

# Effective Early Childhood Education Administrative Management of Bilingual Schools : Sakon Nakhon Bilingual School

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# Effective Early Childhood Education Administrative Management of Bilingual Schools : Sakon Nakhon Bilingual School

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Abstract: The study aims 1) to study and analyze the past, status quo and effective management practices in Sakon Nakhon Bilingual School, 2) to develop integrated management based on the concepts of F.M. (Facility Management) and ELMA using participatory action research approach, and 3) to compare the learning management competencies of the co-researchers before and after the research was conducted. The target groups for this research include: 1 researcher, 12 kindergarten teachers as co-researchers, 21 key informants, including three educational experts and 18 students' parents. The results were as follows: 1. After 5 years the school has evolved from a daycare center to a medium-sized private school. As a result, the school provides an appropriate, clean environment, facility management and fundamental facilities for early childhood education management. Parents' satisfaction is high resulting in their cooperation in all student activities. F.M. and ELMA have been adopted and continuously integrated in order to enhance the quality of learners. After the implementation of the entire projects in 2 spirals. This allows participants to better divide responsibilities and collaborate. The co-researchers' performance were assessed at a great level. The findings allow the co-researchers to create early childhood learning plans that can be used in learning classroom management and learners' assessment. Three aspects of effective management are the coresearchers' learning management capacity was increased 12.54%. Stakeholders' satisfaction of management effectiveness was excellent. Students' perfomances and development after the research was excellent compared to the Likert's 5 Rating Scale.

**Keywords:** Bilingual Schools, Early Childhood Education, Effective Administrative Management

# **1. Introduction**

Early childhood education is available in public and private basic education institutions as well as bilingual schools, which has been in place since 1997. The school provides curriculum according to the Basic Education Curriculum B.E. 2544 (2001) using English as a medium to develop the early childhood learners' knowledge potential and language skills. The learners' basic language proficiency must be acknowlegded with integrity, good ethics, and teaching and learning in a context of universal integration. Bilingual schools are 2 categories: 1) English Program (EP) is a bilingual school that provides instruction in English for all subjects except Thai language and social studies. 2) Mini English Program (MEP) is a bilingual school that provides education in English for up to 50% of the total teaching hours per week. Hoy and Miskel (2005, p. 373) has defined school effectiveness as academic achievement. It enbles students to develop a positive attitude and to adapt to the society environment and able to solve problems within the school very well. From the foregoing, we can conclude that school effectiveness is the ability of a school to manage to achieve the set goals. To accomodate that, stakeholders' satisfaction and teachers' learning management competencies are developed and adapted to the context.

Today's early childhood education focuses on several issues, especially English as the second language learning because English is the most common language in the world. And it is the language that we mainly use to communicate with each other. For this reason, there are many countries that include English as a second language to the national language. Teaching English is essential for today's children's learning. In particular, the policy on preparing children for the ASEAN Community focuses on using English as a tool to communicate with foreigners. Furthermore, their age-related development and cognitive abilities should take into account of the teaching English approach to young learners. According to the development principles of early-aged children, today's children are mainly learning from emotional-based learning. Interacting with adults through whole-language teaching that emphasizes word-shape recognition leads to fun and literacy. (Nattaporn Chaidej, 2012, p. 2)

# 1.1 Theoretical framework

Sakon Nakhon Bilingual School is a private school under the Office of the Private Education Commission, Sakon Nakhon Provincial Office of Education, Ministry of Education. The first prekindergarten daycare was opened on May 7, 2018 with 14 kids under the name Montessori Sakon Nakhon Bilingual School. It is located in Sakon Nakhon Municipality, Mueang District, Sakon Nakhon Province. By the end of the 2018 school year, there were 45 students, so in the 2019 academic year, the school management established a second location. In 2020, in both schools had a significant increase in the number of students and the need to expand the number of rooms for each class. Therefore, the two locations were relocated into a new location with a distance of 1 kilometer to be located in Muang District, Sakon Nakhon Province, under the name Sakon Nakhon Bilingual School in July 2020, the school was well received by the community, the number of students rapidly increased to 270 students from pre-kindergarten to G4 nowadays.

