

# **A Development of Model of Decentralized Educational Management in Basic Education Schools based on the National Education Act B.E. 2542\***

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## **Abstract**

This descriptive research study focused on developing a model of decentralized educational management in basic education schools based on the National Education Act B.E. 2542. The research process used in the study comprised 4 procedures which are (1) compilation and analysis of related documents; (2) interview of administrators of schools; (3) data analysis by using the descriptive statistics and application of the result of analysis in creating a model of educational management; and (4) study of the appropriateness and feasibility of the model by organizing a seminar between eminent persons.

The research study found that the model of decentralized educational management in basic education schools based on the National Education Act B.E. 2542 could be presented in the 3 following parts: Part (1) - Introduction, which was comprised of concept, principle, purpose of the study and responsibilities of schools; Part (2) - Structure and substance of the decentralization model, which comprised 2 main dimensions: The first dimension emphasized the administrative tasks of schools in terms of planning, organizing, leading and controlling. The second dimension emphasized the management tasks of schools in terms of academic management, budget management, personnel management and general management; and Part (3) – Implementation strategies and key success factors.

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## **Introduction**

The decentralized educational management in basic education schools is the management of education in accordance with the intent of the National Education Act B.E. 2542 (1999) and Amendments (Second National Education Act B.E. 2545 (2002)). It can be stated that the National Education Act B.E. 2542 was the first law of Thailand which stipulated that the Ministry of Education shall decentralize the powers to Educational Service Areas and schools, provide all levels of education and reorganize the country's educational structure and provision on the basis of unity in policy and diversity in implementation. As stipulated in section 39 of the Act, the Ministry shall decentralize powers in educational administration and management regarding academic matters, budget, personnel and general affairs administration directly to the Committees and Offices of the Educational Service Areas and schools in the areas (The Ministry of Education, 1999).

Several provisions in the Act have created changing roles and tasks for schools. For example, when schools became legal entities as specified by section 35 of the 2003 Act on Regulations for Bureaucratic Administration of the Ministry of Education, they had to prepare themselves for the decentralization of powers as well as the increased autonomy and flexibility in educational administration and management.

Therefore, all basic education schools have to conduct their educational administration and management in response to the educational reform which focuses on participation from all parties and the utilization of organizational resources to maximize the educational quality development in a cost-effective manner.

Given all these circumstances, the researcher intended to develop a model of decentralized educational management in basic education schools. The result of the study revealed the guidelines in decentralized educational management in a systematic manner and with a clear model. It was expected that organizations at policy level would be able to apply such guidelines in provision of basic education in response to the educational reform at macro level. The researcher deemed that it was necessary to conduct a study on the development of a model of decentralized educational management in basic education schools based on the National Education Act B.E. 2542.

## **Purpose of the Study**

To develop a model of decentralized educational management in basic education schools based on the National Education Act B.E. 2542.

## **Research Concept**

1) The concept on decentralization: The researcher adapted from the concepts of several patterns of decentralization were several scholars. In this research study, the researcher applied 3 patterns of decentralization which are detached decentralization, authorized decentralization and autonomous decentralization.

2) The concept on model development: Theorized by Willer (1967: 83), this concept divides model development into 2 parts: the construction of a model; and research for the model's validity.

3) The concept on the administrative tasks of schools: This concept incorporated concepts on administration originated by Robbins and Coulter (1996: 9-10), Sergiovanni and others (1992: 72). The four main parts included in this concept are 1) Planning; 2) Organizing; 3) Leading; and 4) Controlling.

4) The concept on the management tasks of schools: Based upon the National Education Act B.E. 2542, this concept focused on the tasks of schools as legal entities in terms of academic management, budget management, personnel management and general management.

## **Research Process**

(1) Formulation of the research framework: In this process, the documents, concepts, theories and research studies regarding decentralized educational management in schools, both in Thailand and in other countries, were studied and compiled as data for developing a model;

(2) Study of environments, problems and guidelines in relation to the decentralized educational management in basic education schools: In this process, interviews of 6 administrators of model schools for educational reform and a survey of opinions from 397 schools' administrators were conducted. Data from the interviews and surveys was then studied and compiled as additional data for developing a model;

(3) Development of a model of decentralized educational management in basic education schools based on the National Education Act B.E. 2542;

(4) Study of the appropriateness and feasibility of the model by organizing a seminar between eminent persons; and

(5) Modification of the proposed model and presentation of the research findings.

