

Decentralization and Innovation of Educational Management Relating to Thai Local Government

Suparat Sukwisuth¹

Chakrit Noranitipadungkarn²

Abstract

In the 85 years since the revolution that transformed the country into a democracy, progress in educational decentralization has been made but it has been rather slow due to the central authorities' fear that local agencies do not have the capability to realize the changeover. This situation, however, is gradually changing. Some local authorities have lately shown their talents in strengthening their capacity to educate their people. The objectives of this research were: (1) to study the evolution of Thai decentralization in educational administration policy from the central government to local governments; (2) to study how the local government shows their capacity to manage the education as they are given the opportunity to do so, and, finally; (3) To identify innovation in education administration that local governments have shown so far. This can be considered proof that, if given the opportunity. Local governments can successfully implement central government-initiated educational

^{1,2}Graduate School of Public Administration Burapha University, Thailand

decentralization policy. The research methodology includes document reviews, interviews with well-known scholars of government education, authorities and administrators. Lastly, it uses a questionnaire for local administrators and school headmasters throughout the country.

This study found that,

First, the evolution of Thai educational decentralization. There are three different phases in the decentralization of education from central government to local government. First, after the regime change to the Kingdom of Thailand from 1932 until 1997. This time was the beginnings of Thai democracy. It has been very slow because of problems with unity and national security. Second, during the constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand from 1997 to 2007. This second time saw the blooming of Thai democracy under pressure from the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand. Third was under the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand from 2007 - 2017. This period has seen the achievement of some real results, with development resulting from recognition of the importance of decentralization. Second, The readiness and capacity of Thai local government to respond to educational decentralization. the highest mean value of process management is for planning (4.31), followed by leading (4.29), organizing (4.23), evaluation (4.18), creativity (4.15), and educational management (3.98). All of them, however, are

interpreted as being in the “Strongly Agree”. The current resource management opinions of Thai local government toward readiness and capacity to respond to educational decentralization the highest mean value for resource management is for materials (4.25), followed by human resources (4.20), information technology (4.01) and finance and budgeting (3.80) all are in the “Strongly Agree”. Finally, The innovations in educational decentralization by Thai local governments The results of this study show that educational innovation has happened in local government in two major ways. There is innovation in local management, including participation and progressive vision of local governors and local school administrators, and innovation in local education.

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In the fact, local governments have the potential for local educational innovation. They should be allowed the opportunity for a positive attitude in local educational management. Furthermore, educational decentralization has usefully developed not only local communities, but also has strengthened national development as well. This is because if people in local communities receive good educational opportunities and a standard quality of education, equity in education services can increase human resources development, bringing more sustainable development

Keywords : decentralization, innovation of educational management, local government

Introduction

The world is changing rapidly due to population growth, technological advancement, and convenience of travel between countries. It is very important for each country to be prepared for such changes or else they lose competitiveness and, more importantly, perhaps their very survival. Countries without innovative missions and human development in education lose competitiveness in such an environment. Thus, In order to survive and be able to maintain an educated population, nations need to adjust, adapt and reform. It is the duty and responsibility of the government in a large or modern country, where the population is scattered, to reach everybody across the country. Among the most necessary issues for the government is education because, education is the foundation of much of the life and development of people's lives. Education needs be locally-specific as well as standardized nationally. There are many reasons for a centralized administrative style. First, the large size of populations means rapid population expansion. Second, if the central government's policies are slow to respond to people's requirements, the government is considered to be irresponsible towards their population. Third, there are differences between the central government context and local government contexts. Fourth, there are limitations in how governments can provide public service policy to the people. It is necessary to decentralize. The central government transfers some power of administration to local governments. Educational decentralization is an important factor for decentralization of administration, because the educational administration by the central government is not adequate for all the population in all places, so the government must design

educational policy for people remote from central government power centers. Meanwhile, the local government has to increase their potential to respond to educational decentralization policies from the central government.

