

# Core Competencies of School Administrators in 21<sup>st</sup> Century affecting Professional Learning Community in Primary Schools under Krabi Primary Educational Service Area Office

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## Abstract

The purposes of the research were 1) to study the level of core competencies of school administrators in 21<sup>st</sup> century 2) to study the level of professional learning community in primary schools and 3) to find the predicted variables used to predict the professional learning community in primary schools under Krabi Educational Service Area Office. The sample of the research was 148 schools; the informants were an educational administrator and a teacher who was the head of academic affair from the schools. The instrument for collecting data was a Likert's rating scale questionnaire about core competencies of school administrators in 21<sup>st</sup> century (the value of reliability range from .689-.857) and professional learning community (the value of reliability range from .740-.833). The statistics were based on average, standard deviation, Correlation coefficient, and stepwise multiple regression analysis.

The results were as follow: 1) The overall of core competencies of school administrators in 21<sup>st</sup> century under Krabi Educational Service Area Office was at the highest level. 2) The overall of professional learning community in the schools under Krabi Educational Service Area Office was at the highest level. 3) Core competencies of school administrators in 21<sup>st</sup> century such as collective learning and team working competency, selfdirected professional development competency and also integrity and accountability competency can affect to and can be predicted professional learning community in the schools with statistically significant at .01 level; the multiple correlation coefficient (R) was .795 And the predictive power was at 63.2 percent ( $R^2 = .632$ ).

**Keywords:** Core Competencies of School Administrators in 21<sup>st</sup> century, Professional Learning Community, Krabi Primary Educational Service Area Office

## Introduction

Education system has been developed continuously in order to get students ready for the globalization and sudden changes and unpredictable circumstances in 21<sup>st</sup> century. Students therefore need to be equipped with knowledge and skills suitable for future world; education is a mean to accomplish it. To successfully achieve educational goals, Educators must emphasize on professional development with collaborative teamwork particularly focusing on student's improvement of learning outcomes. Rosenholtz (1989) found that teacher workplaces were influent to teacher collaboration for learning and sharing ideas to improve the quality of instruction effectively. That was the very first start of collaboratively professional development. Instead of working and learning alone, teachers get into groups with a mutual goal - students learning outcomes - in order to work as a team and achieve the goals. Accordingly, the school structure once was a centralized organization, which strictly determines roles, power, and responsibilities, has become a community where all members gather to work and learn together as professionalism. Professionalism transforms a school into a place where everyone is involved in learning and teaching. The term "community" is different from 'organization' as a group of people come and join in team with shared vision and goal; not only just a commitment, but also shared norm and values (Sergiovanni 1994, cited in Sean Lynch, 2004). Consequently, a school becomes a community of teachers as learners and leaders, transforming into professionalism. Professional learning community is a tool leading teachers share knowledge and practical experiences to find the best way of teaching, to help teachers meet the needs of students learning, and to solve teaching

problems (Stoll, Bolam & McMahon, 2006). For the past few years later, professional learning community or PLC has been known among educators and also conducted in many schools.

In Thailand, Professional Learning Community (PLC) has been established to widely implemented into school due to the policy from Ministry of Education. Hence, school leaders and teachers were trained to conduct PLC process in their schools; collaborative working among teachers have been done continuously with a particular focus on student learning outcomes. The community creates learning atmosphere and build culture of learning which everyone is willing to learn collectively and reflect upon their teaching. (Arnon Thitikunnakorn, 2015) Not only teachers play important roles in PLC, but school administrators are also important supporters who facilitate teachers to develop as professionalism. School administrators can be influential to motivate and inspire teachers to take action in PLC and continuously improve themselves for student outcomes and better learning. Shared leadership is the key to reduce the gap between school administrators and teachers; school administrators therefore need to treat teachers with respect, work with them as colleagues, and make decision in team (Shirley M. Hord, 1997). As PLC team leaders, school administrators are responsible for motivating and leading teachers to accomplish mutual goals; they are also expected to be knowledgeable with practical skills in order to effectively manage PLC team (Chaiyon Paopan, 2016). Moreover, school administrators need to adjust their mindsets and roles, relating to a rapidly changing in 21<sup>st</sup> century, based on reality (Wijan Panich, 2015). Those knowledge, skills and attitudes are combined into Core

competency of school administrators to support and facilitate PLC in 21<sup>st</sup> century world. The researchers synthesized and summarized the core competencies of school administrators in 21<sup>st</sup> century as followed : 1) Students outcome-based competency 2) Service mind development competency 3) Collective learning and team working competency 4) Integrity and accountability competency 5) Self - directed professional development competency

Based on the data and the information given above, the researcher was interested in studying more in depth about the core competencies of school administrators in 21<sup>st</sup> century in order to comprehend characteristics of core competencies related to changing situation in 21<sup>st</sup> century and which core competency can affect professional learning community. The sampling of the study was the primary school under Krabi Primary Educational Service Area Office.

