

Issues and Challenges of the Development of Administration in Education Sector: Study on Education Sector in Lao PDR

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Abstract

The study aims to explore the issues and challenges of the development of administration in education sector of Laos. The study uses an extensive literature review to obtain the objectives. The study explores that though the government has invested enough in the implementation of the targets and activities in the education sector but the administration in education sector of Laos is not well organized to enhance the quality of education. As a result, there is a growing trend to establish the private education system in the country. The study also reveals that the cost of education in the private sector is higher than the public sector due to maintain quality, providing modern learning facilities and creating learning environment. A long-term development plan is required to develop the education system as well as the administration in the education sector.

Keywords

Education, Administration, Public Services, Learning, Laos

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1. Introduction

Learning and education is a highly complex and dynamic process. A proper administration is necessary to conduct the education system properly [1]. Besides students' own efforts, other factors like study materials, learning instructional strategies, learning activities, and classroom emotional environment strongly influence on learning [2]. These aspects are deeply linked to the beliefs, inspiration, capability, and situation of the teacher [3]. Some learners lack academic care at home and some of them have financial problems [4-8]. How students utilize out of school time, what educational support they get from home, and what influences they experience outside school play an important role in determining their ability to cope with learning [9-11]. Tensions and perplexities that complicate the school environment also arise with colleagues and parents (e.g., lacking interest in their children's education) [12].

Educational administration is a discipline under the area of education which examines the administrative theory and practice of education in general and educational institutions and educators in specific activities [13-16]. According to the Resolution of the VIII Congress of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party, "Fostering the reform of the national education system". Reforms in the fields of education guidelines and strategic studies of government increase efficiency in teaching, learning, research and high-quality education gradually equivalent to the international response to the transformation industry [17-19]. There are five major areas of education and sport that can be achieved: National Strategy for Reforming the National Education System, Responding and Supporting Imagination Reconciliation Concepts. The Lao people have benefited from the improvement of the sport-gear work, which has made it an important role in building regional and international relations [19]. Three building concept and five education chapters are

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factors that promote the quality and consistency of national human resource development [20]. Strong planning and education management is reflected in the improvement of educational regulations and principles [21]. The knowledge and skills of teachers have been developed and improved and can play a more important role in Lao society.

Educational attainment and literacy rates in Lao PDR have improved significantly. In 1960, the population aged 18-60 in Lao PDR completed on average two years of schooling. In 2003, average schooling for this age group was five and a half years [22]. In 2004, average literacy rate for the 15-24 age group was 78.5 percent. These averages, however, mask stark differences by gender and ethno-linguistic minority. Access to primary school is relatively high. Eighty-four percent of the Lao PDR population lives in a village with a primary school. But fewer children have access to lower secondary schools and even fewer to upper secondary schools. Poor, non Lao-Tai rural youth have the least access to education [23]. Girls also have lower enrollment rates. Only 46 percent of female youth attend primary schools compared to 54 percent of males [22]. This gap becomes wider at the lower and upper secondary levels. Non-poor Lao-Tai boys and girls in urban areas are enrolled in school at a high rate of 93 percent, while poor non-Lao-Tai girls in rural areas are enrolled in school at the low rate of 46 percent, implying an almost 50 percentage-point difference [24]. Primary school completion rates in Lao PDR are low. Only one-third of students that enter first grade are estimated to complete all five grades of primary schooling. Completion rates are even lower for girls. Part of the problem is that repetition rates in primary school are high, particularly in grades 1 and 2. One-fifth of Lao PDR primary students have repeated one or more grades. The majority of repeaters are boys, at all grades in the primary level [25]. Repetition is a structural problem. Rates have remained largely stable since 2000 or experienced a slight increase in the case of girls. Educational public spending in Lao PDR is extremely low. Lao PDR spent barely above 2 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita on primary education and fewer than 3 percent of GDP per capita on lower secondary schooling [22].

A few studies have been done on the education administration in Laos [26-27, 2] considering the importance of the issue, this study intends to explore the status, issues and challenges for development of administration in the education sector in Laos. This study will help policy makers, educators, administrators to know the status and make a desirable reform in educational administration in Laos.

The paper is organized as the second section deals with the methodology, third section deals with present status of the education system, fourth section deals with issues and

challenges and final section concludes the article with recommendations.

