

# The Impact of Organizational Development Intervention on Service Process for Curriculum Development at Assumption University, Thailand: A Case Study

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## Abstract

*With the world fast moving towards a knowledge-based economy, it is imperative for universities to develop quality curricula to support and develop human resources. In light of this exigency, this research focuses on service process for Curriculum Development (CD). It is intended to improve the quality of service process for CD at the university. The three-phase action research model is used as the research framework. The findings show that Service Process in terms of Operation Management Process: Structure of Administrative Function and Tasks/Activities has an influence on Service Quality. Communication Process in terms of Service Providers and Receivers/ disposition as well as Competency and Service Delivery has an impact on Service Quality. And the ODIs have impacted the communication process in terms of Service Providers and Receivers, especially on disposition and competency, as well as the operation management process in terms of Documentation.*

**Key Words:** *Organization Development (OD), Curriculum Development (CD) Organization Development Intervention (ODI), Curriculum Process, Service Process in the University.*

## Introduction

With global changes, free trade and business competition, the world is becoming smaller with little or no boundaries for engagement. As such, every organization has to adapt to the global change in order to respond according to the customer's needs and organization's goals. The human factor is not only a device in the organization but also the heart of an organizational being (Prasad, 1995). In order to achieve the quality of human resources, organization or institution needs to develop and enhance human education as human knowledge is the key for survival and competitive success within this world economy. For this reason, curriculum development in the university is the mechanism to produce quality curricula in order to support and develop human resources. Moreover, only organization that is adaptable to changing environments can survive and surpass other competitors so, organizational change plays the important role as a key for success in today business. Organizational change is shifting from an old system of doing things to a new system for the positive outcomes (Carr, Hard,

and Trahan, 1996). Organizations are open systems interacting with people, tasks, technology, and structure within organization's environment (Nelson and Quick, 2006). Therefore, organization development can aid or improve the organization's performance.

## Theoretical Background

### *Organizational Development (OD)*

Hanson and Lubin (1995) stated that "OD is a planned effort to help people work and live together more effectively and productively, overtime, in their organization" (p.28) such as changing ways of connecting and doing the work that join individual needs with organizational goals. Therefore, OD means solving problems in organization toward goal achievements as well as helping persons in the organization to gain more skills and knowledge in changing process. Moreover, OD is a continuing, long-term, and normal process in management. OD is an organizational process that can improve major processes by setting up tasks and objectives called "a process for improving process". The process of identifying tasks and objectives in work unit or organization and reevaluating the

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goals are useful for people in the organization because this will identify the tasks needed for change and develop the organization improving process. Therefore, OD can help to develop curriculum work in the university in order to succeed in curriculum development of various faculties. From analyzing the current status of organization in terms of the service process for the CD in the university as human social system organization, the steps to improve service process for the CD require involving many people in the university: Deans, chairpersons, full-time lecturers, and staff. The CD engaged the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs: Vice President for Academic Affairs, full-time lecturers in the office and staff. This process goes up to the President, the Curriculum Development and Standard Committee, University Academic Committee, the University Council and the Commission on Higher Education.

#### *Curriculum Process*

Sowell (1996) pointed out that curriculum processes are the procedures involved in creating, using, and evaluating the curricula in the various documents such as guides, syllabi and others. Furthermore, the curriculum process is a cooperative work that curriculum workers consider and decide in development and evaluation of curriculum project. Armstrong (2003) also stated that curriculum development work involves with various people in at least four distinct settings which are national, state, local school district, and individual school. Blenkin and Kelly (1983) stated that curriculum development is about changing that is not only concerned with the content of curriculum but also concerned with curriculum process. This process taking place in an open system allows exchange of information and resources among people within the organization as well as exchange between organization and its environment. Therefore understanding change in CD process by means of ODI is useful for the administrators to decide strategies, plans, and activities suitable for CD.

#### *Organization Development Intervention (ODI)*

Cummings and Worley (2005) mentioned “ODI’s are institutionalized when the change program persists and becomes part of the organization’s normal functioning” (p.199). OD program is the program that facilitates the organization to solve the problems for organization effectiveness (Hanson and Lubin, 1995). Therefore, ODI is also an activity to develop or improve the organization for better performance. Intervention is an activity that emphasizes on the task development of an individual such as coaching, training; of groups such as teams building, survey feedback, retreats, strategic planning; of departments or sub-systems such as data collection, diagnosis the problem issues and problem-solving workshops, all-day confrontation meetings, and of the total organization such as strategic planning, survey, feedback, assessment the process or restructuring, changing the culture in certain problem areas. Furthermore, Cummings and Worley (2005) stated that Human Process Intervention is the intervention that focuses on people within organization and the process including communication, problem solving, group decision making, and leadership to accomplish organization goals. Therefore, Human Process Interventions involved with individual competencies, inter-personal relationships, and group dynamics including coaching, training, and providing consultation supports. Third-party interventions and team building are also useful in coaching to clarify their goals and improve performance; in training and development to increase organization members’ skills and knowledge; in process consultation to help members gaining skills and understandings in identifying problems by themselves. Techno-structural Intervention is also another type of interventions that related to structural design, downsizing and reengineering to achieve improvements in performance.

