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主 論 文 の 要 旨

論文題目

Impact of School Principals' Leadership on Teaching Quality and Students' Achievement: A Case Study of Primary Schools in Phnom Penh, Cambodia

(校長のリーダーシップが教育の質と生徒の学習成果に及ぼす影響-カンボジア国プノンペン市の小学校の事例研究)

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論 文 内 容 の 要 旨

School leadership and management have been the central focus of the current education reforms (MoEYS, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2019b, 2019a). Since the early 2000s, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) of Cambodia formally introduced the concept of decentralization in education to empower schools to be part of the education reforms. Several key educational policies were endorsed to facilitate the process of decentralization in education, including the cluster-school approach, school operational budget program and school-based management (Kheang et al., 2018).

School-based management (SBM) approach was introduced to promote local school capacities to be more autonomous in making the decisions on the development of the schools and enhance access to inclusive and equitable quality of education. School principals, one of the key agents of education reforms at the local level, are responsible for translating the ideas of policy reforms into the implementations and practices at the school level aimed at preparing students for better education and future learning and career. To achieve this objective, school principals were mandated to attend the training provided by the MoEYS in collaboration with the Development Partners (DPs) on school leadership and management after the appointment to be able to carry out their roles and tasks.

Even though school principals have received some training after their appointment, the capacity of school principals remains limited and concerned (McNamara & Hayden, 2022). A-20-days- training on leadership and management in the past provided for school managements after their appointment was insufficient to prepare principals with necessary leadership capacities for taking the roles with full responsibilities for effective outcomes (Kheang et al., 2018). According to Keng's (2009) research, there is, however, a disconnect between primary school actors' demands for reform and the school's management capacity. In this view, rather than concentrating on instruction and pedagogical growth, school principals spend the majority of their time at school

addressing issues linked to administration and financial management (Keng, 2009). Consequently, a critical loss of instructional hours at the primary schools and teachers' absenteeism were attributed to the lack of leadership and management capacity and commitment of school principals (McNamara & Hayden, 2022; Sot et al., 2022). These issues negatively contribute to low students' performance based on the results of the learning assessments at the national and regional levels (Benveniste et al., 2008; McNamara & Hayden, 2022; Song, 2012). McNamara and Heyden (2022) noticed that little empirical literature on leadership and management in Cambodia in the recent past was found. This reflected an improvement in the fields resulting from better school inspection mechanisms and policies to reduce corruption (p. 6).

However, little is known about the effects of school principals' leadership on teaching quality and students' learning outcomes. Therefore, this dissertation examines the effects of school principals' leadership on the quality of teaching and students' achievement in primary schools in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, from teacher perceptions. It is guided by the following research questions.

1. How and to what extent does school principals' leadership affect students' achievement in primary schools in Phnom Penh, Cambodia?
2. How and to what extent does teachers' teaching practice influence students' achievement in primary schools in Phnom Penh, Cambodia?
3. What are the relationships between school principals' leadership and teachers' teaching practices?

This study employed a mixed-method research design using survey questionnaires to gather relevant information and data for analyzing and discussing the phenomenon of the research interest. This study was a one-time survey data collection project targeting primary schools in Phnom Penh, the capital city of Cambodia. By way of randomized selections, thirty-eight primary schools were chosen for this study. Out of the selected primary schools, fifty-four sixth-grade teachers and one principal from each school were involved in completing the survey questionnaire voluntarily. Meanwhile, 1,878 sixth-grade students under the fifty-four teachers were invited to answer the survey questionnaire. Furthermore, students' monthly test scores obtained from the school principals were used for data analysis in this study.

This dissertation is structured into seven chapters as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Cambodia's Primary Education Sector – Context and Background Development

Chapter 3: Theories, Practices, and the Roles of School Leadership on Teaching Quality and School Outcomes

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

Chapter 5: Effects of School Principals' Leadership and Other School Factors on Students'

Achievement

Chapter 6: Influences of School Principals' Leadership on Teachers' Teaching Practices

Chapter 7: Conclusions, Implications, and Research Recommendations

The following paragraphs present the findings and discussion based on the research questions of the study. The multi-level modeling (MLM) strategy was used to analyze the relationships to address the non-independence observations due to the hierarchical structure of data (students' achievement). It was started with the null/unconditional model, which examines the extent to which cluster variances exist in the hierarchical structure of the data. As a result, the Intra-class Correlation Coefficient (ICC) indicated that all variance components were statistically significant in which the variance at between-student was about 87 percent ($SE = .0287$; $p < .001$), between-classes about 6 percent ($SE = .0286$; $p < .05$), and between-schools about 7 percent ($SE = .0366$; $p < .05$). The Intra-class Correlation Coefficient (ICC) of the null model showed that students' achievement was largely explained by the learners' contributions, which is not surprising. Nevertheless, the percentage of the variability combined between class and school was about 13 percent, which falls into a percentage that requires further investigation of the higher level of factors (class and school) that explain students' learning achievement. The results of the null model analysis in the current study provided substantial evidence that the proportions of variances combined between class and school levels mattered in explaining the differences in students' achievement. The substantial group observations within Level-2 and Level-3 units can be justified using the multi-level model technique.

Based on the model specifications, the MLM results highlighted several key findings. First, school principals' leadership significantly influenced students' achievement. School principals influenced students' achievement when their leadership was focused on the quality of teaching by (1) improving the instructional program and (2) involving in the instructional process.

Second, teaching practices positively and significantly affected students' achievement when controlling for other variables. Teachers may influence students' achievement when they pay more attention to the following four indicators: (1) Student progress is regularly reported to parents, (2) Assessment data are used to improve the school's program, (3) Student assessment data are monitored to modify the instruction to promote learning, and (4) Student performance is monitored in a variety of methods.

In addition, the quantitative findings indicate that school principals' leadership has a positive relationship with teachers' teaching practices. Additionally, the findings from qualitative data analyses revealed that principals influenced teaching practices in two ways as follows: (1) School

principals maintain and promote the practices of learning assessments for instructional improvement, and (2) School principals enhance the practices of Teacher Professional Standards.

Another interesting finding was class size. Class size was found to have a negative and significant effect on teachers' teaching practices and students' achievement. Large class sizes can disrupt the instruction processes, including the selection of teaching methods and the practices of learning assessments which negatively influence the quality of teaching and thus students' learning outcomes. Furthermore, school principals' years of leadership experience positively affected students' achievement, but the relationship was non-linear. However, teacher quality did not significantly influence teaching practices and students' achievement.

This study is concluded by highlighting the important findings of school principals' leadership, teaching practices, class size, and years of the leadership role of school principals on students' achievement. These findings provide critical evidence for policy implications that directly and indirectly impact the quality of education in primary schools in Cambodia.