2. Methodology

An extensive desk literature review has been done for this study. It analyzes the various documents of government, external agencies, journal articles, magazines and newspaper articles to obtain the issues, status and challenges for ensuring better administration for better learning. The study also uses some secondary data from government for shaping the article.

3. Present Status of the Education System

Laos has ranked fairly poorly by most development indicators. Laos is ranked 141st out of 188 countries on the HDI (Human Development Index) and one of the 48 countries on the United Nations' list of Least Developed Countries [28]. Economic development has been unequally distributed, exit over 20 percent of the country under the international poverty line [22]. This percentage has been reducing, however developments have been quite slow. While there are over 100 ethnic groups in Laos with a significant "ethnic hierarchy" creating inequalities, insufficient research breaks statistics down by ethnic group [29]. With the goal of developing a new phase of education, such as 1) to promote and enable equal opportunities for equal access; 2) to equal opportunities for both urban and rural populations [30] and 3) to improve quality of learning - teaching on every level (based on SDGs); the improving administration and management system of the central and local education, including the administration and management of schools, and the Education Law has targeted education from primary to secondary schooling as a compulsory education. In addition, in the 8th Five-Year Development Plan (5 years) year 2016-2020 that education and sport are a priority sector, education is central to the development of human resources for quality [31-32]; decisive factor in the economic and social growth of the country [30].

Through the establishment of the National Education System Reform and the implementation of the Five-Year Developmental Education and Sport Development Plans (2016-2020), as in the middle year 2018 there are many positive achievements, including satisfactory pre-school education; higher grade enrollment rates increased at all levels; out of school has been improved; secondary schools announced the completion of 111 primary schools in four provinces, which are faster than expected; more students

enroll in higher education, the course of study - teaching is diverse and of better quality; higher education has improved in quality; Sports and Physical Fitness have also been

promoted and improved, including exercise, administration and management (education, finance, legislation), which have been improved (Table 1).

Table 1. Some achievements in education reform (2005-2015).

Items	Unit	2005	2015
Kindergarten	Amount of kindergarten	969	2,403
Admission rate of 3-5 years	%	8.2	43.2
Primary school	Amount of school	8,573	8,857
Net enrollment rate	%	84.2	98.5
Rate of dropout	%	8.9	5.2
Rate of repetition	%	19.3	5.8
Number of secondary schools	Amount of schools	956	1,651
Number of secondary schools	People	388,044	630,676

Source: [22]

4. Issues and Challenges

Although the government has invested heavily in the implementation of the targets and activities in the education and sports sectors (Figure 1), it is still slow and low quality compared to other countries in the region [23]. The repetition of primary school students is still high in some provinces because of scattered schools, teachers and administrators do

not perform well, the parents do not focus on the education of their children [2]; high school dropout in the secondary school because that are very far away from their settlement [27]. There is lack of dormitory, the using of teachers is not effective, especially these unpredictable planning, legislation and methods. Most remote schools have lack of teachers, more teaching rooms, lack of teaching facilities, lack of teacher ownership and low community involved [23].



Figure 1. Differences school between cities in urban and rural areas.

Additionally, the gap between school service in urban and rural areas has more gap (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Showing distance comparison between urban and rural school.

5. Possible Solutions

In the course of school year 2019-2020, the government has to expand pre-school education to be broad and comprehensive; to solve problems of school drop-out and repetition of primary and secondary students by basic. Encourage the performance of teachers and administrators by providing subsidies [2]. Establish a group of schools to help teach the exchange; assess knowledge, ability to perform duties of teachers and administrators at all levels; to provide secondary tuition and secondary school dormitories, especially in remote areas and development focus areas. They are sending key staff from the center to local for helping to improve the quality of education, especially in poor districts; and replacement the teachers to continue development the teacher's knowledge [33-34]. Therefore, in order to mitigate the disparity between schools in urban and rural areas, the Government of Lao PDR has many international cooperation projects, such as:

The Early Childhood Development Program (ECE) which targets 40 districts, 13 provinces to access and improve the quality of pre-school education (3-5 years); to build 550 pre-primary rooms; to establish 200 primary elementary teachers; the Studying impact of the Child Development Group in 73 communities, to train the teachers at the Pre-Primary School, education development in the village level of 4,590 people; provides food to 312 schools, with students eating about 50,000 [34]. The Basic Education Quality Improvement Project in Lao PDR (BEQUAL) covers 60 disadvantaged cities. The purpose of the project to help girls and boys with disabilities to complete basic education with more quality, more literacy, to calculate the numbers and to have the skills to live; follow-up to reduce the rate of school dropout, repetition and non-enrollment, improve the first- five year in primary school curriculum for contribution [28], the train new module for teachers in primary schools in year 2019-2020s, to train a Excel Program to provide financial staff and central planning, provincial and district offices in country [2].

