

A Monitoring and Evaluation Model for Advancing the Implementation of the Provincial Education Office in Thailand

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ABSTRACT

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The objective was to develop the guideline for monitoring, evaluating, and implementing the National Education Plan to relevant with the area context by using the qualitative research method in creating the model that covered every relevant aspects. The result of the model had defined the responsibility target in the assessment, and there were 4 components regarding to the evaluation which were performance base perspective, internal process perspective, stakeholder perspective, and learning and growth Perspective. In each components had their own objectives, the examples of key performance indicators to track and evaluate including with the data collection methods and the successful conditions for monitoring and evaluation. This article proposed the new practice for the monitoring and evaluating process in order to obtain the accurate data that can be used for the policy decisions by the provincial responsible administrative agencies, and to ensure that operations respond to the country's educational development goals more effectively.

Keywords: Implementation Evaluation, The National Education Plan advocacy, Provincial Education Office

1. INTRODUCTION

The National Education Plan serves as Thailand's master blueprint for education. It mandates that relevant agencies utilize it as a guiding framework to enhance the quality and efficiency of the nation's education management across all levels. Four primary approaches are outlined to drive the National Education Plan into practice: 1. **Building understanding and awareness:** This involves ensuring all relevant stakeholders recognize the importance of the plan and are prepared to participate in its implementation. 2. **Integration of key national plans:** This includes aligning the National Scheme of Education (2017-2036), the 20-year National Strategic Plan, government policies, the 5-year Development Plan for Education, the 4-year Operational Plan, and the annual action plan. This integration process has been undertaken and evaluated by the Office of the Education Council and other involved organizations. 3. **Improvement of laws and regulations:** This aims to create a supportive legal and regulatory environment for the development of education at all levels. And 4. **Community involvement:** This focuses on providing opportunities for people within the community to express their opinions and actively participate in educational administration, both in policy formulation and implementation (Office of the Secretariat of the Education Council (OEC), 2017).

To effectively implement the National Education Plan, it must be transitioned from central agencies to provincial or operational-level agencies. The Provincial Education Office plays a crucial role in coordinating various relevant sectors to engage in area-based education management, an approach advocated by The World Bank. This strategy

emphasizes tailoring the education system to better address the specific needs and contexts of individual areas, ultimately striving for effective educational outcomes (Barrera-Orsorio, 2009).

However, the implementation of this central government policy, which prioritizes strategic management approaches with a focus on policy outcomes but gives less attention to the processes or methods of improving work during implementation, leads to practical challenges (Love, 2004). The central determination of issues, indicators, and targets may not fully reflect the actual working conditions and the needs of practitioners. This discrepancy results in significant problems related to management, internal quality and efficiency, and external efficiency, which hinder successful implementation at the local level (Office of the Education Council, 2017).

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2009) suggests that achieving positive development outcomes necessitates a process of regular data collection and analysis to compare actual occurrences with planned activities. Therefore, establishing a process for monitoring and evaluating policy implementation (Implementation Evaluation) is essential to demonstrate the progress of various undertaken activities, highlighting both their strengths and weaknesses. This process also serves to generate recommendations for improving and modifying operations (King, Morris, and Fitz-Gibbon, 1987: 9). Evaluation should commence at the grassroots level, as this is where the implementation process begins, and the data obtained directly reflects the perspectives of staff and service recipients (Provus, 1971; cited in Patton, 1986). This bottom-up approach is crucial for identifying ways to prevent and resolve situations that could negatively impact future operations.

Given the aforementioned background and challenges, developing a model for monitoring and evaluating operational performance is of paramount importance. This model should be fundamentally based on balancing the allocation of resources and various activities of local operational units to align with the actual conditions on the ground and the strategies outlined in the National Education Plan. This alignment fosters a connection between central authorities, operational units, stakeholders, and all personnel to collaboratively work towards achieving common goals, consistent with the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) approach developed by Robert S. Kaplan and David P. Norton. The BSC aids in clarifying an organization's vision and strategy by communicating and establishing linkages between strategic objectives and key performance indicators. It also encourages feedback and learning from past performance, enabling the utilization of results for planning, goal setting, and aligning future organizational activities. The data derived from monitoring and evaluation serves as a guideline for the development of the organization and the education system at the provincial level. Consequently, applying the Balanced Scorecard concept to address the research questions of this study is highly appropriate.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researchers used a qualitative research methods approach to determine a model for monitoring and evaluation to promote the operations of the Provincial Education Offices in Thailand.