# 1.2 Management Concepts

The school administrators are well aware of the importance of classroom environment and its surrounding, as it affects students' ability to learn. Color and noise conditions influence teachers and learners at all times. Therefore, administrators must understand the principles of school environment management appropriately. To achieve education management well-set goals, Facility Management (F.M.) being discussed in 3 components: 1) physical environment, 2) school atmosphere, 3) academic support environment. As the researcher is the the Sakon Nakhon Bilingual School administrator, she reconizes the importance of classroom environment and surrounding.

At the school, English language is taught by foreign teachers at all levels to provide foundation and language preparation for students. Therefore, ELMA teaching concept has been organizing in the school for some time, which is a teaching and learning arrangement based on 4 components as follow: 1) Teaching English as a foreign language; (EFL) 2) Literacy Learning 3) Montessori 4) Active Learning. Parents are satisfied with the school's management and their child English development as there is a tendency to send more students to kindergarten (3-5 years old) in the current year.

School education management is based on the Ministry of Education's Early Childhood Education Curriculum B.E. 2560 (2017) and adopts the concepts of F.M. and ELMA as a focus on improving students' English language skills. It is the development of management in accordance with the identity and school's motto and vision. In addition, the school is in a period of volume expansion. Students and parents should be able to play their part in improving the quality of management. Therefore, the researcher, who is a school administrator, applied the principles of normal management to Participatory Action Research (PAR) and aims to bring a change in the school. Teachers and students expected to be able to integrate everyday classroom learning according to the concepts of F.M. and ELMA effectively and efficiently.

#### 1.3 Objectives of the Study

To study and analyze past and current conditions and effective management approaches in Sakon Nakhon Bilingual School and To develop integrated F.M. and ELMA management concepts using participatory action research processes to achieve management effectiveness : 1) co-researchers' learning management competencies, 2) stakeholders' reactions, and 3) learners' learning behaviors. Lastly, to measure the management development according to the participatory action research cycle, resulting in co-researchers' learning management competencies, stakeholders' reactions and learners' learning behaviors.

#### 1.4 Research hypothesis

After participatory action research, school management will be more effective and co-researchers will have higher learning management capabilities.

# 2. Related Literature

# 2.1 Facility Management

Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) cited in Prasert Buajanath (2016, p. 25) had stated that facility management has 4 effects on students, teachers and school: 1) Students will benefit the most from their studies when the school environment is well-prepared (Pascarella and Terenzini 2005, p. 626). Learners will be able to learn more and more efficiently when they have the options to learn through a variety of activities. 2) learning is more effective with incorporating knowledge into students' social activities. Students are given the freedom to think about how to make good use of their time. In order to encourage learners to gain knowledge during various types of activities, transparency and consistency in educational administration must be maintained in order to be able to create learning models 3) Integration of learning and social activities will improve learners' learning abilities (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005) Therefore, it is necessary to establish integrated supplementary learning activities as a curriculum. For example, the link between daily life and the content of the lesson will have a positive impact on the learners when educational institutions supports students in achieving educational goals and consistent educational values and objectives of educational institutions. 4) When learners feel that the school values them. they feel the need of participation because the school values welfare and values their educational success. Kuh and others (1991), cited in Prasert Buajanath (2016, p. 25).

Areeya Starat (2013, p. 15) says that school facility management should make everyone feel warm. The facility management objectives are : 1) To organize and adjust the environment in the school to suit the teaching and students' well-being, 2) To make students love and be proud of their school, 3) To make students develop in 4 aspects: physical, emotional, social, and intellectual, 4) To

make students disciplined, loving, beautiful and moral. 5) To make the school as an example to the community.

