on how to implement a quality culture in extra-large sized secondary schools.

Population and Samples

The researchers employed a purposive sampling technique, which is known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling, involves selecting 10 participants, five from each of sample groups, namely school administrators and teachers based on specific characteristics and criteria that align with the research aim. This purposive sampling technique was chosen because the researchers wanted to make sure that the participants are well-informed about quality culture implementation under this study (Gay et al., 2011). This purposive sampling often involves smaller sample sizes compared to random sampling methods, but the focus is on depth of information rather than statistical representation. The researchers created a list of potential participants who meet the criteria such as school administrator who is holding a principal position with at least 5 years of experience in their role and recognition for promoting quality culture while teachers with at least 5 years of teaching experience and active involvement in quality initiatives.

Research Instrument and Data Collection

A structured interview guide consisted of 10 open-ended interview questions was used as the research instrument to explore the quality culture implementation in depth. This interview guide was aligned the interview questions with the research objectives and ensure they were open-ended to allow for in-depth responses and allows flexibility to follow up on interesting responses or delve deeper into certain issues or challenges. The researchers conducted a pilot test with a small group of educators to refine the questions. Before the researchers started to interview, they defined clearly the research objectives to the participants such as understanding the implementation of quality culture in extra-sized schools as well as shared with them the results of the preliminary study. This was followed by obtaining informed consent to ensure participants understood their voluntary participation and the use of the collected data.

The researchers utilized a qualitative research method namely an in-depth interview that involving a detailed conversation between an interviewer and a participant. The researchers built a comfortable and trusting relationship with the participants to create a friendly and non-judgmental atmosphere to encourage open communication. The researchers also used probing techniques to encourage participants to elaborate on their responses in order to seek clarification when needed to ensure a clear understanding of the participant's perspective. At the same time, the researchers paid close attention to the participant's responses, both verbal

and non-verbal cues. Sometimes, the participants were required to reflect on what they were saying and responded appropriately. The conversation allowed for flexibility and exploration of unexpected issues.

There were some key elements taken into consideration before researchers conduct an in-depth interview, namely purpose and research question, participant selection, interview guide, establish rapport, probing and clarification, active listening, recording and note-taking, ethics, data analysis, and reporting. In-depth interviews were planned to conduct face-to-face; they could also take place over the phone or through other mediums (Gay et al., 2011). The researchers would like to do recording and note-taking while collecting in-depth interview data. With the participant's permission, the researchers recorded the interview to capture detailed information. At the same time, researchers took detailed notes to supplement the recording and aid in analysis.

Data Analysis

The researchers used thematic analysis to analyze qualitative interview data that was obtained from the 10 participants. This analysis method was used for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns or themes within data. It is particular useful in exploratory research to gain insights from interviews. The researchers employed thematic analysis following Naeem et al.'s (2023) guidelines to analyze the obtain data. Researchers started by thoroughly reading and re-reading the interview transcripts to become familiar with the content. This was followed by taking notes on initial impressions, key ideas, and recurring themes. Then, researchers began coding by systematically breaking down the data into meaningful segments or units. Next, researchers assigned descriptive labels or codes to these segments that captured the essence of the content to generate initial codes. These codes can represent concepts, ideas, emotions, actions, or any other relevant aspects of the data.

Once researchers coded a significant portion of the data, they began searching for patterns, connections, and recurring themes among the codes. Then, researchers looked for similarities and differences within and across codes. Next, researchers grouped related codes together to form preliminary themes. Hence, researchers reviewed the preliminary themes to ensure they accurately represented the content of the data. Researchers refined and clarified themes by revisiting the coded data and considering how they related to each other. This was followed by merging, splitting, or eliminating themes as needed to create a coherent and comprehensive thematic structure. Then, researchers defined each theme clearly by identifying the key concepts and characteristics that define it. This could be done by choosing descriptive and evocative names for each theme that capture its essence. Next, researchers wrote brief descriptions or summaries of each theme to clarify its meaning. Finally, researchers developed a narrative that described and interpreted the identified themes in relation to the research purpose and questions. Researchers used excerpts from the interview transcripts to illustrate and support each theme. Subsequently, researchers provided context and explanation for how the themes emerged from the data and what researchers revealed about the phenomenon under research to write up the results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of five principals and five teachers who were involved in the in-depth interviews and labelled as P1 to P5 and T1 to T5, respectively. The researchers started to present the results from identification of key factors and indicators of quality culture, following by the strategies for developing a quality culture in developing the guidelines.

Identification of Key Factors and Indicators of Quality Culture

The following excerpt from the 10 participants explicit pointed out that the key factors of quality culture in descending order such as quality leadership, continuous development, human resource management, teamwork to create quality and personnel values.