Research Design and Research Process

In the first phase, the researchers studied the conditions, problems, operational needs, and success factors of the monitoring and evaluation process for driving the National Education Plan into practice by personnel of the Provincial Education Offices. Three qualitative research methods were used: Documentary Review, Non-participant Observation, and In-depth Interviews. The qualitative research in this study utilized the following instruments:

Situation Assessment Recording Form: This was used for comparison to categorize opinions and classify them into four aspects: 1) Knowledge and Understanding, 2) Plan Alignment, 3) Relevant Laws and Regulations, and 4) Channels for Participation. Data was categorized by adapting the Situation Assessment or Education Sector Diagnosis (ESD) framework of the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), which comprises eight topics: Context, Access, Equity, Internal Efficiency, External Efficiency, Quality, Cost and Finance, and Management.

The researchers analyzed the data through content analysis, employing interpretive analysis, categorization, comparison, and consideration of consistent opinions.

A structured interview form was used. Audio recordings were made, and the researcher also personally took notes summarizing the key points of the interviews. The data was analyzed using Content Analysis, focusing on interpreting the content related to problems, needs, and considering suggestions for developing a model for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the National Education Plan by the Provincial Education Offices.

The use of qualitative methods in this stage is appropriate because it allows for a deeper understanding of the opinions and experiences of the target expert groups. These groups include policy-level educational officials, academic experts, and practitioners at the operational level.

In the second phase, the researchers used the results from the first phase to create a draft model with three components: the principles and main objectives of the model, four components of monitoring and evaluation, and the success conditions of the model.

The final step was to verify the suitability and effectiveness of the draft model as intended. This was done by having experts provide feedback through an expert review form. The draft model was validated by evaluating it against established standards developed by The Joint Committee on Standards of Educational Evaluation, under the direction of Stufflebeam and colleagues.

After obtaining the expert evaluation results, the researchers addressed the suggestions and comments from the experts to revise and improve the model, making it more complete.

Population and Samples

In the first phase, for the population used to study the conditions, problems, operational needs, and success factors, the key informants comprised representatives from the Provincial Education Offices who participated in the personnel development program, specifically the Educational Planning for Supporting Educational Reform Implementation of International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) course during the research period.

The researchers used purposive sampling based on pre-defined criteria, selecting 15 individuals. This group consisted of administrators and experts from the central level under the Ministry of Education, provincial-level administrators including provincial education officers, directors of policy and planning groups, directors of follow-up and evaluation groups, specialized policy analysts, and specialized educational planners.

In the final step of verifying the draft model, the informants were selected using purposive sampling. This group consisted of three individuals with qualifications and experience in educational administration monitoring and evaluation, and public administration policy: the Provincial Education Officer, the Director of the Policy and Planning Group of the Provincial Education Office, and a qualified expert.