The Projects of the province/Vientiane capital which are organized with non-governmental organizations, such as improving the quality of primary education: read, calculate, prepare for pre-primary education; the provision of educational materials; training the teacher in pre-primary school and multi-grade teaching with 229,892 pre-school children ready; the enrollment rate for 5-year-old children is about 77.1%; primary net enrollment is 98.8%, the secondary school net enrollment ratio is about 83.1% and upper secondary school is approximately 53.3%; to improve basic construction and repair infrastructure for schools in the country is 250 billion kip [22].

In addition to the above-mentioned projects, there are

continued to improve education in each province and each of the gap rate in 22 districts, there are lower enrollment rates of 5 year below 60%; 21 districts with 95% of lower enrollment rates in 5 grad; the child is isolated from school clothing and learning materials [22]; there are a lot of children not attending school and going to school because the school is far away, there are no dormitories, no money to buy clothes and books [23]. Therefore, it is important to improve the quality of education, teaching and development in remote areas to be closer to developing education in urban areas and suburban areas. The Project for Improving Educational and Sport Quality in Remote Areas is a Government Project to Address Educational Development Issues in Lao PDR. The project aims to raise the quality of education and sports in remote areas, to start early education to secondary education. The purpose of the project: (1) to improve the quality of education and teaching, also the pre-primary education level in secondary education makes education in remote areas closer to developing urban education in urban and suburban areas; (2) strengthening administrative and administrative management at provincial, district and school in the tree building concept areas; (3) to implement the national patriotic challenge to be effective and (4) to create replacement staff and prepare personnel for the next three levels meeting of government/party. Expectation of project outputs are such as (1) Educational indicators in these districts meet the targets set and selected by some personnel to inherit and provide for three-levels conference, each district has a primary education group and a secondary education secondary school; (2) The province has educational and sport development strategies, which can be monitored and evaluated, and the city has a strong administrative management capability in its city, each district has an educational plan, and each school has its own educational plan that can be used to develop its educational development plan [35].

The plan that to build a dormitory and student campus in some cities and during the end of the school year, each department within the Ministry of Education and Sports has worked in different provinces in the country to study the educational and sports development situation in each province and some districts. The establishing laws to serve to improve the quality of education in remote areas, such as the decree on supporting poor and disadvantaged students, 3 Standards create education and Other Sports [22]. The implementations by tree building concept that improve the quality of education in remote areas. The provincial/ capital department of education and sports appoint a target staff to create a recruiting officer working in the city together with staff from the ministry. The office of education and sport of the city is a target staff to create a retired staff to work with

the school team to monitor and encourage the teaching of teachers, teachers and teachers from colleges, where this group will be the leader of the school group. The department of planning joints with the administration office of Ministry of Education and relevant departments to set up work to the Department of Teacher Training, the Department of Higher Education and the Higher Education Department combines with the institutions of teacher education, the Faculty of Technical and Vocational Training, especially the Faculty of Education selects the staff including the target teachers, who address in the target district in order to carry out technical development assistance as well as to monitor and encourage the process of teaching, teaching and movement. In addition, it is also worth investigating the delivery of student teachers to vocational training and training [36]. The Department of Finance allocates the approved Section 63 budget for expenditures related to the project. Department of planning allocate of investment funds, especially basic construction for school groups and 40 groups based on model group development plans to support project activities.

6. Conclusion

The study was intended to explore the status of educational administration for ensuring better education in Laos. A document analysis has been done on the report published by the government agencies, international development organizations, book chapters, journal articles and newspaper articles. The study revealed that the educational administration is not well equipped to address the educational quality gap created due to distance like urban and rural areas, public and private schools, cost, teacher's facilities and teaching and learning aid availability. A proper educational administration requires a number of facilities, structure, span of control, monitoring and supervision but there is a lack of these issues in the administration of Laos. The study suggests that a long-term educational reform is necessary to address these issues, and challenges of the present and ensuring better learning and education in future.

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