

GUIDELINES OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN PROGRAM MANAGEMENT: THE FACTORS ENHANCING EFFECTIVENESS OF CHINESE LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

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Increasingly leaders are recognizing the rise of Asia as one of the central facts of the twenty-first century. China, with its tremendous economic growth and emergence as a social and political leader in the region, is fundamental to this shift. Given these changes, the task of increasing the number of Thai students who can demonstrate a functional proficiency in Chinese is undeniably urgent. Interest in learning Chinese is steadily growing among Thai youth, but the number of existing school programs is small and the present infrastructure to meet this demand is weak. There are plenty of Thai schools at a basic education level, especially in Bangkok, which are willing to have a Chinese program in their schools according to the demand from students and parents; but the professional teachers of Chinese are inadequate and unorganized. Few schools have gained experience from their struggling for many years in managing their Chinese program; unfortunately, there are still many school administrators who are seeking good practices in starting and running their Chinese program effectively and efficiently. Therefore, the understanding of the nature of Chinese teaching and learning; the knowledge and skills in Chinese program management are crucial for success of Chinese programs.

Purpose of the Study

Since the Chinese programs are in demand in many basic education schools one needs to know how to manage the program effectively and efficiently. The researcher proposed conducting this study in order to identify the factors that enhance the effectiveness of Chinese program management in Thai basic education schools; and to analyze deeply the dominant factors; which affect the program effectiveness of Chinese program management. Simultaneously, the study can assist in the improvement of managerial practices for other foreign language programs. The outcome of this research is expected to be guidelines for effective Chinese program management for Thai school administrators and course coordinators.

Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are fourfold:

1. To identify the factors enhancing the effectiveness of Chinese language programs management for Thai basic education schools in Bangkok.
2. To identify the characteristics of effective language program management for Thai basic education schools in Bangkok.
3. To identify the differences between practices and expectations in Chinese program management from the perspective of school administrators and teachers of Chinese.
4. To develop practical guidelines for Chinese language program management for Thai basic education schools.

Significance of the Study

According to Thai MOE's policy and strategies in promoting Chinese language in all schools at a basic education level, it is extremely crucial for administrators to know factors enhancing effectiveness of Chinese language programs management in initiating and running their own programs. Systematic management evaluation requires a list of expected characteristics of Chinese program management to direct the administrators and teachers. What may happen to ensure the effectiveness of the program management seems important as the target of each school's Chinese language program. Continuous improvement of Chinese programs to explore and understand the differences between practices and expectations from the perspective of school administrators and teachers of Chinese is of import. The differences between the practices and expectations in those identified factors from school administrators, or from teachers of Chinese, can demonstrate the development priorities from the views

of administrators or teachers. The differences between school administrators and teachers of Chinese in the real practices can show the level of consistency for each factor's development. School administrators' confidence in starting and maintaining Chinese language programs is created by having clear guidelines for general knowledge and recommended practices, which are summarized from participants' and experts' experiences.

Scope of the Study

This research is focused on Chinese language program management for Thai basic education schools in Bangkok, for which the study is composed of four management aspects: curriculum, instruction, human resource, and teaching/learning quality. Within the range of these four areas, there are ten factors which are focused on in this study: Curriculum development, teaching materials, teaching methodology, ICT assisted teaching and learning, teachers' profession, staff development, budget management, administrative supports, quality assurance, and evaluation and assessment.

Conceptual Framework

Reviewing the international and domestic literatures provides a foundation for looking at the importance of effective management for Chinese language programs in Thai basic education schools. The use of open-ended survey and semi-structured interview approaches are, in many aspects, a process of generating and summarizing a new body of knowledge by integrating successful practices from the field, in the sense that the feedback one obtains from the research will provide certain guidelines in the theory applicable to the case at hand.

Combining some of the approaches from different scholars provides for a conceptual framework, by which one can be allowed to understand: the factors enhancing the effectiveness of Chinese program management; the differences between practices and expectations in Chinese program management; views from the perspective of school administrators and teachers of Chinese; and the characteristics of effective language program management. The results show what can happen to improve the determined factors in order to enhance the effectiveness of Chinese program management for the Thai basic education schools in Bangkok.

Sites of Study

The study is to investigate those ten factors for both public and private schools. Four schools were randomly selected as the research sites: the sample schools are recognized by Thai MOE and the location is limited to only Bangkok. The number of students in each school is greater than 3,000. All sample schools have run Chinese language programs for more than 6 years. The 41 participants, in which Chinese teachers and administrator who work closely with the Chinese programs in each school are involved, are carefully approached by the researcher.