3. RESEARCH FINDINGS

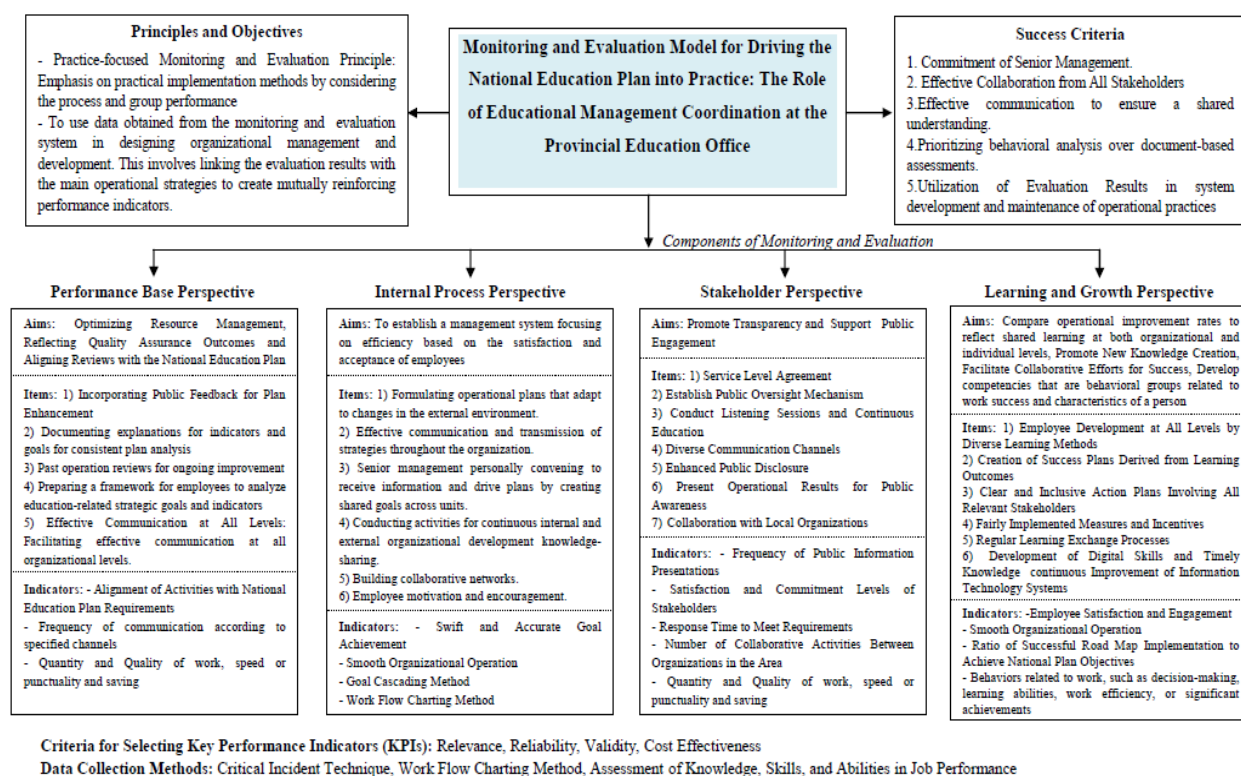
The monitoring and evaluation framework is delineated into three distinct components.

Part 1: The principles and objectives of the framework for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the National Education Plan in the role of coordinating educational management at the Provincial Education Office.

Part 2: The components of the monitoring and evaluation framework for driving the National Education Plan into practice in the role of coordinating educational management at the Provincial Education Office. It consists of specific objectives, tracking and assessment items, sample indicators, and methods of data collection.

Part 3: Framework Success Criteria

This section outlines the conditions for the success of the framework and provides detailed information on each aspect.



Principles of the Framework

- 1) **Inclusivity Principle:** Involvement of stakeholders, including organizations and individuals related to educational management within the same geographical area, educational service recipients from all target groups, professionals, communities, and the general public. They participate in both providing and receiving information during and after the evaluation.
- 2) **Practice-focused Monitoring and Evaluation Principle:** Emphasis on practical implementation methods by considering the process. It prioritizes monitoring and evaluating group performance, utilizing key performance indicators (KPIs) such as input indicators, process indicators, and outcome indicators. These indicators include those in necessary resource steps, activity or process steps, and the measurable results of actions or outputs and outcomes.
- 3) **Self-assessment and Evaluation Principle:** Operational units or personnel of the Provincial Education Office conduct self-monitoring and evaluation to facilitate a close learning process. This is done in conjunction with units responsible for evaluation according to the chain of command to ensure accuracy based on academic principles.

Objectives of the Framework:

- 1) **Internal Monitoring and Evaluation System:** To serve as an internal system for monitoring and evaluating, aligning with the routine operational plan of the Provincial Education Office.
- 2) **Inform Organizational Management and Development:** To use data obtained from the monitoring and evaluation system in designing organizational management and development. This involves linking the evaluation results with the main operational strategies to create mutually reinforcing performance indicators and foster performance improvement.