From the foregoing, it can be concluded that the importance of the school environment is the factor that students will benefit from learning the most. Learners will be able to learn more effectively and encourage them to gain knowledge during various types of activities. It must be transparency and consistency in educational administration in order to create a long-term model for learners' learning. Therefore, it needs to be linked between daily life and the content of the lessons, learners will feel that they will have to participate in various activities because the school places importance on the oncampus environment to promote the 21st century learning skills. Physical aspects both inside and outside the classroom should be appropriately suited to learning. As for psychology, it should create an environment to foster good relationships. To keep students motivated and have good feelings that lead to effective learning. To jointly promote learners' development to be knowledgeable and to be good quality citizens of the nation, stakeholders in educational management can apply facility management guidelines to their own educational context. The 21-century teaching and learning model is one in which teachers have to shift their roles from teachers to learning facilitators. In other words, teachers have to change their way of transferring knowledge from educating students alone to providing skills. Emphasis is placed on learners to be able to learn on their own and be able to integrate and expand on their own (Critique Panich, 2555). It is also necessary to design an appropriate educational environment (Office of the Secretary-General of the Education Council, 2014). For concepts and theories related to the educational environment. Therefore, we would like to propose the following elements of F.M. (Facility Management) (Parliament Pongpinyo, 2013, p. 25).

# 2.2 ELMA Concept

E: English as a Foreign language: To develop English communication skills in early childhood students to be most effective Lenneberg (1967) states that the time to learn a language quickly and closely to learning a first language in terms of quality and duration is during the critical period, i.e. between 0 and 12 years old which corresponds to Brown (1994), who agrees that after the critical period at the age of 12, language learners are less successful in pronouncing a second language than native speakers. , which is also in line with the 1995 government policy that declared students to learn English as a foreign language by providing instruction from elementary school onwards (Sripicha Chatasirikul, 2017, pp. 68-69).

L: Literacy Learning: Whole Language Approach is based on the principles and ideas of educator Jean Piaget, who believes that the child's movement will create knowledge within him/herself. The child will be an active person, not passive. The relationship between sound and image, sound and letters is knowledge of the alphabet and an element of children's reading. Piaget believes that language teaching is important for children to use to solve problems in their daily lives and that language has meaning for life. Learning the language must come from something that is true and relevant to the child by learning the language holistically: learning to listen, speak, read and write at the same time. Natural language teaching has been prevalent in Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Canada since the 1970s. In Thailand, Thai-Israel Foundation published the whole language approach during the year 2538 – 2539 (Natsajee Songin 2017, pp. 43 -46).

M: Montessori learning concept provides a home-like school environment and support freedom for children, counseling and encouraging children to think on their own to solve problems and to use their minds to absorb the environment. Children is a priority in Montessori that also encourages children to learn independently. It is teachers and administrators' responsibility to provide an environment and equipment for children to practice mechanical skills through the five senses to create awareness through knowing how to control their own work. Montessori teaching concept believes that children are those who know their needs and have the ability to absorb learning from the environment (Chulintipa Nopakun, 2017, p. 14).

A: Active Learning is a learning management process that focuses on maximizing learners' abilities.

In particular, Active Learning creates advanced thinking skills consisted of analysis, synthesis and valuation. The main characteristics of Active Learning are the opportunity for learners to participate in the learning process, build knowledge and organize their own learning. It also strengthens accountability. This is in line with training learners to possess 21st century attributes and skills. The key principle of Active Learning is to encourage learners to participate in the class and interact between instructors and learners through techniques or activities. Teachers play a role in facilitating and providing an environment that allows students to build their own knowledge to create meaningful learning (Boonsuporn Pengtha, 2019, p. 3).

