

The Strategies of Driving Upright Schools Under the Office of the Basic Education Commission in the Northeastern

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Abstract

The study aimed 1) to investigate the components and indicators of the upright schools, 2) to explore the current state, the desired state, and the need assessment of driving the upright schools, 3) to develop strategies for driving the upright schools and 4) to investigate the outcomes of implementing driving the upright school strategies in schools in the northeastern region under the supervision of the Office of Basic Education Commission. The study is divided into 4 phases. Phase 1: seven experts scrutinize, evaluate the components and indicators. Phase 2: investigate the need assessment of a sample group including school directors and teachers total of 375 schools took derived by multi-stage sampling. Phase 3: 10 experts for assessment the strategies. Phase 4: apply the strategies to 30 schools. The data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, assessments, and observational forms. Average, standard deviation and Priority Needs Index (PNI_{modified}) were used to analyze the data. The findings of the study revealed the following:

1. The components and indicators of the upright school project include five components and sixteen indicators: 1) academic administration (4 indicators), 2) budget administration (3 indicators), 3) personnel administration (2 indicators), 4) general administration (2 indicators), and 5) result and success (5 indicators). These are measured at the highest level when evaluating the appropriateness of the mentioned features and indicators.
2. The overall current state of the upright schools is rated at a moderate level, while the desired state is rated at high level. However, when classifying the needs of driving the upright school project, the required components were arranged from highest to lowest as follows: result and success, academic administration, budget administration, personnel administration, and general administration.
3. The strategies for driving upright schools under the authority of the Office of Basic Education Commission, which are comprised of 5 strategies (5S)
4. The outcomes of implementing driving the upright school strategies demonstrated that the target schools understandably applied the strategies and have been evaluated at the highest level in all standards regarding the standard of upright school project administration on the whole.

Keywords: strategies, upright schools, upright school project standard

1. Introduction

The major goal of the 20 year national policy (2018–2037) is to combat corruption and misconduct by ensuring that the public sector operates with transparency with no corruption or malfeasance and administering the principles of good governance and the philosophy of a sufficiency economy. As well as creating a culture against corruption and misconduct among government officials by strengthening morality, honesty, integrity, transparency, and fairness. According to that, there are three guidelines for developing transparency: 1) raising awareness of being an upright citizen, having an honest culture, and cultivating culture among children and youth of all ages and levels; 2) promoting cleanliness in the performance of duties among government officials and discouraging practices that may lead to corruption; and 3) adjusting work systems and organizational structures that facilitate corruption by requiring government sectors to assess morality and transparency in their operations regularly. The mentioned policy has been operating since 2015 until 2021, and the results reflect the performance of the Educational Service Area Office in terms of morality and transparency (Bureau of Educational Innovation Development, 2021).

Corruption has become recognized as a major issue in countries all over the world, including Thailand. This issue does not appear to be fading away. Moreover, it is also becoming more intense and sophisticated, despite the fact that Thailand has joined modernity by having a contemporary government administration system and has proclaimed anti-corruption laws. Still, Thailand's corruption problem has been one of the greatest challenges for a long time and has had a significant impact on the country's progress. Moreover, as corruption has become a normal practice for some Thais and has influenced some people's thoughts, it has been found that some behaviors of government officials are not consistent with the concept of modern governance. Thus, the 20-year national policy and Thailand 4.0 are considered a key strategy for national development and sustainable development goals (SDGs) (Bureau of Educational Innovation Development, 2019).

The Office of the National Anti-Corruption Commission and the Office of the Basic Education Commission have signed an agreement with the Ministry of Education to collaborate in the fight against corruption. And the Office of Basic Education Commission approved the Office of Educational Innovation Development to carry out the project to enhance morality, ethics, and good governance in educational institutions called "Anti-Corruption" under the name "Upright Schools" in 2013. The project intends to coordinate collaboration in the fight against corruption by using educational institutions as a tool to raise awareness among the young, which is considered the initial phase of the project to strengthen morality, ethics, and good governance in educational institutions (Upright School Project) (Office of Basic Education Commission, 2019).