Research Methodologies

This research employs and mixed qualitative and quantitative methodologies into four parts in order to answer the four research questions which follow:

Part 1 Analyze and categorize by utilizing dendrograms to cluster theories, principles and practices of Chinese language program management from a documentary review and interviews.

To achieve research objective 2 and 3, an open-ended survey is constructed from the documentary review and interviews, according to each of those ten factors:

Part 2 Analyze and rank the characteristics of effective language program management from documentary review and survey results. Dendrograms are applied to cluster five characteristics of effective language program management and to calculate an average ranking for those five characteristics by administrators and teachers from the last part of the surveys.

Part 3 Analyze the differences between practices and expectations in Chinese program management from the survey results. Gap analysis is applied in identifying differences between the practices and expectations from school administrators; differences between the practices and expectations from teachers; and differences between school administrators and teachers from the perspective of real practices.

Part 4 Conceptualize guidelines for Chinese program management for Thai basic education schools. The instrument used in the study is a formative interview guide, consisting of general

questions and specific ones. As a semi-structured interview, these guides are not exactly questions asked during the interviews: the researchers asked different questions of different participants in accordance with participants' interests and experiences in Chinese language program management in each school.

Research Findings

The results have been summarized into four parts:

Part 1 Chinese language programs management

Analysis of theories, principles and practices of Chinese language program management from international and domestic documentary review and 16 interviews with school administrators and teachers of Chinese from 4 schools in Bangkok: to summarize the factors enhancing effectiveness of Chinese language programs management in Thai basic education schools; in order to make it easy to understand; the researcher utilizes dendrogram resulting from clustering ten factor. These are as follows:

1.1 Curriculum Development

For all students, the first priority should be to enhance enthusiasm for the learning of the Chinese language, so that they develop an abiding interest in the language and culture well after leaving school. The emphasis of each school's curriculum should be on effective oral communication and reading. For students with the ability and interest, developing fluency in all the four language skills and good understanding of Chinese history and culture can be enhanced in a school environment. Many school administrators mentioned that to invite experts to assist schools in reviewing and developing curriculum is a common practice to help ensure quality.

1.2 Teaching Materials Development

How to choose appropriate textbooks for different age-groups and it is important to pitch the language used at a level that the child can understand. At the same time, the topics covered and the content of passages should also be relevant and appealing to students. Because recently there are many teaching materials of Chinese language, to ensure the textbooks and other materials used in school are recognized by various institutions locally and internationally, is a common practice for many schools. As school environments differ widely, teachers are in the best position to determine the most suitable materials for their students. Teachers should be encouraged to make use of space in the curriculum, to develop their own materials.

1.3 Teaching Methodology

Chinese teachers should understand how students shape specific classroom strategies and activities that will kindle and sustain students' motivation to learn Chinese Language and give teachers the room to adopt new strategies to enliven their students' learning of the language.

1.4 ICT Assisted Teaching and Learning

How to prepare students to use Chinese Language in a future where technology tools in Chinese language will be ubiquitous. Especially, Chinese teachers should introduce and promote the use of assistive technology tools, which facilitate language learning process. And schools should tap on the IT literacy of students, as well as the excellent infrastructure in schools, to introduce appropriate Chinese language productivity tools, as well as engaging resources customized to the needs of the learners.

1.5 Teachers' Profession

To recruit qualified professional teachers of Chinese is one of the most important and difficult tasks in the teaching and learning process. A clear checklist for educational background and teaching experiences according to his or her teaching tasks should be identified by schools before seeking for personnel.

1.6 Staff Development

To develop training program for Chinese language teachers to ensure a high level of proficiency in the language, in-depth knowledge of Chinese culture, as well as competency in language teaching methodologies. To establish a more structured training roadmap for all Chinese Language teachers should vary according to the teacher profile. For example, compulsory courses should be developed for new Chinese language teachers in their first few years of teaching, to strengthen their language competency and pedagogical skills. More experienced Chinese Language teachers should attend courses focusing on developments in pedagogy and assessment methods.

1.7 Budget Management

Even though there are very rare studies on budget management from existing researches, fortunately, the researchers touched this area by interviewing school administrators and summarized some recommendable practices of appropriate operating-cost percentage of different aspects of

program management, which is presented in the last part of chapter 4.

1.8 Administrative Supports

To provide more time for teachers of Chinese in preparing their teaching, they should no longer be 'routinely' required to undertake tasks of a clerical or administrative nature.