# **3.** Conceptual Framework

3.1 Research is Sakon Nakhon Bilingual School, Muang District, Sakon Nakhon Province, under the Office of the Private Education Promotion Commission. Co-researchers are 12 Sakon Nakhon Bilingual School kindergarten teachers and key informants are 21 persons consists of 3 educational experts and 18 kindergarten students' parent representatives

3.2 Content Scope are 3 components of F.M. (Facility Management) concept are: 1) Basic school facility environment 2) School environment 3) Academic support environment. In addition, ELMA concept components are 1) E: English as a Foreign Language (EFL) 2) L: Literacy Learning 3) M: Montessori 4) A: Active Learning then integrate both concepts into the school management context.

#### 4. Methodology

This research uses the Participatory Action Research methodology as a school research and a pursuit of practical truth with the aim of the quality integrated quality management enhancement based on the F.M. and ELMA concepts in the classroom environment. It enables school administrators and teachers to develop learners effectively and efficiently according to the school's identity.

#### 4.1 Research Design

The researcher used Kemmis & McTaggart's (1988) operational research cycle with four stages: Planning, Action, Observation, and Reflection. This design is characterized by dynamic processes that are characterized by a spiral of interaction that is reversed and further developed in a new cycle (Back and Forth). The research was divided into 3 phases: Phase 1: Research preparation is divided into 3 stages: School analysis stage. Creation of research instrument and preparation of research co-authors Phase 2: Research operations in 2 cycles and Phase 3: Summarizing research findings. The researcher has adopted the researcher's code of conduct, (Virote Sarrattana) 10 Code of Research Conduct (p. 109) which used to minimize bias.

The participatory action research methodology was chosen because it gives teachers the opportunity to become collaborative co-researchers in planning and making research decisions. Teachers are involved throughout the research process, from studying past and current conditions and effective management practices in the school by problem analysis, planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation. The knowledge that arises from participatory action research is a practice that is not understood alone but by action but by bringing abstract understanding into concrete action.

#### 4.2 Research Instrument

1. School Record Form are note-taking forms from school documents and structured interviews from school founders and school administrators. Document content analysis and interview analysis were conducted.

2. Meeting Record Form is note-taking by the researcher and co- researchers which was document content analysis after the meeting.

3. Co-researchers' self-assessment form is co- researchers' self-evaluated before and after the research. Inquery analysis and interview analysis were conducted.

4. Stakeholders' Reaction Assessment Form was inquery analyzed.

5. Performance Skills Assessment Form is evaluated by the 3 educational experts and using inquery analysis.

6. Learners learning behavior observation is evaluated by co-researchers using inquery analysis.

# 5. Research Conceptual Framework

Research on Effective Early Chilhood Education Management in Bilingual Schools: The Case of Sakon Nakhon Bilingual School defines the research conceptual framework as follows:



3. Learners learning behavior

#### 6. Results and Discussion

According to the first research purpose which was to study and analyze past and current conditions and effective management approaches in Sakon Nakhon Bilingual Schools, it was found that this school was established in May 2018 under the name of Montessori Sakon Nakhon Bilingual School with pre-kindergarten and kindergarten class and later the number of students increased, so the second school, Sakon Nakhon Bilingual School, was established to accommodate the rapid expansion of the number of students. Therefore, the school has been offering pre-kindergarten to kindergarten 3 and English language instruction by foreign teachers at all levels in order to lay the foundation and prepare students for the language. The school had adopted the concept of ELMA teaching and learning for some time consisted of 1) Teaching English as a foreign language (English as a Foreign Language: EFL) 2) Literacy instruction Literacy Learning 3) Montessori 4) Active Learning. Students were found to have satisfactory English language development. Teachers are content and enjoy new learning management. Parents are satisfied with the school's general management. There is a tendency to send more students to all level both kindergarten and elementary in the current year. The school is a private educational institution that can boost teachers' morale and job security. All staff and teachers are constantly improving themselves in the profession of teachers to fit the school standard.