Thailand is a reasonably large country. Presently, it has a population of about 65 million living in 77 provinces with a total area of 513,120 square kilometers, with the government divided by type according to level. These are divided into three levels : central, provincial and local. The central government consists of two types: ordinary and special. The central level consists of Ministries, Bureaus, and Departments. The provincial government consists of provinces. Local government consists of two types : ordinary local government and special local governments. The ordinary local governments are Provincial Administrative Organizations (PAO), covering a total area of 513,120 square kilometers, and which is divided into 76 provincial administrative areas. There are three levels of Municipalities; 1) city municipalities with a total area of 1,395.49 square kilometers established in areas with a population of at least 50,000 citizens; 2) town municipalities with a total area of 3,893.79 square kilometers, established in areas where there are at least 10,000 citizens, and; 3) Sub-district Administrative Organizations (SAO), which is any other local government municipal area. The special local government is established in significant localities. Currently, this type of local government consists only of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) and Pattaya City. Thus, there exists a need to decentralize administration to reach people equally and to be competitive. Thailand needs to boost the people's capacity to match the changing environment.

In the 85 years since the revolution that transformed the country into a democracy, progress in educational decentralization has been made but it has been rather slow due to the central authorities' fear that local agencies do not have the capability to realize the changeover. This situation, however, is gradually changing. Some local authorities have lately shown their talents in strengthening their capacity to educate their people. The objectives of this research were: (1) to study the evolution of Thai decentralization in educational administration policy from the central government to local governments; (2) to study how the local government shows their capacity to manage the education as they are given the opportunity to do so, and, finally; (3) this research will identify innovation in education administration that local governments have shown so far. This can be considered proof that, if given the opportunity. Local governments can successfully implement central government-initiated educational decentralization policy.

The research methodology used in this study both qualitative approach for described the evaluation includes document reviews, interviews with well-known scholars of government education, authorities and administrators. And, quantitative approach for described the capability in education management that survey the opinions in the educational capability of Thai local government. The samples group have collected from 491 cases sampled from a representative population working in both Thai local governments and schools run by local governments and data Interpretation was defined as follows:

Table 1 : Data Interpretation

Mean	Data Interpretation
4.51 – 5.00	Strongly Agree
3.51 – 4.50	Somewhat Agree
2.51 – 3.50	Moderately Agree
1.51 – 2.50	Somewhat disagree
0.00 – 1.50	Strongly Disagree

Finding and Discussing :

1. The evolution of Thai educational decentralization.

There are three different phrases in the decentralization of education. First, after the regime change to the Kingdom of Thailand from 1932 until 1997. This time was the beginnings of Thai democracy. It has been very slow because of problems with unity and national security. Second, during the constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand from 1997 to 2007. This second time saw the blooming of Thai democracy under pressure from the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand. Third was under the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand from 2007–Present. This period has seen the achievement of some real results, with development resulting from recognition of the importance of decentralization.

2. The readiness and capacity of Thai local government to respond to educational decentralization. Concepts for analysis of the readiness and capacity of Thai local government to respond to educational decentralization include process management and resource management. Process management

included planning, organizing, leading, creativity, evaluation and educational management. Resource management included human resources, finance and budgeting, materials, and information technology. Respondents were recovered in 457 cases, representing 93 percent

Table 2 : Current process management opinions of Thai local government toward readiness and capacity to respond to educational decentralization.

Process	Opinions		Data Interpretation
	Mean	S.D.	
Planning	4.31	0.53	Strongly Agree
Organizing	4.23	0.54	Strongly Agree
Leading	4.29	0.58	Strongly Agree
Creativity	4.15	0.60	Strongly Agree
Evaluation	4.18	0.59	Strongly Agree
EducationalManagement.	3.98	0.66	Strongly Agree

The table shows that the highest mean value of process management is for planning (4.31), followed by leading (4.29), organizing (4.23), evaluation (4.18), creativity (4.15), and educational management (3.98). All of them, however, are interpreted as being in the “Strongly Agree”

Table 3 : Current resource management opinions of Thai local government toward readiness and capacity to respond to educational decentralization

Resources	Opinion		Data Interpreting
	Mean	S.D.	
Human Resources	4.20	0.58	Strongly Agree
Financial and Budgeting	3.80	0.73	Strongly Agree
Materials	4.25	0.60	Strongly Agree
Information Technology	4.01	0.68	Strongly Agree

The table shows the highest mean value for resource management is for materials (4.25), followed by human resources (4.20), information technology (4.01) and finance and budgeting (3.80). All are in the “Strongly Agree” level.