## Objectives

1. To study the level of core competencies of school administrators in 21<sup>st</sup> century in primary schools under Krabi Educational Service Area Office.

2. To study the level of professional learning community in primary schools in primary schools under Krabi Educational Service Area Office.

3. To find the predicted variables used to predict the professional learning community in primary schools under Krabi Educational Service Area Office.

## Research framework

The study aimed to study core competencies of school administrators in 21<sup>st</sup> century affecting professional learning community in primary

schools under Krabi Primary Educational Service Area Office; the factors of core competencies of school administrators in 21<sup>st</sup> century were synthesized from the educators and researchers : Siranee Wasupat (2008), Uthai Pakdeeprayoonwong (2013), Benjaporn Wateekarn (2015), Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning (2006), Wijan Panich (2015), Somchai thepsang (cited in Sasirada Pangthai, 2016), National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) (2006), Pornchao Jedaman (2016), and Maria Sternberg (2016). They consist of 5 factors : 1) Students outcome-based competency 2) Service mind development competency 3) Collective learning and team working competency 4) Integrity and accountability competency 5) Self-directed professional development competency.

Besides, the factors of professional learning community were synthesize from educators and researchers : Hord (1997), Sergiovanni (1998), Jane Bumpers Huffman, Kristine Kiefer Hipp (2003), Kim Balley (2010), Rewanee Chaichaowarut (2013), Worraluk Chukomnerd (2014), Arnon Thitikunnakorn (2015). They consist of 5 factors : 1) Shared Vision 2) Shared leadership 3) Collaboration 4) Collective learning 5) Supportive condition.

## Research Method

### 1. Population and Sample

The popularity in the research was 217 primary schools under Krabi Primary Educational Service Area Office; including 220 school administrators and 2,763 teachers. The calculation from the population came up with 148 primary schools; the sample size was calculated based on Yamane's formula. A stratified random sampling was used to select schools in each district; then, a random sampling was used to select school names without

replacements. The informants were an educational administrator and a teacher who was the head of academic affair from the schools.

## 2. Research instrument

The instrument for collecting data was a Likert's rating scale questionnaires separated into 2 parts : 1) the question about core competencies of school administrators in 21<sup>st</sup> century with 26 items and 2) the question about professional learning community with 20 items. Three experts in educational administration analyzed the instruments for content validity. Then the researcher revised the instruments based on experts' suggestions. The reliability of the questionnaire was determined by using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The reliability test by 30 schools revealed value of reliability range as follows : 1) the value of reliability range of the questionnaire about core competencies of school administrators in 21<sup>st</sup> century from .689-.857 and 2) the value of reliability range of the questionnaire about professional learning community from .740-.833

## 3. Data collection

Data collection was conducted after obtaining permission letters from the department of Educational Administration, Faculty of Education, Prince of Songkla University. The researcher distributed the questionnaires attached with

the permission letters to 148 primary schools; then, the researcher collected the questionnaires back from the schools to check the completion of the instrument.

## 4. Data analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS program. The statistics were based on average and standard deviation to study the level of core competencies of school administrators in 21<sup>st</sup> century and the level of professional learning community. Moreover, to find the predicted variables used to predict the professional learning community, the researcher analyzed data by using stepwise multiple regression analysis.

## Conclusion

1. The overall of core competencies of school administrators in 21<sup>st</sup> century under Krabi Educational Service Area Office was at the highest level. Moreover, the output revealed that the average of integrity and accountability competency was the highest competency; the average of service mind development competency was the lowest, which showed based on the chart 1 : The core competencies of school administrators in 21<sup>st</sup> century in primary school under Krabi Primary Educational Service Area Office.

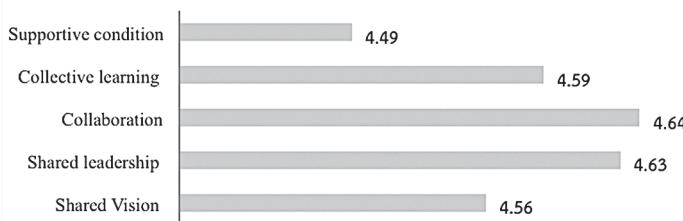
**The chart 1: The core competencies of school administrators in 21st century in primary school under Krabi Primary Educational Service Area Office**



2. The overall of the level professional learning community in the schools under Krabi Educational Service Area Office was at the highest level. Moreover, the output revealed that the average of collaboration was the highest; the

average of supportive condition was the lowest, which showed based on the chart 2 : Professional learning development in primary school under Krabi Primary Educational Service Area Office.