The Upright School Project was conducted following the government policy, which requires associated institutions to make contributions to the national strategy for preventing and combating corruption and aimed to implant morality and ethics among the youth with the 5 characteristics of the upright school character. The project started in 2013 with the selection of 225 schools as a model of the upright schools around the country by the Primary Education Service Area Office under the five qualified standards. The five qualified standards for assessing the school consists of 1) academic standard, which is related to the implementation of learning management by promoting students to develop themselves according to the five characteristics of the upright schools through various and modern activities, together with continuous supervision and monitoring both internally and externally. 2) Budget standard must operate finance, accounting, and supplies correctly, economically, cost-effectively, transparently, and verifiably according to government regulations. 3) Personnel standard should be the operations related to offering convenience, creating morale, and taking care of and sustaining the benefits of the school staff, as well as organizing activities for promoting and developing knowledge and abilities for them.

4) General standard is the management of buildings and facilities for teachers, students, and the community by providing a clean, shady, practical, and safe environment, as well as maintaining the school building, supporting buildings, classrooms, and other related facilities to be in good condition, ready to use, and conducive to learning. 5) The result and success standard are the outcome of the aforementioned standard's operation, which leads the school to be transparent, free of corruption, verifiable, and effective (Office of Basic Education Commission, 2016).

Regarding the aforementioned part, it is concluded that the mission and focus of the Office of Basic Education Commission are to promote morality and ethics, emphasize transparency, and be free from corruption. Therefore, the school administrators play the key role in leading the school to achieve the strategic goal of the Office of the Basic Education Commission and The Office of the National Anti-Corruption Commission on preventing corruption. All in all, the researchers intend to develop the strategies for driving upright schools under the Office of the Basic Education Commission in the northeastern part of Thailand in order to obtain strategies for driving upright schools that can be implemented, raise awareness, strengthen morality, ethics, and good governance and make the schools more effective.

2. Research Objectives

To investigate the components and indicators of the upright schools under the supervision of the Office of Basic Education Commission

To explore the current state, the desired state, and the needs of driving the upright schools in the northeastern part of the country under the auspices of the Basic Education Commission

To develop strategies for driving the upright schools under the authority of the Office of Basic Education Commission

To investigate the outcomes of implementing driving the upright school strategies in schools in the northeastern region under the supervision of the Office of Basic Education Commission

3. Scope of the Research

The study is conducted to develop the strategies for driving upright schools under the Office of the Basic Education Commission in the northeastern part of Thailand. The scope of the study revealed the following:

3.1 The Content Scope of the Research

The components and indicators of the upright school project consisted of five components and sixteen indicators: 1) academic administration (4 indicators), 2) budget administration (3 indicators), 3) personnel administration (2 indicators), 4) general administration (2 indicators), and 5) result and success (5 indicators) (Ministry of Education, 2016).

The components of the driving upright school project strategies consisted of four components: 1) objective, 2) strategy, 3) plan/project/activity, and 4) success indicators.