To answer the second research objective which was to develop integrated F.M. and ELMA management concepts using participatory action research to achieve effective early childhood education administrative management : 1) co-researchers<sup>1</sup> learning management competencies, 2) stakeholders' reactions, and 3) learners' learning behaviors by conducting 7 workshops that lead to the 3 administrative management components. The 7 workshops are 1) Participatory Action Research 2) How to teach English to kindergarteners" (E: English as a Foreign Language: EFL) 3) Teaching Early Childhood Literacy Learning 4) Montessori Learning management 5) Early childhood children EF skills with an emphasis on Active Learning 6) Child Development and Assessment 7) Teachers<sup>1</sup> Educational Field Trips. All projects supposedly lead to a better education administrative management.

Last research's objective is to measure the management development according to the participatory action research cycle, resulting in co-researchers' learning management competencies, stakeholders' reactions and learners' learning behaviors. Two spirals of participatory action research have created and developed seven workshop projects and put them into practice using school resources. As a result, the co-researcher attended the workshop and were able to create at least 3 lesson plans for each class, prepare Home Sweet Home manuals and provide appropriate classroom environments for all classrooms. By integrating the concepts of F.M. and ELMA as an interpolator to achieve effectiveness in 4 aspects, teacher learning management competency, stakeholder reaction, learner learning behavior, and comparison of teacher competency assessment results on management. Based on the self-assessment of the participants before and after the research. According to the participatory action research process in these 2 cycles, the improvement of the action plan towards development is in line with the research hypothesis that is after the participatory action research, school management will be more effective and co-researchers have higher learning management capabilities.

The researcher and co-researchers observed the project implementation in the first cycle to ensure the 3 mentioned effectiveness aspects according to the participatory action research process. There are also guidelines for organizing activities that are appropriate and beneficial to research. With appropriate guidelines, the researcher and co- researchers have continued to re-do some projects as an improvement in the second cycle. Therefore, we continued in the second cycle, resulting in the F.M. and ELMA management development activities in the school to develop the critical thinking skills and performance skills. As a result, teachers have knowledge and better understanding of early childhood education management. The conduct of this research has achieved its purpose. Scorecards and targets as defined in all respects.

From the results of the assessment of the development of school management arising from the implementation of the Education Development Plan based on the Participatory Action Research (PAR) process, it was concluded that the Sakon Nakhon Bilingual School kindergarten teachers had a high level of knowledge and understanding of the effective management development in the School.

#### 7. Findings Discussion

From the research on effective management in bilingual schools: the case of Sakon Nakhon Bilingual School discusses as follow:

1. Historical conditions Status quo and effective management approach in Sakon Nakhon Bilingual School

Former conditions of Sakon Nakhon Bilingual School from May 2018 to the 2023 academic year, the school has transitioned from a nursery to a medium-sized private school within five years. As a result, the school has expanded its facilities to accommodate its expanded number of students. There is also a ground called "Rainbow Yard" for kindergarteners to do multi-activities in. One additional swimming pool has been constructed as a full-size pool to prepare for the rising number of students and to prepare a group of students to form up a group of competitive youth swimmers. SNBS Dome is at the elementary section and is utilized for activities that include all students. Facility management is important in early childhood education administration as safety is the priority matter that parents concern about and the first thing school administrators and teachers must care for.