#### *ODI for Administrative Service Unit for CD*

Administrative Service Unit of Service Process for CD is coordinating, supporting, and facilitating all academic units: faculties and departments in CD process in the university. Moreover, Administrative Service Unit for CD interacts with many people in different levels such as Officers of the Commission on Higher Education, Secretary of the University Council, President of the University, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Deans, Chairpersons and faculties. Thus, the university must emphasize on human development by attracting competent people to work in the organization. The effective interventions of service process for CD lead to development of new CD process, new service process, and creating tasks for the quality service. Suitable intervention process for CD in the university includes the "Human Process Interventions" including orientation, coaching, training, and process consultation. "Techno-structural intervention" is another appropriate intervention in the improvement of curriculum development process and service process for the better quality of service process.

#### *Service Process and Service Quality*

Tinnil and Vepsalainen (1995) pointed out that service is a concept involved with a wide variety of processes and exchanges while the customer enters into a relationship with the service. Service process involves with the stage of ordering that receive an order from the customer and prepare the consequent tasks to perform and deliver the order (Sheu, McHaney and Babbar, 2003). Moreover, Mayer, Bowen and Moulton (2003) make reference to the process of service definition cited by Shoatack (1992) that process of service consists of steps, tasks, procedures, mechanisms, and activities required to the rendering of a service. Beside Zeithaml and Bitner (2006) stated that services are activities, processes, and performances. Services are involved in a sequence of steps, actions, and activities done for customers. The quality and satisfaction are based on customers' perceptions of the service. Quality service

reflects the customer's perception of reliability, assurance, responsiveness, empathy, and tangibles. Therefore, the key components of service quality improvements are: market and customer focus; motivated and well-trained frontline staff; well-designed process; devolvement of responsibility and authority to the frontline staff; clear definition of quality; effective internal and external communications; and measurement that the requirements of customers translate into product and delivery process.

#### *Brain Map Model*

Studying the human behaviors is important to serve each person for her/his maximum satisfaction. Brain Map Model (Lynch, 1984) provides a functional system to describe the differences of human behaviors through the whole brain thinking process. Since organizations are human social systems involving many people from various orientation and disciplines, it is critical to use a framework that enables people to tap into potentials of whole brain functions (Tayko, 2004). People are different in thinking, behaviors, working styles, communication preferences, and management styles, therefore, the whole brain model can help to understand styles of each person at work. The Brain Map Model of Dudley Lynch, Brain Technologies Corporation, illustrates the differences of four brain thinking quadrants that describe human behaviors in terms human information processing skills which are I-Control, I-Pursue, I-Preserve, and I-Explore. Furthermore, Hermann (2003) stated that the whole brain model has four quadrant metaphoric models that describe thinking preferences of what people like and don't like. The whole brain model is made up of four distinct quadrants colored coded as Blue, Green, Red, and Yellow. The Blue Quadrant specializes in Quantitative, Logical, Analytical and Linear Thinking. The Green Quadrant specializes in Organized, Sequential, Safe-keeping, Planned, Detailed, and Implementer. Red Quadrant places on

Interpersonal, Feeling-oriented, Teamwork, and Intuition. Yellow Quadrant is Creative, Innovative, Holistic, Synthesizing and Visionary. Therefore, the Brain Map model is the tool to help organization identify each style of people in the organization and define the role and responsibility of the people at work. This Brain Map model is also useful for Administrative Service Unit for CD as a tool to identify people in four quadrants of brain thinking styles and find the proper way to contact and communicate with each people in different levels in the organization. The Brain Map model also helps finding suitable activities for organization development intervention such as coaching, training, and process consultation for improvement of different faculties.

### ***Conceptual and Research Framework***

The conceptual framework in Figure 1 illustrates the Independent and Dependent Variables involved in the study. Service Process for CD is the IV composed of Operations Management Process, Support Process and Communication Process. The DV is Service Quality as indicated by process quality and faculty satisfaction

The study focuses on the influence of Service Process on Service Quality. This study was also primarily concerned with the impact of OD Interventions on Service Process in terms of Operations Management Process, Support Process and Communication Process to enhance Service Quality. The study has four research objectives namely, (1) to describe and analyze the current status of the organization in terms of the service process for CD in the University as a human social system (2) to conduct diagnosis, identify, propose, and implement appropriate ODI (3) to determine the influence of the service process for CD on service quality and (4) to determine the impact of ODI on the service process in terms of operation management process, support process and communication process. This research used the action research model (Lewin, 1958) which consists of Pre-ODI,

ODI and Post ODI phases of Service process for CD. As such, the researcher diagnosed situation analysis of the problem of service process for CD and created/implemented the activities to support the service process. The results in the Pre and Post ODI were compared and evaluated. The findings of action research are the following:

#### ***Diagnosis Stage***

After diagnosing the problems of service process of CD, the researcher found that the operation management process is less systematic in structures, tasks, activities and curriculum documentation. There were no specifically defined tasks and/or activities in each step of the service process. Moreover, there was low efficiency of communication process so. The information sent to the faculties was unclear which resulted in misunderstanding the process of CD. There is little support of the process in terms of accessibility of curriculum database. Online curriculum data was not updated and difficult to access.