3.2 The Research Conceptual Framework

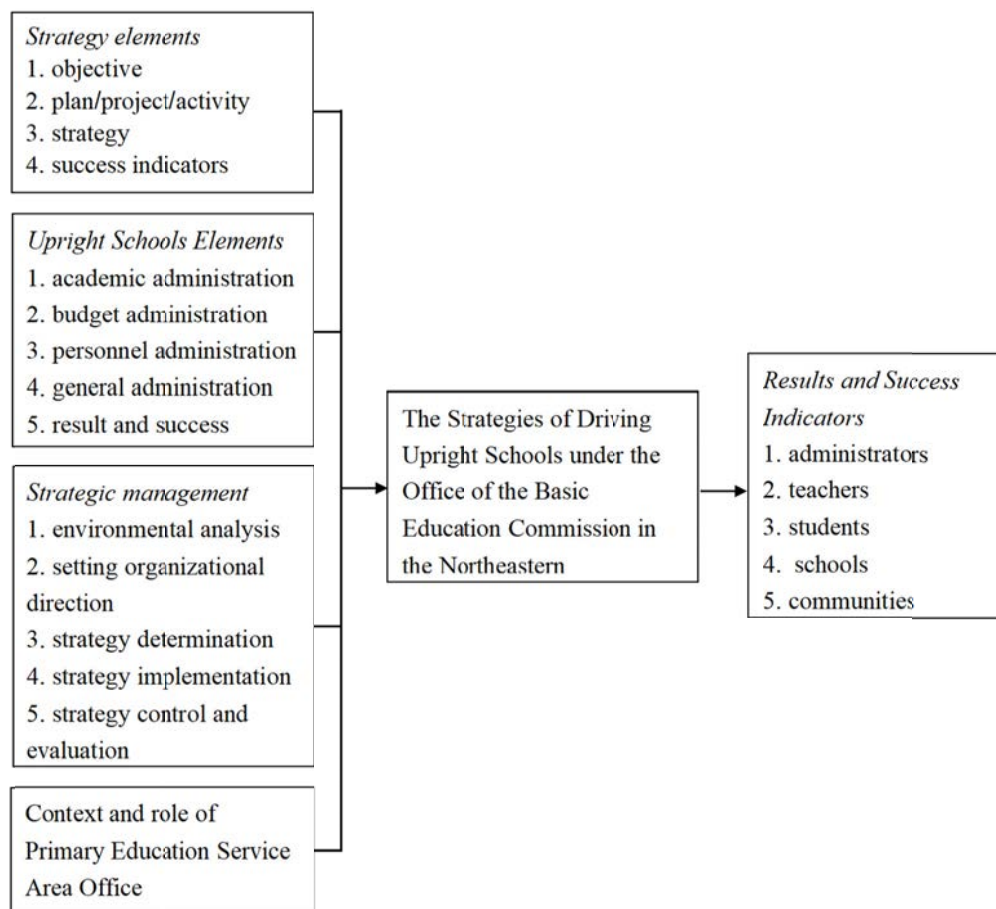


Figure 1. The Research conceptual framework

4. Research Methodology

The study is conducted through the use of research and development methods (R & D). The study is divided into four phases as follows:

4.1 Phase 1: Investigating the Components and Indicators of Upright Schools Under the Office of Basic Education Commission

A structured interview was employed to engage seven experts in the upright school project, selected through purposive sampling. The research instrument used was an assessment form for evaluating the suitability of

upright school components and indicators, involving the steps of creation, validation, and reliability checks.

4.2 Phase 2: Investigating the Current State, Desired State, and the Requirements for Driving Upright Schools in the Northeastern Part of the Country Under the Office of Basic Education Commission

1) The sample group of the study comprised 375 schools in the northeastern region responsible for the upright school project under the Office of the Basic Education Commission during the academic year 2021. The selection was conducted using a multi-stage sampling technique, applying the table of Krejcie and Morgan as cited in Srisa-ard (2004).

2) The research instrument was a questionnaire assessing the current state, desired state, and requirements for advancing upright schools, utilizing a 5-point Likert scale. The questionnaire comprised two parts: Part 1 included a checklist gathering general information about the respondents, and Part 2 consisted of questions related to the current state, desired state, and needs for driving upright schools in the northeastern part of the country, under the office of Basic Education Commission.

The five experts reviewed the revised questionnaire consisting of 70 questions to ensure consistency between the questions and objectives. The Inter-Observer Consistency (IOC) rating ranged between 0.80 and 1.00.

3) Data collection involved distributing the questionnaire on the current state, desired state, and needs for advancing upright schools to the schools. The data were then analyzed using averages, standard deviation, and the Modified Priority Needs Index (PNI_{Modified}).