3. Innovations in educational decentralization by Thai local governments.

The results of this analysis show that educational innovation has happened in local government in two major ways. There is innovation in local management, including participation and progressive vision of local governors and local school administrators, and innovation in local education.

Initially, innovation in local education management by local management was not responsive because the central government assigned management of local education

representatives of the central government rather than opening opportunities to various groups in the local community with the result that many local education development projects were unsuccessful. However, with educational decentralization policies, there have been many factors supporting the development of local education, such as local educational policy, local governors, master administrators of local schools and budgeting subsidies. All these factors can be seen as sources of innovation in management local management participation. Due to increased local participation, local teams have been initiated that will expand cooperation in local communities to participants from every part of the community to have a say in the development of local education. They could be able to form absolutely local education policies which they can formulate to express their expectations of local education and propose them to the central government. Local education policy is one important way to encourage local management innovation. In addition, participation is bringing about budget reform for participants to subsidize support for high-performance projects in local education innovation and encourage cooperation as participants can feel that they are a part of local education development for their own local communities. Moreover, innovative management is part of the progressive vision of local governors and local school administrators. One key success factor is leadership; not only by local governors but also school administrators. If both the local government and local schools can

enhance leadership skills, innovation in local education is bound to follow.

Second, innovation in Thai local educations are of four main types; the idea of SBMLD (School Based Management for Local Development), curricula, teachers and extra-curricular activities. Local schools have community-based curricula that integrate local content with general, standard curricula.

The idea of SBMLD (School Based Management for Local Development) is to enhance local development with the assumption that a grass-root basis to development is more likely to succeed. In addition, local educational development must occur in tandem with central educational development. This concept is supported by related organizations such as the Department of Local Administration (DLA) in the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Education.

Local content curricula are designed by local participants; administrators, experienced local leaders, teachers, and guardians. The local curriculum is not only an innovation by Thai local education, but it maintains the value of traditional knowledge for the new generation and supports good relationships within a locally-connected community.

For teachers, the world has become practically borderless. Local schools have to prepare their students with language skills. Formerly, they have had limitations on access to teachers with language expertise, while at present, local schools can innovate,

for example, with Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) to enhance organizational capacity both domestically and abroad, and also with the option of hiring language teachers from among ex-patriots living in Thailand and who have fluent language skills, such as in English, Chinese, Japanese and others, according to local needs.

Extra-curricular activities are of key importance to success in building educational innovation. Such activities are not only advantageous for students in school, but also they can adapt knowledge to lifelong learning processes and improve their chances to continue on to advanced study, change their job prospects and economic activity, and gain advantage for their local community (for example, with the development of instructional media such as computer science languages and others, the reading for happiness project, garbage robots, playing football, and making local chili sauce, playing Thai music, traditional music, robot competitions, energy saving cars etc.).

Conclusion

The evolution of Thai educational decentralization has occurred in three phrases. At first, it was very slow because of a focus on unity and national security. Second, during the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand from 1997 to 2007, Thai democracy, under the new Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, began to strengthen. Third, practical results have been achieved in recent with recognition and involvement of local participants.

The readiness and capacity of Thai local governments to respond to educational innovation stem from process management and recourse management. Process management consists of planning, organizing, leading, creativity, evaluation and educational management. Resource management includes human resources, finance and budgeting, materials, and information technology. The survey opinions from both Thai local governments and local government schools reveal the educational potential of local government to be responsible for local education. All of these factors were seen to be perceived of as at a good level. The result of this analysis shows that education innovation has happened in Thailand's local governments in two main fields: innovation in local management and innovation by local educational institutions. This has been done in four main ways: the idea of SBMLD, curricula, teachers and extra-curricular activities.

This study found that, in fact, local governments have the potential for local educational innovation. They should be allowed the opportunity for a positive attitude in local educational management. Furthermore, educational decentralization has usefully developed not only local communities, but also has strengthened national development as well. This is because if people in local communities receive good educational opportunities and a standard quality of education, equity in education services can increase human resources development, bringing more sustainable development.

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