#### ***Development Stage:***

Appropriate OD interventions implemented were tasks/process activities namely, redesign structure, recruit more staff, define specific tasks/activities, redesign processes and develop curriculum documentation in the operation management process; develop a database program and an up-to-date curriculum development website in support process; conduct orientation, training/ coaching, process consultation, and establish follow up system for the communication process.

#### ***Evaluation Stage:***

The researcher found higher efficiency and effectiveness of operation management process, more efficiency and effectiveness of communication process. There was improvement in support process for better accessibility and availability of updated online curriculum data. This outcome was useful to improve service

quality in terms of process quality and faculty satisfaction.

**Hypotheses**

Ho 1: *Service process in terms of operation management process, support process, and communication process has no significant influence on service quality in terms of process quality and faculty satisfaction.*

The researcher found that the service process in terms of the operation management process, the support process and the communication process has significant influence on the service quality in terms of process quality and faculty satisfaction. Five sub-variables had significant influence on service quality namely, (1) Structure of administrative function (2) Tasks/activities (3) Service providers and receivers (Mindset -disposition) (4) Competency and (5) Service delivery. These results are shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1:** Summary of the Influence of Service Process on Service Quality

Hypothesis test		Result
<b>Service Process</b>	Operation Management Process	<.05
	Support Process	
	Communication Process	
<b>Operation Management Process</b>	Structure of Administrative Function	<.05
	Tasks/Activities	<.05
	Service Procedures	>.05
	Documentation	>.05
<b>Support Process</b>	Documentation Database	>.05
	Technology/Online data	>.05
<b>Communication Process</b>	Service Providers and Receivers: Mindset (Disposition)	<.05
	Mindset (Perception)	
	Competency	<.05
	Service delivery	<.05

Moreover, the researcher found that the highest correlation of the service process on service quality was service delivery and the lowest correlation of the service process was on structure of administrative function. The other variables were Mindset -disposition, tasks/activities and competency respectively.

Ho 2: *There is no impact of ODI on service process in terms of operation management process, support process, and communication process.*

The researcher found that there was impact of ODI on the service process in communication process only so, the communication process in terms of competency, service providers and receivers (mindset/ disposition) was the key role to run the service process successfully and assure service quality. Moreover, documentation from the operation management process had impact on the service process because the curriculum documentation was the medium to communicate with various faculties (See Table 2 Appendix B).

**Research Methodology**

The researcher distributed 185 questionnaires for pre-ODI to 17 faculties and 84 programs; there were 103 questionnaires retrieved. There were 62 respondents who participated in the ODI consisting deans, chairpersons and full-time lecturers/ staffs. From the 103 respondents in the Pre ODI, there were only 67 respondents in the Post ODI. These are the respondents who participated in the new curriculum development process from the beginning to the end. The researcher used three instruments namely, questionnaires, interview guide and observation checklist.

The data was analyzed using means, standard deviation. Paired sample t-test was used to measure the impact of ODI on service process. To determine the influence of service process in terms of operation management process, support process and communication process on service quality, step-wise regression analysis was used.

Qualitative data from interview, observation, and open-ended questions were clustered according to the set of questions. Brain Map was used to classify respondents for ODI in communication process.

### **Research Findings**

The finding results of the study were:

1. The result ranged from *agreed* to *strongly agreed* with regards to the service process for curriculum development. The respondents were satisfied with ODI's on the service process with the average mean in post-ODI higher than in the pre-ODI.

2. There is a better understanding of the key roles and functions of the Administrative Service Unit by those who were involved in the curriculum development.

3. There is improvement in the efficiency and effectiveness of the service process for the curriculum development. Service quality was also enhanced as expressed by the respondents.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

OD interventions had impact on communication process in terms of service providers and receivers specifically on disposition (value) and competency. OD intervention also had impact on the operation management process in terms of documentation. The operation management process in terms of structure of administrative function and tasks/activities had influences in service quality. Furthermore, the communication process in terms of service providers and receivers (disposition), competency and service delivery had influence on service quality.

Based on the findings of the study, the following are the recommendations for further ODI:

1. Techno-structural Intervention to enhance the Operation Management Process -

- Establish a Center for Curriculum Development Facilitation

- Produce a manual for staff who are responsible for the service process for curriculum development.

2. Strengthen the Support Process through an updated and revised curriculum database program and regular up-loading of information to an online database

3. Human Process Intervention to improve efficiency and effectiveness in the Communication Process

- Training people in charge in the tasks of curriculum development in the university

- Develop a checklist of requirements for curriculum documentation, and regulations

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Figure1.1 - Research Framework