4.3 Phase 3: Developing Strategies to Drive Upright Schools in the Northeastern Part Under the Authority of the Office of Basic Education Commission

1) Drafting strategies for driving upright schools in the northeastern region under the authority of the Office of Basic Education Commission involves analyzing the internal and external environment through the SWOT Analysis concept. This analysis takes into consideration the identified needs. The strategies are then drafted based on the findings from the research and development methods in Phase 2, coupled with the outcomes of the internal and external environment analysis. The wording, strategy arrangement, and other relevant factors are validated. The draft is presented to the adviser, and strategies are constructed and refined based on their suggestions. Subsequently, the document is submitted to a panel of 10 experts for the next stage of evaluation.

2) Connoisseurship was employed to assess the proposed strategies for appropriateness and feasibility. The sample group consisted of 10 experts selected through connoisseurship.

3) Create the comprehensive strategies: Review the details of the strategies for accuracy and completeness, enhance the strategies based on the feedback received, conclude by preparing the report, submit it to the advisor, and then implement the strategies.

4.4 Phase 4: Investigate the Outcomes of Implementing Strategies to Advance Upright Schools in the Northeastern Region Under the Supervision of the Office of Basic Education Commission

The sample group was 30 schools under the Mahasarakham Primary Education Service Area Office 1 that voluntarily participated in the upright school project under the Office of the Basic Education Commission. The steps of the designing and validating the research instrument revealed the following: 1) examine documents, theories, academic articles, and relevant research to systematically develop and design the questionnaire, 2) formulate questions aligned with the objectives, ensuring the completeness of content and precision in language use, 3) present to the adviser, construct and improve the questionnaire based on the recommendations, and then submit to the 5 experts for the next stage of examination, 4) develop and improve the questionnaire, and 5) create a complete strategy manual.

5. Research Results

Phase 1: Investigate the components and indicators of the upright schools under the supervision of the Office of Basic Education Commission in the northeastern part of the country

Table 1. The components and indicators of the upright schools under the supervision of the Office of Basic Education Commission in the northeastern part of the country

The components of upright schools	The indicators of upright schools
1. Academic administration	1.1 Learning management 1.2 Organizing activities to promote upright school projects 1.3 Internal supervision 1.4 Academic services
2. Budget administration	2.1 Financial planning 2.2 Budget spending 2.3 Following up on the budgetary results
3. Personnel administration	3.1 Professional Development 3.2 Increasing Staff Morale
4. General administration	4.1 Organizing the school's environment 4.2 Community relations
5. Result and success	5.1 administrators 5.2 teachers 5.3 students 5.4 schools 5.5 communities
5 components	16 indicators

Table 1 shows the components and indicators of the upright schools under the supervision of the Office of Basic Education Commission in the northeastern part of the country consisted of five components and sixteen indicators

Phase 2: Investigate the current state, the desired state, and the needs of driving the upright schools in the northeastern part of the country under the auspices of the Basic Education Commission

Table 2. The analysis results of the current state, the desired state, and the needs of driving the upright schools in the northeastern part of the country under the auspices of the Basic Education Commission

Standards	The current state			The desired state			PNI _{modified} (I-D)/D	The needs
	\bar{X}	S.D.	Meaning	\bar{X}	S.D.	Meaning		
1. Academic administration	3.16	0.62	Moderate	3.50	0.74	High	0.11	2
2. Budget administration	3.20	0.61	Moderate	3.54	0.82	High	0.11	2
3. Personnel administration	3.15	0.66	Moderate	3.47	0.87	Moderate	0.10	3
4. General administration	3.17	0.66	Moderate	3.47	0.87	Moderate	0.09	4
5. Result and success	3.26	0.62	Moderate	4.82	0.76	Highest	0.33	1
Overall	3.18		Moderate	3.76		Moderate	0.15	

According to Table 2, the current state is rated as moderate. When each component was considered, it was found that all aspects were evaluated at a moderate level. While the desired state is rated at a high level, when each aspect was taken into account, it was shown that all of the aspects were rated at a moderate level. However, when the needs are taken into account, the entire result is graded at the level of development needs. Furthermore, the aspect that requires the most improvement is the result and success ($PNI_{modified} = 0.33$).