"I found that quality leadership is the fundamental factor to creating and sustaining a quality culture in extra-large secondary schools. This is because quality leadership involves setting a clear direction, fostering a commitment to excellence, ensuring effective communication, and supporting the continuous development of personnel." (P2)

"The key indicators of quality leadership include quality vision, commitment to quality, quality communication, and personnel development." (P1)

"To my opinion, continuous development is essential factor for maintaining and improving the quality of education in extra-large secondary schools. This factor focuses on systematic and ongoing efforts to enhance the school's performance." (T3)

"I agree with T3 that continuous development is an important factor in promoting quality culture. This is because continuous development involves quality assurance, work process improvement, and using evaluation results for development." (T5)

"I think human resource development is a critical factor in fostering a quality culture within extra-large secondary schools. Effective human resource development focuses on enhancing the capabilities, performance, and engagement of school staff." (P4)

"The key indicators of human resource development in this context include motivation, performance appraisal, and personnel participation." (T1)

"To me, creating a quality culture through effective teamwork in extra-large secondary schools involves fostering a collaborative environment where teachers work together towards common goals." (P3)

"What I can observe in my school is the key indicators of teamwork that contribute to this quality factor are personnel participation, strengthening good relationships, and clearly defining responsibilities." (T2)

"In the context of establishing a quality culture in extra-large secondary schools, the personnel values factor is crucial. This factor focuses on the underlying values and behaviours that teachers share, which significantly influence the overall school environment and performance." (T4)

"There are two key factors of personnel values that I can identify, namely shared confidence and having common work practices." (P5)

After the researchers triangulated qualitative interview data and aligned with the quantitative data results in the preliminary study, the researchers suggested that the guidelines are consistent with the factors and indicators of quality culture. This congruence could be interpreted as all identified factors such as quality leadership, continuous development, human resource development, teamwork to create quality, and personnel values that constitute a quality culture within extra-large secondary schools. Triangulation involved using multiple methods or data sources in qualitative research to develop a comprehensive understanding of phenomena. If both qualitative and quantitative data were telling a similar story, it strengthens the validity and reliability of the results. The alignment of data confirmed that the guidelines developed or under consideration are well supported by empirical evidence. The qualitative result indicated that the factors and indicators have identified as part of quality culture are indeed relevant and accurately represented.

Strategies for Developing a Quality Culture

The qualitative results revealed that a strategic and collaborative approach can develop a quality culture in extra-large secondary schools in Thailand. Therefore, school administrators can create an environment that promotes excellence and supports the holistic development of students by focusing on strong leadership, continuous improvement, collaborative environments, professional development, effective communication, and student-centered practices. Following this line of reasoning, the guidelines should include implementation of these strategies that suggested by the 10 participants. This is because the suggested strategies that would help extra-large secondary schools to overcome their unique challenges and achieve sustainable educational success. The following verbatim interview records of the 10 participants support this analysis:

"In my opinion, leadership training programs for school administrators in extra-large sized secondary schools is a significant strategy because the leadership training can develop school administrators' skills in managing large schools and fostering a culture of quality." (P2)

"I would like to create collaborative platforms for teachers to share best practices, resources, and innovative teaching methods." (T1)

"Implement quality assurance systems to regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of school programs and initiatives could be a good idea to develop quality culture." (P2)

"What we can do is to utilize data and analytics to inform decision-making processes, track student performance, and identify areas for improvement, so-called data-driven decision-making." (P4)

"We should establish recognition and reward systems to acknowledge and incentivize excellence among teachers, staff, and students as good guidelines to implement quality culture." (P3)

"Community engagement should be an essential strategy to promote quality culture by fostering strong relationships with the local community, businesses, and higher education institutions to enhance educational opportunities and resources." (P1)

CONCLUSION

The ultimate contribution of this study was successfully developing a quality culture model together with guidelines to assist extra-large sized secondary schools in their administration. The results have provided a comprehensive approach of implementing quality culture developmental initiatives. These guidelines can provide school administrators with a framework to develop and sustain a quality culture that enhances educational outcomes and fosters a supportive environment for all members of the school community.

By following these guidelines, school administrators can develop and sustain a quality culture in extra-large secondary schools. This comprehensive approach ensures that all aspects of the school environment are aligned with the goals of continuous improvement, stakeholder engagement, and student success. Implementing this quality culture model will help extra-large secondary schools overcome their unique challenges and achieve high standards of educational excellence.

The researchers would like to suggest for future research to sustain these guidelines through validation by following these steps, namely review and refinement, peer review, implementation and monitoring, and documentation. Future researchers can continuously review and refine the guidelines based on new data or feedback to ensure they remain relevant and accurate. Future researchers should engage with peers or experts in the field to review the guidelines and provide feedback. Next, school administrators are encouraged to implement the guidelines in a controlled environment and monitor their effectiveness in promoting quality culture. They adjust according to observation and data. Finally, future researchers can keep detailed records of how the guidelines were developed, the data sources used, and how they were validated. This transparency can aid in further research and application.

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