1.9 Quality Assurance

Teaching is not right or wrong, good or bad, effective or ineffective in any absolute, fixed or determined sense. Instructors emphasize different domains of learning and employ different theories of education and teaching methodologies. They encourage learning in different sites. They use different instructional strategies and formats, and they do this while recognizing that students have diverse backgrounds and levels of preparedness. The criteria for evaluating teaching vary between disciplines and within disciplines, and should take into consideration the level of the course, the instructor's objectives and style, and the teaching methodology employed.

1.10 Evaluation and Assessment

Examinations should move towards integrative and communicative approaches where contextualized and/or authentic language materials are used as test items. Contextualized test items will expose students to more print reading while authentic test items will make the learning of Chinese language more relevant to daily life. It will also allow teachers to move away from teaching vocabulary out of context and enable them to adopt more lively teaching strategies.

Part 2 Analysis of the characteristics of effective language program management from documentary review and survey results

The 41 participants' responses are summarized to show the importance of each characteristic of effective program management. Because the survey is open-ended, there is one additional item added by three administrators and five teachers of eight participants, "A set of meaningful enrollment criteria in selecting potential students is strictly implemented.", and this one is placed as the sixth characteristic for consensus. Therefore, the six characteristics of effective Chinese program management are follows:

- 2.1.** High standards and proper screening of candidates.
- 2.2.** Solid academic instruction in pedagogy, subject matter, classroom management, and child development.
- 2.3.** Ongoing training, instruction, and reflection.
- 2.4.** An organized and comprehensive system of support from experienced, trained mentors.
- 2.5.** Continuous monitoring, evaluation, and feedback of performance.
- 2.6.** A set of meaningful enrollment criteria in selecting potential students is strictly implemented.

Part 3 Analysis of the differences between practices and expectations in Chinese program management from survey results

1.1 Practices and expectations from school administrators

Considering average gaps and ranks from the ten factors provides advice for decision making processes of each school. Teaching materials are on the top of the list: many administrators evaluated the teaching materials used by their Chinese teachers are old-fashioned and not interesting to the students. They believe that to motivate teachers in developing attractive materials is the most effective and economical way in improving their Chinese programs. For this reason, many administrators prefer to initiate development of their Chinese programs by starting with teaching materials. ICT assisted teaching and learning, teachers' profession, teaching methodology, and staff development are the other four factors of the top five listed.

1.2 Practices and expectations from teachers

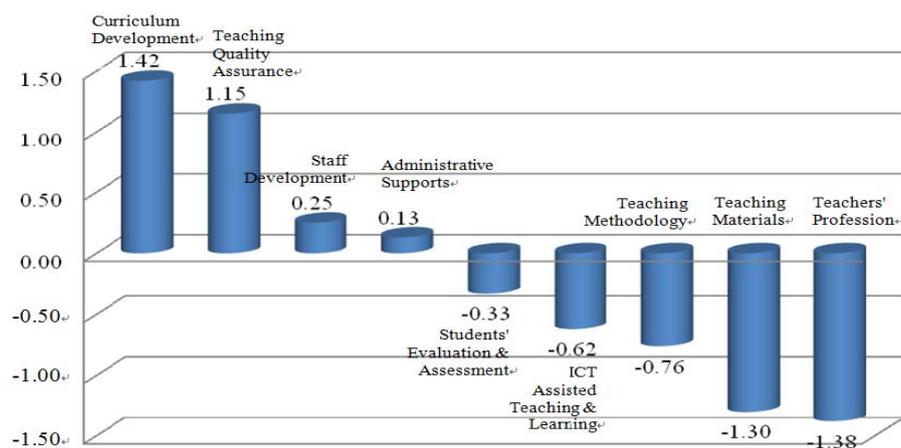
From the survey results of Chinese teachers, the researcher found that the average gaps and ranks from the ten factors are different from administrators' judgments. ICT assisted teaching and learning is on the top of the program development list. Opposite from administrators, curriculum development become the second priority of the teachers' list, which reflects teachers' willingness to change the current Chinese curriculum to be more practical than simply test-oriented plus schools should involve frontline teachers in developing curriculums. The next important factor in teachers' minds, quality assurance of each school, should be a process or a tool to ensure quality of teaching; and to reflect teachers' teaching performances fairly. The results show Chinese teachers should be judged and promoted by those evaluations.