Phase 3: Develop strategies for driving the upright schools in the northeastern part under the authority of the Office of Basic Education Commission

The strategy draft comprises of 4 components and 5 driving strategies: 1) Set Network, 2) Set Agreement, 3) Smart Action, 4) Smart Advice and 5) Success, depicted in table 3.

Table 3. Strategies for driving the upright schools in the northeastern part under the authority of the Office of Basic Education Commission

Components	Indicators
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. OBEC students have contemporary learning processes and thinking skills, are disciplined and honest, sufficient and generous, have morality and ethics, and are free of corruption. 2. Teachers, administrators, and other educational staff are all involved in the campaign against corruption. 3. Teachers, administrators, and other educational professionals of OBEC comprehend how to prevent corruption.
Strategies	<p>Strategy 1: Set Network: Set up a network with qualified standard upright schools</p> <p>Strategy 2: Set Agreement: Make a performance agreement</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School administrators make a performance agreement on the challenging issue of implementing the upright school project. 2. Teachers make a performance agreement on organizing teaching and learning according to the upright school curriculum. <p>Strategy 3: Smart Action: Aim for success by promoting the participation of all sectors in success according to plans, projects, and activities</p> <p>Strategy 4: Smart Advice: Collaboratively develop with supervision</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supervise and follow up systematically 2. Supervise, follow up and provide assistance from the upright school project committees 3. Evaluate the performance based on the upright school project standards: 1) academic administration, 2) budget administration, 3) personnel administration, 4) general administration, and 5) result and success, by performing the practices as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 Exchange the experiences 3.2 Group the upright schools regarding the quality levels 3.3 Announce the award of success
Plan/project activity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Set up the team for driving the upright school project 2. Perform the practices by 1) setting up an upright school network, 2) training the school administrators, 3) training the students and communities, and 4) organizing a camp 3. Evaluate/Reflect on performance outcomes 4. Announce the award of success
Success indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School administrators <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Systematically plan the practices 1.2 Perform the practices with morality, professional ethics, and transparency according to government regulations 1.3 Do not make use of the position to obtain illegal benefits 1.4 Be an example to the people by living happily based on the principles of sufficiency 1.5 Dedicate to the public 2. Teachers <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 Systematically plan the practices 2.2 Perform the practices with morality, professional ethics, and transparency according to government regulations 2.3 Professionally perform the duties full-time 2.4 Live the life based on the principles of sufficiency 2.5 Dedicate to the public <p>Note: 80% of teachers were able to practice each issue.</p> 3. Students <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 Have the operational steps 3.2 Perform the practices regarding school regulations 3.3 Take no possessions from others 3.4 Save and use the resources wisely. 3.5 Be generous and help others <p>Note: 80% of students were able to practice each issue.</p> 4. Schools <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1 Have a clean, shady, practical, and safe environment 4.2 Have an agreement for implementing educational quality development 4.3 Transparently, verifiably and cooperatively administrate 4.4 Use resources efficiently and beneficially 4.5 Be a model school for the upright school projects 5. Communities <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5.1 Cooperatively plan for the upright school project in practices 5.2 Perform the practices according to an agreement between school and community 5.3 Preserve the school property 5.4 Live the life based on the principles of sufficiency 5.5 Willingly dedicate for the school and community events <p>Note: 80% of communities were able to practice each issue.</p>



Figure 2. 5S MODEL

S1 = Set Network : Set up a network with qualified standard upright schools.

S2 = Set Agreement: Make a performance agreement

S3 = Smart Action : Aim for success by promoting the participation of all sectors in success according to plans, projects, and activities

S4 = Smart Advice : Collaboratively develop with supervision

S5 = Success : Announce the award of success

The evaluation of proposed strategies for driving upright schools in the northeastern part under the authority of the Office of Basic Education Commission is rated at the highest level of propriety and feasibility.