### **Research Findings**

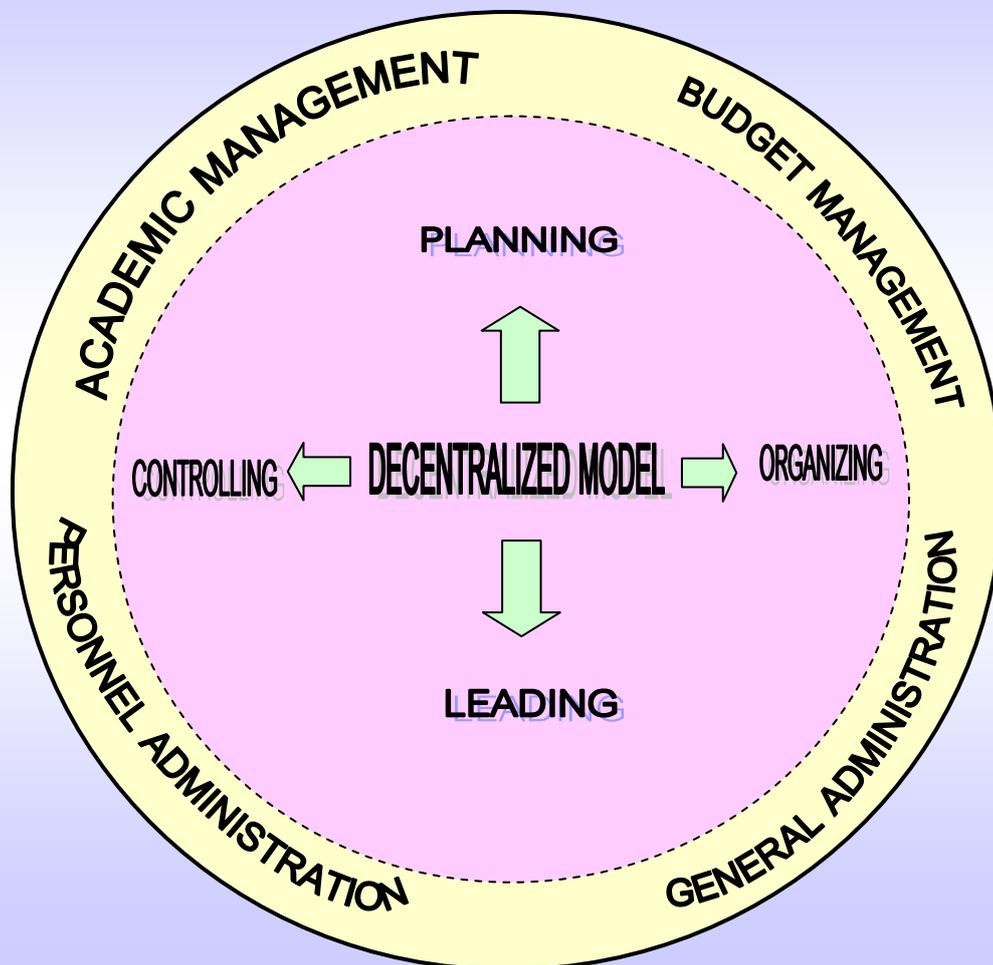
The research study found that the model of decentralized educational management in basic education schools based on the National Education Act B.E. 2542 could be presented as follows:

**The Model of Decentralized Educational management in Basic Education Schools  
based on the National Education Act B.E. 2542**

**PART 1 INTRODUCTION**

1. Framework
2. Principle
3. Purpose
4. Responsibilities

**PART 2 STRUCTURE AND SUBSTANCE OF  
THE DECENTRALIZATION MODEL**



**PART 3 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND  
KEY SUCCESS FACTORS**

## **Part 1: Introduction**

Based on the National Education Act B.E. 2542, basic education schools are organizations that are responsible for decentralized educational management at implementation level. In the provision of pre-tertiary education, basic education schools are required to grant all individuals with equal rights and opportunities to receive basic education provided by the State for the duration of at least 12 years. Such education, the provided on a nationwide basis, shall be of quality and free of charge. Moreover, provision of education is based on the principles of lifelong education for all; participation in educational provision from all segments of society; and continuous development of the bodies of knowledge and learning processes. In this regard, the administrative and management tasks of schools shall be taken into account.