Part 2: Components of Monitoring and Evaluation:

1. Performance Base Perspective

Objectives of Monitoring

- 1) Optimizing Resource Management
- 2) Reflecting Quality Assurance Outcomes
- 3) Aligning Reviews with the National Education Plan

Monitoring and Evaluation Items

- 1) Creating Media for Clear and Accessible Communication: Establishing easily accessible communication channels with clear explanations of indicators and set goals.
- 2) Incorporating Public Feedback for Plan Enhancement: Gathering and integrating public feedback for continuous plan improvement.
- 3) Development of Unit Action Plans: Crafting unit action plans in harmony with national strategies and each department
- 4) Ensuring Clarity in Unit Action Plans
- 5) Documentation Clarifying Indicator Issues: Documenting explanations for indicators and goals for consistent plan analysis.
- 6) Comparing Frequencies for Continuous Improvement: Comparing the frequency of past operation reviews for ongoing improvement.
- 7) Management Framework for Employee Guidance: Preparing a framework for employees to analyze education-related strategic goals and indicators.
- 8) Effective Communication at All Levels: Facilitating effective communication at all organizational levels.

Sample Indicators:

- 1) Achievement of Goals in Organizational Performance Plans
- 2) Alignment of Activities with National Education Plan Requirements
- 3) Adequate Resources in Policy Implementation
- 4) Quantity of work, quality of work, speed or punctuality and saving.

2. Internal Process Perspective

Objectives of Tracking

To establish a management system focusing on efficiency based on the satisfaction and acceptance of employees.

Monitoring and Assessment Items

- 1) Developing operational plans aligned with the National Education Plan, considering the benefits for employees and the public.
- 2) Formulating operational plans that adapt to changes in the external environment.
- 3) Effective communication and transmission of strategies throughout the organization.
- 4) Senior management personally convening to receive information and drive plans by creating shared goals across units.
- 5) Internal review and assessment of actual outcomes against the educational resource reform objectives.
- 6) Mechanisms for public oversight.
- 7) Establishing proactive communication channels.
- 8) Conducting activities for continuous internal and external organizational development knowledge-sharing.
- 9) Preparing various facilities for operational tasks.
- 10) Building collaborative networks.
- 11) Employee motivation and encouragement.

Sample Indicators

- 1) Swift and Accurate Goal Achievement
- 2) Smooth Organizational Operation
- 3) Goal Cascading Method
- 4) Work Flow Charting Method

3. Stakeholder Perspective

Objectives of Tracking

- 1) Promote Transparency
- 2) Support Public Engagement
- 3) Mitigate Regulatory Constraints

Monitoring and Assessment Items

- 1) Service Level Agreement
- 2) Establish Public Oversight Mechanism:
- 3) Conduct Listening Sessions and Continuous Education
- 4) Diverse Communication Channels
- 5) Enhanced Public Disclosure
- 6) Present Operational Results for Public Awareness
- 7) Accessible Complaint Mechanism
- 8) Clear Complaint Handling Processes
- 9) Proactive Communication Channels
- 10) Collaboration with Local Organizations: Foster collaboration with other local organizations to collectively review and suggest improvements to regulations that align with current circumstances.

Sample Indicators

- 1) Frequency of Public Information Presentations
- 2) Satisfaction and Commitment Levels of Stakeholders
- 3) Response Time to Meet Requirements
- 4) Number of Collaborative Activities Between Organizations in the Area

4. Learning and Growth Perspective

Objectives of Tracking

- 1) Analyze and Compare Improvement Rates: Evaluate and compare operational improvement rates to reflect shared learning at both organizational and individual levels.
- 2) Promote New Knowledge Creation: Encourage the creation of new knowledge to drive the National Plan and achieve personnel objectives.
- 3) Facilitate Collaborative Efforts for Success: Foster cooperation and collaboration in operations until successful outcomes are achieved.
- 4) Develop competencies that are behavioral groups related to work success and characteristics of a person.