Phase 4: Investigate the outcomes of implementing driving the upright school strategies in schools in the northeastern region under the supervision of the Office of Basic Education Commission

Thirty schools under the Mahasarakham Primary Education Service Area Office 1 that voluntarily participated in the upright school project under the Office of the Basic Education Commission in the academic year 2022. The outcomes revealed the following:

1) The preparation of performances for driving the upright school strategies in schools under the Mahasarakham Primary Education Service Area Office 1 that voluntarily participated in the upright school project under the Office of the Basic Education Commission has the steps as follows:

(1) Organize a 5-hour meeting to clarify the understanding of the upright school conceptual framework for the school administrators and teachers.

(2) Perform the practices as follows:

Set up a network (Strategy 1: Set Network)

Organize a workshop for the school administrators of the 30 sample schools under the Mahasarakham Primary Education Service Area Office 1 together with 10 school directors with the AA level of Integrity and Transparency Assessment (ITA) in the fiscal year 2021.

Organize the training for the network school administrators

Set up the workshop for 30 school administrators and 30 teachers who are in charge of the upright school project from the network schools.

The results of the mentioned practices exposed that the sample schools have been evaluated at the highest level in all standards regarding the standard of upright school project administration on the whole.

6. Discussion

1) The strategies for driving upright school project under the supervision of the Office of Basic Education Commission consisted of four components: (1) objective, (2) plan/project/activity, (3) strategy, and (4) success indicators which is in accordance with Weladee (2004) which stated that guidelines for developing educational

institution strategies comprised of (1) brainstorming ideas from individuals involved in establishing operational guidelines, (2) selection of particular objectives, (3) developing success indicators, (4) analyzing the feasibility, and (5) specifying plan/project/activity. A similar strategy was observed in a manual plan of Mahasarakham University (2011) which stated that the components of strategy included goal, indicator, objective, strategy and project plan. This finding can be supported by the previous study of Chaloeynak (2013) which reported that the components of strategy consisted of (1) strategy issues, (2) goals, (3) success indicators, and (4) strategy.

2) The current state of driving upright school project under the supervision of the Office of Basic Education Commission is rated as moderate. When each element was considered, it was found that the standard 5: result and success was discovered to be the most actionable procedure, while other standards were rated as standard 2: budget administration, standard 4: general administration, standard 3: personnel administration, and standard 1: academic administration, respectively. The findings are in line with the report of Ministry of Education (2016), which stated that morals, ethics, good governance, and the characteristics of upright schools should be employed to administer the school efficiently. Clarke and Clinell (2001) consistently stated that countries with democratic administration that decentralizes power to local areas, as well as a possible development strategy, could successfully develop their own countries. While the desired state of driving upright school project under the supervision of the Office of Basic Education Commission is rated at a high level. The most actionable procedure was standard 5: result and success while other standards were rated as standard 2: budget administration, standard 1: academic administration, standard 3: personnel administration, and standard 4: general administration, respectively. The finding was consistent to Thompson and Strickland (1999) whose study reported the importance of strategy management as (1) guidelines for organizational staff, (2) alerts for administrators to change the administration, (3) assistance for administrators to carefully plan, (4) decisions of administrators to cooperatively and unite the organizational administration, and (5) the plan for future decision-making. Bluemel (2000) also emphasized that implementing good governance principles is crucial for international assistance and national cooperation. However, when the needs are taken into account, the most actionable procedure was standard 5: result and success, whereas other standards were rated as standard 1: academic administration, standard 2: budget administration, standard 3: personnel administration, and the least required aspect was standard 4: general administration. This finding aligns with the results observed in a study conducted by Boonbongkan and Kejornnan (2009), which claimed that strategic management is crucial for the organization in (1) establishing organizational direction, (2) ensuring consistency in working performances, (3) ensuring organizational readiness, and (4) ensuring competitive efficiency.