**The chart 2: Professional learning development in primary school under Krabi Primary Educational Service Area Office**



3. The factors of Core competencies of school administrators in 21<sup>st</sup> century affecting to professional learning community showed

the output based on table 1 Model Summary and table 2 Coefficients.

**Table 1 : Model Summary**

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	S.E <sub>b</sub>
1 ( $X_3$ )	.758	.574	.571	.182
2 ( $X_3, X_5$ )	.789	.622	.617	.172
3 ( $X_3, X_5, X_4$ )	.795	.632	.625	.171

The model summary is based on the Table 1. The value of R<sup>2</sup> is .574 (Model 1) shows that there are 57.4% (R = .758) changes in professional learning community. It due to changes in collective learning and team working competency. This explains that collective learning and team working competency is major factor to professional learning community. The value of R<sup>2</sup> is .622 (R = .789) for Model 2 shows that there are 62.2% changes in professional learning community is occurred because changes in combination of two variables which collective learning and team working competency and self-directed professional development

competency. Moreover, the value of R<sup>2</sup> is .632 (R = .795) for Model 3 shows that there are 63.2% changes in professional learning community is occurred because changes in combination of three variables which collective learning and team working competency, self-directed professional development competency, and integrity and accountability competency.

By comparing these models, Model 3 is the best model that fits to the data. This is because the highest value of R<sup>2</sup> and adjusted R<sup>2</sup> (Model 1 = .571; Model 2 = .617; Model 2 = .625), the best model fits to the data.

Table 2 : Coefficients

Model	Coefficients	Standard error	Beta	Significant value	
				t - value	
1 (Constant)	1.528	.218		7.002	.000
$X_3$	.664	.047	.758	14.032	.000
2 (Constant)	1.270	.215		5.913	.000
$X_3$	.464	.064	.530	7.203	.000
$X_3, X_5$	.261	.061	.316	4.295	.000
3 (Constant)	.874	.292		2.990	.003
$X_3$	.428	.066	.489	6.450	.000
$X_3, X_5$	.215	.064	.260	3.333	.001
$X_3, X_5, X_4$	.160	.081	.135	1.977	.050

According to Table 2, it shows coefficients. From that coefficient, we can develop two models using Multiple Linear Regression equation below:

Model 1 :

$$\hat{Y} = .874 + .428(X_3)^{**} + .215(X_5)^{**} + .160(X_4)^{**}$$

Model 2 :

$$\hat{Z}_y = .489(X_3)^{**} + .260(X_5)^{**} + .135(X_4)^{**}$$

Based on the Model 1, the standardized coefficients for collective learning and team working competency ( $\beta = .758$ ,  $p < .01$ ) is significant. This explained that only collective learning and team working competency is factor to professional learning community. In Model 2, the standardized coefficients for collective learning and team working competency ( $\beta = .530$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and self-directed professional development competency ( $\beta = .316$ ,  $p < .01$ ) are significant. While in model 3, the standardized coefficients for collective learning and team working competency ( $\beta = .489$ ,  $p < .01$ ), self-directed professional development competency ( $\beta = .260$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and integrity and accountability competency ( $\beta = .135$ ,  $p < .01$ ) are significant.

This explained that collective learning and team working competency, self - directed professional development competency, and integrity and accountability competency are factors to professional learning community. In conclusion, Model 3 is the best model fits to the data.

## Discussion

The research finding indicates that the overall of core competencies of school administrators in 21<sup>st</sup> century and professional learning community under Krabi Educational Service Area Office were at the highest level; the factors of Core competencies of school administrators in 21<sup>st</sup> century which are collective

learning and team working competency, self - directed professional development competency and also integrity and accountability competency can affect to and can be predictable professional learning community in the schools. This can be described based on the research objectives.