Monitoring and Assessment Items

- 1) Employee Development at All Levels by Diverse Learning Methods
- 2) Creation of Success Plans Derived from Learning Outcomes
- 3) Clear and Inclusive Action Plans Involving All Relevant Stakeholders
- 4) Fairly Implemented Measures and Incentives
- 5) Leadership in Creating a Positive Working Environment
- 6) Regular Learning Exchange Processes
- 7) Comparison of Collaboration Rates Focused on Mission Success
- 8) Development of Digital Skills and Timely Knowledge

- 9) Continuous Improvement of Information Technology Systems
- 10) Involvement in Regular Learning and Development:

Sample Indicators

- 1) Employee Satisfaction and Engagement
- 2) Smooth Organizational Operation
- 3) Ratio of Successful Road Map Implementation to Achieve National Plan Objectives
- 4) Behaviors related to work, such as decision-making, learning abilities, work efficiency, or significant achievements

Criteria for Selecting Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Given the importance of the model in tracking and evaluating group performance, various indicators play a crucial role. These indicators fall into three categories: Input Indicators, Process Indicators, and Result KPIs (Outputs and Outcomes).

- 1) Relevance - Indicators must reflect progress or success levels aligned with the assessment and situational requirements. Consistency with organizational policy specifications is essential.
- 2) Reliability - Selected indicators must have reliable methods and data sources, including the acceptance of data collection efforts by organizational units.
- 3) Validity - Indicators should accurately reflect measurement outcomes according to the specified objectives.
- 4) Cost Effectiveness - The collaborative and comprehensive consideration of these criteria ensures the selection of KPIs that effectively contribute to the model's objectives and provide meaningful insights into organizational performance.

Data Collection Methods

There are five methods that can be employed for data collection, namely:

- 1. **Critical Incident Technique:**
 - Evaluate based on observable behaviors that stand out.
 - Record behaviors related to work, such as decision-making, learning abilities, work efficiency, or significant achievements.
 - Utilize information from critical events in the workplace, specifying dates, times, and locations.
- 2. **Work Flow Charting Method:**
 - Inspect primary documentation and record results in sequence, following the progression of tasks.
 - Interviews and focus groups
- 3. **Assessment of Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities in Job Performance:**
 - Record leading factors influencing job performance through interviews or group discussions.
 - Use questionnaires to assess the satisfaction and expectations of service recipients (Customer-Focused Method).

Part 3 : Success Criteria for the Model

The success criteria for the model are detailed as follows:

- (1) Commitment of Senior Management:
 - Senior management demonstrates commitment and practices that motivate the collaborative learning process.

- (2) Effective Collaboration from All Stakeholders:
 - Good cooperation is established among all involved parties.
- (3) Importance Placed on Studying Model Details:
 - The organization emphasizes studying the details of the model, focusing on effective communication to ensure a shared understanding.
- (4) Clear and Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:
 - The action plan for monitoring and evaluating results is clear and continuous, prioritizing behavioral analysis over document-based assessments.
- (5) Utilization of Evaluation Results:
 - The results of the assessment are used to provide incentives and rewards, including their application in system development and maintenance of operational practices.

4. CONCLUSION

Monitoring and evaluation, aimed at enhancing the operations of Provincial Education Offices, is an ongoing process of activity improvement during implementation. It underscores the relationship between theories, activities, outputs, and the environmental factors that influence these operations. As field-level operational units are the starting point of the implementation process, administrative flexibility must be emphasized, and significant importance should be placed on defining specific critical details within the operational steps. Furthermore, evaluation items should be aligned with these operational steps. This alignment allows for the immediate rectification of errors as they occur, rather than waiting until the completion of an ongoing project.

Given that the developed monitoring and evaluation model emphasizes alignment with the local context, relevant provincial-level agencies can adopt key aspects of this model to formulate questions for tracking work progress in conjunction with their organizational development plans. Importantly, each component does not necessarily require fixed indicators; these should be determined based on the primary objectives of the agency. Subsequently, indicators should be defined to align with the objectives of the work plan being monitored and evaluated at each stage. This process should also ensure consistency with the readiness and needs of the practitioners.

To genuinely promote the operations of the Provincial Education Offices, it is essential to have personnel with a thorough and relevant understanding of the related plans. Strong cooperation from all parties is also crucial, beginning with the administrators. They should initiate new projects and plans and act as catalysts by actively participating alongside their subordinates. This active involvement will foster other vital factors such as motivation and dedication in work performance, as well as the offering of opinions for improving work processes. The data obtained from monitoring and evaluation should serve as a guideline for developing the organization and the education system at the provincial level, ultimately leading to the successful achievement of the intended plans.

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