As a result, the model of decentralized educational management in basic education schools was based on the concepts and principles of educational administration and management of the National Education Act B.E. 2542. The concept, principle and purpose of the study as well as the responsibilities of schools were presented as follows:

### **1. Concept**

The decentralized educational management in basic education schools focuses on increasing their autonomy and flexibility in educational administration and management so as to enable them to presume assigned tasks through the decentralization of powers from the Ministry of Education and the Educational Service Areas. To transform the government's educational policies into concrete implementation, it is necessary that schools be organizations that perform their duties with great potential in developing the Thai people in all aspects: physical and mental health, intellect, knowledge, morality, integrity and a desirable way of life as well as the ability to live in harmony with others.

### **2. Principle**

Decentralized educational management is the management of education that takes into account the following principles: participation, good governance, the development of learners' attributes, checks and balances, the mobilization of resources, legislation, professionalism, integration and systematic administration and management.

### **3. Purpose**

#### **General Purpose**

1) To propose a model of the decentralized educational management that is responsive to the contexts of Thai society and rural communities.

2) To submit the data obtained from this research study to the Ministry of Education and the Offices for Educational Service Areas. It is expected that they would make use of the data in formulating policies relating to the management of basic education.

#### **Specific Purpose**

To increase efficiency in educational management of schools and to develop the potential of teachers and educational personnel in responding to their duties and in making decisions in concurrence with their tasks as well as in decreasing the procedures in educational management and implementation.

### **4. Responsibilities of schools**

The responsibilities of schools were stipulated in sections 39 and 40 of Chapter 5: Educational Administration and Management and in Chapter 4: National Education Guidelines of the National Education Act B.E. 2542 (1999) and Amendments (Second National Education Act B.E. 2545 (2002) while schools' status as legal entities were specified in section 35 of the 2003 Act on Regulations for Bureaucratic Administration of the Ministry of Education.

The responsibilities of schools' principals were stipulated in sections 39 of the 2003 Act on Regulations for Bureaucratic Administration of the Ministry of Education and in section 27 of the 2004 Act on Regulations for Teachers and Educational Personnel. In addition, schools' principals are also responsible for other tasks as designated.

## **Part 2 : Structure and Substance of the Decentralization Model**

**The First Dimension: Administrative Tasks of Schools** can be summarized as follows:

### **1. Planning**

The formulation of an annual strategic plan and development plan was based on the **detached** decentralization pattern in which powers were detached to teachers and the board supervising basic education schools. It is necessary that the division into groups or task groups and employment of academically acceptable information and planning process are taken into account in planning.

Large and medium-sized schools might include the task-force committees in the participatory planning while small schools might assign a general administration group in each school, which comprises the school' principal and all the teachers, to join in the participatory planning.

### **2. Organizing**

The organizational management of schools as well as relevant grouping and coordination was based on the **detached** decentralization pattern in which powers were detached to teachers who were divided into groups, task groups and activity groups. In so doing, the potential and number of personnel and tasks, the decrease of work procedures and participation in decision-making of stakeholders were taken into account. It was suggested that small schools limit the number of groups and task groups to correspond with their contexts and to minimize the duplication of organizational structures and tasks.

### **3. Leading**

The resolution of conflicts and problems was based on the **detached** decentralization pattern in which powers were detached to individuals or task groups or outsiders by taking into account the constructive solution and harmony of the groups.

### **4. Controlling**

The comparison between performance and standards was based on the **autonomous** decentralization pattern while the modification of schools' activity was based on the **authorized** decentralization pattern in which powers were authorized to

academic groups or groups that are responsible for the assessment of efficiency in educational management.

**The Second Dimension: Management Tasks of Schools** can be summarized as follows:

### **1. Academic Management**

The development of school's curriculum was based on the **autonomous** decentralization pattern in which powers were transferred to academic groups or task groups responsible for management of curriculum and academic tasks. In so doing, the school's curriculum should be commensurate with each level of education with an aim to improving the quality of life suitable for each individual's age and potential.

The development of the learning process that focused on learners was based on the **autonomous** decentralization pattern in which powers were transferred to teachers and academic groups or other task groups or activity groups by taking into account the management of the learning process with freedom and the development of learners as specified in the National Education Guidelines of the National Education Act B.E. 2542.

The tasks relating to testing, assessment and credits transfer were based on the **authorized** decentralization pattern in which powers were authorized to teachers and academic task groups or other task groups or activity groups by taking into account the guidelines for testing and assessment as specified in the National Education Guidelines of the National Education Act B.E. 2542 and in Regulations for Testing and Assessment as stipulated in 2001 Basic Education Curriculum.