3) The outcomes of implementing driving the upright school strategies in schools in the northeastern region under the supervision of the Office of Basic Education Commission demonstrated the following:

The draft of strategy for driving upright school project under the supervision of the Office of Basic Education Commission consisted of four components: (1) objective, (2) plan/project/activity, (3) strategy, and (4) success indicators which is in accordance with Saikrajang (2017) who investigated the management approach of school administration based on the principles of good governance in the upright school under the supervision of the Office of Basic Education Commission. The findings indicated that the appropriate approach should consist of principles, objectives, working systems, operation, evaluation, and implementation. The study by Naowaboot (2014) backed up the claim, revealing that strategic administration development comprised of five major steps, which were as follows: (1) environmental analysis; (2) formation of organizational direction; (3) strategy creation; (4) strategic operation; and (5) strategic control.

The evaluation of proposed strategies for driving upright schools in the northeastern part under the authority of the Office of Basic Education Commission is rated at the highest level of propriety and feasibility. In support of this finding, Chootosri (2017) examined the study of guideline development to promote morality and good governance in upright schools, and it turned out that the experts agreed and rated it at the highest level of propriety and feasibility.

4) The outcomes of implementing driving the upright school strategies in the 30 sample schools in the northeastern region under the supervision of the Office of Basic Education Commission demonstrated that the target schools understandably applied the strategies and have been evaluated at the highest level in all standards regarding the standard of upright school project administration. The finding is correlated to Ministry of Education (2016) which stated that in order to accomplish the goal of driving an upright school project, school administrators must lead and govern the school in accordance with the standard criterias included: (1) academic administration, (2) budget administration, (3) personnel administration, (4) general administration, and (5) result and success. Kimmert (2005) also demonstrated that widely applying good governance principles in any aspect of government administration could result in various forms of reformation: governance, political development, and

the development of new management approaches that make the country more effective and democratic.

7. Suggestion

7.1 The Suggestions for Implementation

The outcomes of implementing driving the upright school strategies in schools in the northeastern region under the supervision of the Office of Basic Education Commission demonstrated the five main components. Therefore, the Office of Basic Education Commission could adapt the findings as a guideline to drive the upright school project for the whole country.

Strategy 1: Set Network: Set up a network with qualified standard upright schools

Strategy 2: Set Agreement: The school administrators should make a performance agreement on the challenging issue of implementing the upright school project while the teachers make a performance agreement on organizing teaching and learning according to the upright school curriculum.

Strategy 3: Smart Action: Aim for success by promoting the participation of all sectors in success according to plans, projects, and activities.

Strategy 4: Smart Advice: The schools should collaboratively develop with both internal and external supervision from the upright school project committees. As well as being regularly evaluated based on the upright school project standards: 1) academic administration; 2) budget administration; 3) personnel administration; 4) general administration; and 5) result and success.

Strategy 5: Success: The administrative sectors should declare the reward of achievement, as well as exchange experiences and group the high-quality upright schools to motivate and maintain the standards of the schools.

The driving upright school project at schools under the authority of the Office of Basic Education Commission should investigate strategic approaches to raise awareness of the upright school project operations among school administrators, teachers, and communities.

The operations of the strategy manual for driving upright schools under the supervision of the Office of Basic Education Commission should study ways to support and encourage schools under the dominion to see the importance and necessity of the standards and adapt those strategies on a regular basis.

7.2 The Suggestions for Further Study

The Office of Basic Education Commission should apply the guidelines from successful upright schools to operate with other schools under or different authorities.

The Office of Basic Education Commission should research and sustain the model for constructing upright schools.

There should have greater implications of the upright school project for schools in other jurisdictions.

There should be more research into different operational forms of driving upright school projects in schools in the northeastern region under the supervision of the Office of Basic Education Commission.

A strategy for driving upright school projects in schools in the northeastern region under the supervision of the Office of Basic Education Commission should be implemented in the actual educational institutions.

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No additional data are available.

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