1.3 School administrators' and teachers' perspectives on current practices

From the survey results, there are 24 common items from 9 factors: budget management is the only factor that is not in the list. There are four factors with positive gaps between administrators and teachers from the perspective of current practices. Curriculum development showed the highest gap,

administrators generally believe in their school curriculum; but teachers want to adjust it to increase emphasis on practical use of language and to help students in achieving language skills and cultural understanding. The second positive gap belongs to teaching quality assurance. For the other two positive factors, staff development and administrative supports, the gaps between administrators and teachers are relatively small, which provides administrators and teachers opportunities to achieve consistency in development planning of these two factors. There are five factors which receive negative gaps between administrators and teachers from the perspective of current practices. Teachers' profession and teaching materials have the biggest negative gaps. Teachers generally evaluate their profession and teaching materials higher than administrators. Again, administrators and teachers should communicate each party's demand and supply needs in order to reduce the gaps and create consensus.

Figure: The Factor ranking list from gaps between administrators and teachers



Part 4 Conceptualization of practical guidelines for Chinese program management for Thai basic education schools

The researcher integrates and categorizes administrators and teachers' interview results into the ten identified factors of four aspects. The integration of these four managerial aspects can be used as guidelines for Chinese language program management in Thai basic education schools.

4.1. Curriculum Development

The variety of Chinese-language courses has also increased to encompass regular language, culture, literature and Chinese for special purposes courses. Administrators identified the four issues in curriculum design: First, the curricular disconnect. Second, first- and second-language acquisition principles have often been glaringly omitted from curriculum design. Third, teacher lack of knowledge and experience in Chinese curriculum development. Fourth, schools lack source of experts in curriculum development.

4.2. Teaching Materials

Administrators suggest that teaching materials should have a clear structure and clearly defined goals in order to guide the behavior of teachers and the learning process of pupils. A major finding of administrators was that video played a central role in teaching and often served as the unique language model. Administrators found that less confident teachers were over-reliant on the video. Videos provide an authentic model, a medium to attract the pupils' interest and a core input, but also run the risk of restricting the teacher to limited material and the pupils to reduced learning opportunities. Teachers need to be able to evaluate resources and to use them selectively.

4.3. Teaching Methodology

In language teaching programs, teaching models are often based on particular methods or approaches. There are: *the communicative approach*: the focus of teaching is authentic communication. Fluency is a priority; *the cooperative learning model*: students work in cooperative learning situations; *the process approach*: in writing classes students take part in activities which develop their understanding of writing as a process (planning, generating ideas, drafting, reviewing, revising, editing); *the whole-language approach*: language is taught as whole and not through its separate components.

4.4. ICT Assisted Teaching & Learning

School administrators find the potential of ICT for enhancing Chinese programs: Creative use of ICT in the classroom can promote inclusion and reflect cultural and linguistic diversity by enabling the learning environment to be extended beyond the physical. Up to date information relating to

linguistic and cultural diversity can be made accessible to all. Computer games can help to develop study-buddy friendships. Learners can work individually or with others at their own pace and return to a task at a later date. And ICT gives learners immediate access to richer source materials that draw on the previous learning and experiences.

4.5. Teachers' Profession

Core components of teacher knowledge include the following: *Practical knowledge*: the teacher's repertoire of classroom techniques and strategies; *Content knowledge*: the teacher's understanding of the subject of teaching Chinese as a Second language; *Contextual knowledge*: familiarity with the school or institutional context, school norms, and knowledge of the learners, including cultural and other relevant information; *Pedagogical knowledge*: ability to restructure content knowledge for teaching purposes, and to plan, adapt, and improvise; *Personal knowledge*: the teacher's personal beliefs and principles and his or her individual approach to teaching; *Reflective knowledge*: the teacher's capacity to reflect on and assess his or her own practice

4.6. Staff Development

Depending on their linguistic background, different groups of prospective teachers have different needs in terms of teacher preparation, as do teachers of different grade levels and different types of language programs. The extent to which a school provides such opportunities to do the following: Engage in self-reflection and evaluation; identify their areas of strength and weakness; develop specialized knowledge and skills about many aspects of teaching; develop curiosity and interest in many different aspects of teaching; expand their knowledge base about research, theory, and issues in teaching; take on new roles and responsibilities, such as supervisor, mentor teacher, teacher-researcher, or materials writer; and develop involvement in professional organizations

4.7. Budget Management

Four administrators who have the financial responsibilities from four sample sites provide useful information about the appropriate percentage of effective Chinese programs expenditure: Approximate 50% of the total costs run to Chinese teachers' compensation, which consists of salary, bonus, insurance, visa and work permit allowance. The range for expenses on textbooks and teaching materials are 20 to 30 percent of the total. For continuousness and smoothness of program's operation, nonteaching staffs, which consists of experts, academic & coordinating staffs, cannot be ignored. To retain students' interests in schools' Chinese program, schools should reserve 5 to 10 percent of its overall expenses in arranging Chinese activities.