The development of learning materials, educational innovations and technologies was based on the **autonomous** decentralization pattern in which powers were transferred to teachers and academic task groups, other task groups or activity groups by taking into account the freedom in such developments and the efficiency in educational management.

The assessments of educational provision were based on the **detached** decentralization pattern in which powers were detached to academic task groups or task groups that were responsible for the assessment of educational provision by taking into account the participation and mutual support in assessments.

The tasks relating to research were based on the **autonomous** decentralization pattern in which powers were transferred to teachers and academic task groups, research task groups or other groups by taking into account the freedom in carrying out the tasks, educational quality and learners' advantages.

## **2. Budget Management**

The tasks relating to budget preparation and proposal as well as accounting and procurement were based on the **authorized** decentralization pattern in which powers were authorized to groups that are responsible for issues relating to budget, accounting, procurement and property management by taking into account the regulations and guidelines involved.

## **3. Personnel Management**

The personnel task group, which is responsible for planning in relation to the number and positions of personnel as well as recruitment and appointment, was based on the **authorized** decentralization pattern.

The promotion task group, which is responsible increasing salaries and status for teachers and educational personnel, was based on the **authorized** decentralization pattern.

The development task group that is responsible for the development of teachers and educational personnel was based on the **autonomous** decentralization pattern.

The disciplinary task group that is responsible for disciplinary issues was based on the **authorized** decentralization pattern.

The school's principal could decentralize powers to either the personnel task group, the promotion task group, the development task group, the disciplinary task group or other task group that the school deemed appropriate by taking into account the readiness of the school.

## **4. General Management**

The administration facilitation task group was based on the **authorized** decentralization pattern and took into account correctness and orderliness.

The information network development task group was based on the **autonomous** decentralization pattern.

The building and environment task group was based on the **autonomous** decentralization pattern.

The students' activities support task group was based on the **detached** decentralization pattern.

The school-community relation building task group was based on the **detached** decentralization pattern.

The school's principal could decentralize powers to either the administration facilitation task group, the information network development task group, the building and environment task group, the students' activities support task group, the school-community relation building task group or another task group that the school deemed appropriate by taking into account the readiness of the school.

### **Part 3: Implementation Strategies and Key Success Factors**

**1. Implementation Strategies:** It was found that the success of the decentralized educational management model depended on the following implementation strategies: participation, authorization, monitoring, personnel development, technology utilization, resource mobilization, coordination, integration and total quality management.

**2. Key Success Factors:** It was discovered that the success of the decentralized educational management model depended on both internal and external factors. Internal factors include 1) the vision and leadership of the school's principal; 2) the belief, dedication, knowledge and skills of teachers with regard to joint efforts and teamwork; and 3) the capability and cooperation of the board supervising each basic education school. External factors include: 1) budget allocation with an aim to increase students' attributes; 2) political policy with a focus on educational development; and 3) the generosity and hospitality of Thai culture.

### **Explanation of the Findings**

The researcher found that the model of decentralized educational management in response to the National Education Act B.E. 2542 should be further elaborated in the following aspects:

**Part 1: Introduction** was comprised of concept, principle and purpose of the study as well as responsibilities of schools. It was found that the critical concept of the decentralized educational management model focused on the autonomy and flexibility in educational administration and management as stipulated in the National Education Act B.E. 2542. It was also found that schools were required to decentralize their powers with regard to making decisions to teachers and educational personnel by taking into account the principle of accountability as specified in the Bureaucratic Reform Plan in which the performance-based public management system was emphasized. (The performance herein focused on the student's attributes.)

The decentralized educational management model depended on several principles such as participation, good governance, improvement of educational quality, checks and balances, the mobilization of resources, professionalism, systematic administration and management and integration. As a result, it is necessary that the school's administrator has vision, leadership, knowledge and skills in integrated administration and management as well as an ability in persuading personnel and other organizations to willingly take part in developing schools as planned. In this regard, it is critical to provoke the vision of schools' administrators. Although it is difficult to polish up the vision of schools' administrators, it is vital to accelerate such action so as to maximize the efficiency in administration and management.