**The objective 1 :** the overall of core competencies of school administrators in 21<sup>st</sup> century under Krabi Educational Service Area Office were at the highest level; the output also revealed that the average of integrity and accountability competency was the highest competency. The researcher found that core competencies of school administrators have been improved continuously because of a project of Primary Educational Service Area Office. The project aimed to develop and assess achievement of school administrators, as well as, to promote school administrators' competencies and potentials. Moreover, they have been well trained to clearly determine goal and empower teachers by participatory management. Furthermore, educational transformation by Ministry of Education particularly focuses on development and specifically potentials of school administrators needed to play important roles in the new era, (Ministry of Education, 2003) especially core competencies of school administrators. Consequently, the level of core competencies of administrators in 21<sup>st</sup> century was at high level.

Besides, Ethic and good governance are critical factors in leadership; as school administrators' action can affect on other teachers. While, Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning (2006) highlighted about leadership and accountability which were the quality of school administrators. the researcher found that there is a plan, Krabi educational development plan during 2017 - 2021,

which emphasize on ethic and good governance in modern administration. Accordingly, the average of integrity and accountability competency was the highest competency.

**The objective 2 :** The overall of professional learning community in the schools under Krabi Educational Service Area Office was at the highest level. According to the reveal above, the researcher found that the level of PLC was high because one of the Ministry's policies was promoting PLC in every school in the country. In order to improve student learning outcomes, the Ministry Committee believed that teachers should be trained and improved themselves as good teachers and professionalism in teaching. Additionally, since primary school has smaller number of staffs, it can reduce the gap among teachers and all staff in the school; making it easy to get everyone involve in the community. After building up professional learning community within schools, Krabi Primary Educational Service Area Office also offer schools the possibility to connect across the schools, by creating 19 school networks in the area. Hence, Primary schools in Krabi are able to learn and share as the community within and across the school in order to achieve mutual goals, the improvement of student learning outcomes. As a result, the level of professional learning community was at the highest level.

**The objective 3 :** The result shows that there are 63.2% changes in professional learning community is occurred because changes in combination of three variables which collective learning and team working competency, self - directed professional development competency, and integrity and accountability competency.

The collective learning and team working competency is the best factors affecting professional learning community; associated

with a study of Payao Sutruk (2010) found that the coefficient of core competency in team working was at the highest level. In order to build up a team, school administrators need to understand people and be able to work as a team, as well as, get others to trust them and support their team to move up, to make decision in group, and to improve at all times. (Sharmir cited in Muchinsky, 2003). However, school administrators is not just a leader in the team; they are also head of learning who eager to learn and reflect on their learning (Louis and Kurse, 1995).

Moreover, when added self - directed professional development competency to combine with collective learning and team working competency, there is higher changes in professional learning community. Learning and sharing together requires various types of knowledge and skills to reflect on the learning and sharing; school administrators therefore need to continuously improve themselves as leaders of learning in community (Sasirada Pangthai, 2016) and learn to thrive to influence others. Also, Hish and Hord (2008) highlighted a role of school administrators as head learners who create pathway and encourage others to meet to discuss and learn.

Lastly, integrity and accountability competency is one of the factors affecting professional learning community. School administrators need to improve themselves and be accountable for their own decisions and results (Helter and Killiam, 2011); they also need to promote sense of accountability to others in order to succeed team collaboration. Additionally, Integrity and accountability competency can build trust and encourage willingness of teachers and all staffs to focus on work.

The combination of the three competencies totally affects professional learning community. School administrators should be trained and promote these competencies in order to effectively build up professional learning community in schools.

## Suggestions

### 1. Suggestions for using the research result

1.1. School administrators should be trained to develop collective learning and team working competency; by creating groups or school networks to meet and share ideas, and then develop the way to improve student learning outcomes in order to build up professional learning community.

1.2. School administrators should be trained to develop self - directed professional development competency by meeting within school networks and reflect on practice in schools, giving feedback for development in professional learning community.

1.3. School administrators should establish trust within team and truly show respect and accountability. As head of learning, school administrators have qualities to motivate teams to work and develop as professionalism for professional learning community.

1.4. Administrative system should be developed effectively for the changes in 21<sup>st</sup> century; by utilizing information technology and innovation for analyzing, working, evaluating, and developing in order to make the community work more effectively.

1.5. Supportive condition would help teachers to work and learn more conveniently; school administrators should give budget to support materials and supplies align with the needs of teachers.

1.6. Educational office or educators should focus on developing training course or curriculum based on competency development in order to increase core competency of school administrators in 21st century for building up and continually developing professional learning community.

## 2. Suggestions for further research

2.1. There should be a qualitative research to study behaviors and indicators for assessing core competencies of administrators in 21<sup>st</sup> century.

2.2. There should be a qualitative research to study circumstances, as well as, obstacles and limitations in professional learning community.

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