4.8. Administrative Supports

If teachers are expected to teach well and to develop their teaching skills and knowledge over time they need ongoing support. This may take a number of forms: orientation, adequate materials, course guides, division of responsibilities, further training, teaching release, mentors, feedback, rewards, help lines, and review.

4.9. Quality Assurance

The factors relevant to creating a culture of quality assurance in a school are: A formulated policy on quality assurance has been articulated and is familiar to all staff; reasonable and acceptable standards have been determined for all aspects of quality, such as employment, publicity, materials, facilities and teachers' dress codes; systems are in place to ensure that quality is regularly assessed and corrections made where necessary; a reward system is in place to ensure that those who attain high quality in their work are recognized; support is available to enable staff to improve quality (e.g. of their teaching or materials) if necessary.

4.10. Evaluation & Assessment

Assessment results have important implications for instruction. In attempts to change assessment to match the content and format of instruction, some schools are relying more upon what is known as alternative assessment. Performance-based assessment, portfolios, student-designed assessments, etc., are regarded by many educators as more reflective of new curricular goals and methods of instruction. Some educators view alternative assessment as a better way to determine how well students are learning (and how effective instruction is) than traditional forms of assessment like multiple choice tests.

Recommendation for Future Practices

The results of this research prompt several recommendations regarding the concept of Chinese language program management for Thai basic education schools in Bangkok:

1. **Building Awareness**: although among certain audiences the need for Chinese is quite clear, the general public does not understand the likely importance of Chinese in the twenty-first century

and sees the language as difficult or not immediately applicable. Raising awareness is still a fundamental need.

2. **Establishing Programs:** in Thai basic education school systems, there are a host of other issues. Interest in Chinese is growing, but few schools know how to start and sustain quality Chinese programs. Many school boards might be hesitant to offer Chinese, perceiving it as too difficult for students to learn, or they may not know how to build community support or where to find teachers or appropriate resources.
3. **Programs outside the School Day:** Growing pressures on the school day have generated a renewed necessity to think creatively about where a Chinese-language program could fit. After-school programs afford schools and teachers more flexibility in developing innovative curriculum and in building parental support.
4. **Enhance Attractiveness of Chinese Language Teaching:** to encourage Thai students to consider a career as Chinese Language teachers is the final solution for source of Chinese teachers in Thailand.
5. **Technical Assistance Network or Center:** similar to those already existing for other languages will be needed to sustain and enhance new Chinese-language programs. Actually, there are Chinese education centers in different educational districts in Bangkok, and there are several Confucius institutions in different universities in Thailand, but the active and practical cooperation in supporting each other's teaching and learning is rare.
6. **Joint Thai-China Programs:** Collaboration between schools and language organizations in China and Thailand could certainly yield stronger programs. While isolated models exist, there is a genuine need for establishing a broader "culture of exchange" with China, in which educators can work on common challenges together, particularly in the development of new curricula and programs.
7. **A Pilot Partnership Programs:** The researcher proposes a pilot program of a group of schools to build a partnership to facilitate Chinese-language programs. A cost-sharing approach, in which the partnered schools offer and share all the expenses and resources of Chinese programs management.
8. **Outsourcing Chinese Language Programs:** Hiring part-time teachers is the first stage for outsourcing the whole programs to professional Chinese language institutions for many reasons: those part-time teachers are unstable and uncommitted; the HR department spends plenty of time in recruitment, but the commitment of teachers is generally ever-changing; outsourcing of the whole program can enable a school to gain better control over a function.

Recommendation for Future Research

During both survey collection and face-to-face interviews in this research, it is recommended that one study other factors. For example, students' learning capacity and efforts in learning Chinese language is one important factor for programs' success, and other factors, like school' policy, parental involvement, community involvement are also valuable and researchable elements, which are out of range of this research. Therefore, further researches on other factors are recommended.

The researcher focused the Chinese language programs management in Bangkok, but teaching Chinese is popular all over the country. For this reason, it is highly recommended to conduct researches in Chinese teaching and learning from other provinces of Thailand. Chinese language programs in the basic education schools are evaluated in this research; however, there are other dimensions, for instance, Chinese language programs in vocational education, higher education and non-formal education. Detailed studies in these different dimensions might contribute extra benefits for teaching Chinese as a second or foreign language in Thailand.

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