A culture of happiness and workplace satisfaction was emphasized in the research based on the believe of satisfaction is in related to a quality work culture (Jinnawat Pakotang, 2018, p. 277) Doing participatory action research has increased teachers' knowledge and understanding of their work and their colleagues. A Greater recognition of peers' advantages and disadvantages makes classroom work seamless and better collaborative work. This research encourages teachers to collaborate to put their vision into practice until empirical results are achieved. After the research, there was a significant improvement in coordination and division of work as teachers collaborated on all 6 training projects and went on a study trip. Effective management practices in the school have become clearer. The researcher and co-researcher collaborate to solve problems and obstacles. Be flexible according to the situation, provide assistance and collaborate with fellow teachers regularly to promote the efficiency of educational management. By applying the principles of integration of the F.M. and ELMA management concepts, the process is proved to be inspiring and encouraging the teachers team to collaborate on the vision into action. The findings are empirical and in line with the findings of Prabhada Konklong's study (2017, p. 298) ; Teacher Leadership Development for Learning Management in the 21 Century: The Case of Khamchaee Kindergarten School, where the researcher found that the research first priority is self-transformation, meaning the researcher and coresearchers who jointly develop and transform themselves to have leadership skills. The leadership skills lead the researcher and co-researchers to recognition the organization importance and to encouragement to develop themselves and their colleagues contributing to the faith of the organization personnel. Recognizing the organization problems together and seeing opportunities will arise in developments that will deliver maximum benefits.

2. The findings were utilized to improve the school environmental development. Whether it is to add more rides for early childhood children. Increasing stage space for talent shows, organizing parking spaces, and creating a Home Sweet Home guide that has given parents a better understanding of home activities and has a similar approach to teaching activities at school, allowing their children to develop rapidly. This is consistent with research (Lieberman and Hoody, 1998, cited in Hackenwerth, Shawn B. Randies, & M. Jeremy Tucker, 2009, p. 40) stating that giving freedom to early childhood students to explore the environment facilitates leads to the development of high-level thinking skills or Executive Functions.

3. Co-researchers' learning management competencies before and after conducting research by considering the effectiveness of 3 aspects as follows:

3.1 Teachers' Learning Management Competencies after assessing "teachers' competency" leans towards effective management based on the teacher competency assessment score, Before the workshops, the teachers had a self-assessment score of 88.08 out of 100 points and after the workshops, at 99.00, which increased to 10.92 points or 12.54 percent. According to Jeremy R. Phillips' (2019, p. 43) research stated that for student achievement, schools must develop teachers to be leaders so that teachers have high learning management competencies.

3.2 In assessing stakeholder reactions, after the researcher conducted participatory action research, it was found that stakeholders had reactions highest level in all aspects in assessing effective management development. In descending order, teachers are ethically and moral role models to students. Teachers provide friendly and appropriate curriculum and learning activities. Furthermore, after conducting the action research, students have improved in all 4 aspects: physical, emotional, social, and intellectual, as well as English speaking skills and assertiveness. Management Section, the parents is always able to communicate with school, school facilities are safe and have enough outdoor space for activities.

3.3 In conclusion, learners learning behavior and the management development plan meet the research hypothesis that after the participatory action research, school management will be more effective and the co-researcher will have higher learning management competencies.

The findings are in line with Sandra Lyle's (2018, p. 22) that says that the qualifications of teachers and the basic facilities of the school are important inputs for student achievement and school effectiveness.

# 8. Conclusion and Recommendations

This research encourages teachers to collaborate and put their vision into practice until empirical results are achieved. The researcher emphasized the importance of accelerating of a happiness culture in educational institutions due to the believing that a culture of happiness must go hand in hand with a quality work culture (Jinnawat Patokong, 2017, p. 277). The finding is in line with the research results of Prabhada Konklong (2017, p. 298) who studied teacher leadership development for 21st century learning management.

The school uses these findings to improve the school environment development. With the addition of children rides, talent show stage, parking lots development, and the creation of a Home Sweet Home handbook. The handbook is to help parents to have a better understanding of home activities and have similar approaches to teaching at school. This is in line with the Lieberman and Hoody (1998) research that says that giving students the freedom to explore the environment facilitates the development of high-level thinking skills.

Results of the integrated F.M. and ELMA management concepts should continue to develop participatory operations. The management raises awareness of collaboration, provides support, morale, listens to opinions and provides opportunities to participate at every opportunity and hopefully decrease in obstacles. The management development should be conducted at the elementary level. This is to build on and assess whether these two concepts can be used at the higher education level.

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