In this research, 2 purposes were set. The general purpose is to indicate the whole spirit of educational management that regardless of an educational manager, education is beneficial to all the people and to the country. The specific purpose is to propose a concrete model of the decentralized educational management that can be applied in the decentralized educational management in basic education schools. It is also expected that the research findings could be used as guidelines for the Ministry of Education in formulating educational policies relating to educational management in basic education schools.

From the above-mentioned responsibilities of schools' principals and other personnel involved, it could be summarized that the tasks and responsibilities of schools had significantly changed and became clearer while several ministerial rules were issued to serve such modifications. As a result, schools' principals, teachers and all involved personnel should be prepared to learn and understand their responsibilities as stipulated by laws so as to perform their duties to the best of their ability.

## **Part 2: Structure and Substance of the Decentralization Model**

**Patterns of Decentralization:** Regarding the administration and management duties, it was found that there were 3 patterns of decentralization: detached decentralization, authorized decentralization and autonomous decentralization. Each pattern of decentralization is adapted from the relevant concepts of several scholars and experts. The researcher applied the mentioned patterns of decentralized educational management in schools and discovered that different tasks required different levels of powers exercised by schools' principals. It was very likely that some tasks required various levels of powers and hence patterns of decentralization. This depended on the vision of leaders and the potential of teachers and educational personnel as well as relevant environments. As a result, it is necessary that schools are flexible and able to adapt themselves. Medium-sized and small schools have several limitations and accordingly, require even more flexibility and adaptability.

As for the administrative tasks of schools, it was found that planning, organizing and leading tasks were conducted in the detached decentralization pattern while controlling tasks were conducted in the detached decentralization pattern and the authorized decentralization pattern. Regarding the management tasks of schools, it was found that academic management tasks were mainly conducted in the autonomous decentralization pattern, budget management tasks were conducted in the authorized decentralization pattern while personnel management and general management tasks utilized all decentralization patterns, rarely the authorized decentralization pattern, the detached decentralization pattern and the autonomous decentralization pattern. In each decentralization pattern, different levels of powers were granted in accordance with types of tasks, regulations, implementation guidelines and possibilities in exercising the powers.

Regarding the receivers of powers and responsibilities according to their tasks, it was found that schools' principals decentralized their powers in 2 ways: group power and individual power. Group power was more popular and responded to the decentralization concept as stipulated in the National Education Act B.E. 2542. The Act not only initiated the idea of decentralization of powers to relevant boards, groups, task groups and activity groups but also encouraged the receivers of powers to appoint relevant boards in accordance with the organizational structure and the number of

personnel in each school in order to increase the efficiency in their tasks. In this regard, schools should develop the skills needed, i.e. decision-making skills, presentation skills and rational decision-making skills.

### **Part 3: Implementation Strategies and Key Success Factors**

**1. Implementation Strategies:** It was found that the success of the decentralized educational management model depended on the following 9 implementation strategies: participation, authorization, personnel development, monitoring, networking resource mobilization, technology utilization, coordination, integration and total quality management. Administrators, teachers and educational personnel as well as schools' boards should take these essential strategies into consideration and utilize them in line with the types of tasks.

**2. Key Success Factors:** It was found that restrictions, such as different educational environments, were unavoidable regardless of the perfection of the decentralized educational management model. However, common key success factors include the following internal factors: schools' principals with leadership and vision that was in line with decentralization; good governance; teachers and educational personnel with belief and dedication in a democratic working style; cooperation from the board supervising each basic education school; maximization of the utilization of resources from other sources. Essential external factors include: performance-based budget allocation; political policy with a focus on educational development; and the generosity and hospitality of Thai culture.

### **Recommendations**

As summarized from the research study, the researcher proposes recommendations at policy and implementation levels as well as recommendations for further research as follows:

#### **1. Recommendations at Policy Level**

1.1 The government should provide support for educational resources, such as budget and personnel, with equally and adequately and in a timely manner.

1.2 The government should revise the relevant laws and rules so that educational management in schools can be conducted with autonomy, flexibility and efficiency.

## **2. Recommendations at Policy Level**

2.1 Schools should systematize their mechanisms in decentralized educational management to create flexibility, transparency, equality and accountability by taking into account the participation in decision-making from all parties concerned.

2.2 Individuals and communities participating in educational management should be rewarded and recognized by schools as models.

## **3. Recommendations for Further Research**

3.1 Further studies should be conducted to analyze the efficiency of the model of decentralized educational management as proposed in this research study.

3.2 Further studies should be conducted to set up indicators or criteria in assessing the decentralized educational management in basic education schools.

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