

Chapter 1

Introduction

Background and the importance of the problem

The National Education Act B.E 2542/1999 emphasizes on the education as the learning process for the prosperity of individuals and society through transfer of knowledge, training, culture, and academic advancement. Knowledge is created by the management of environment, society, learning and the supporting factors that allow individuals to learn continuously for the rest of their lives (Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment, 2004, p. 3). In addition, The National Economic and Social Development Plan (Version 8-10) aims to create “People-Centered Development”. It has the target for quality development that every Thai get development on physical, psychological, knowledge, abilities and professional skills and secure in their lives. This aim covers all target groups to enhance the potentials of people. The ‘Development’ will strengthen the family, community and Thai society. By emphasizing on rather acquiring good morality before getting knowledge, the program creates immunity and prevention method among Thai people. Developing the mind along with the learning of people in every age group for the rest of life starts since childhood when people can accumulate basic knowledge, life skill, efficiency, and labor force skill that are consistent with their needs. They will step into the working and competitive world with quality, creativity, and developed man-force to excellence especially on creating innovation and knowledge. Creative Thais are created through continuous and sustainable learning. Creative Thais create both knowledge through local wisdom and modern knowledge from the community level to the country level. This creativity can develop the socio-economic. But at present the educational quality in Thailand in all levels has been reduced continuously and left behind the levels of the neighboring countries. The ability to make linkage between the knowledge with the practical application among the Thais is still in low level. The Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) (2006, p. 25-37) has drawbacks to limit the citizens’ quality development, and Thailand has low competitive level compared with the level of the other countries. The students’ learning achievements, for example, are still in a low level. Most of them can achieve only limited critical and analytical thinking which are very important for their daily living. In the Vocational Education level, for instance, the ratio of learners per population at same age is lower than that of the general education. The usual reasons are given as the followings. First, because of people’s value system, they think that studying in general education to pursue studies at college level brings them higher social status and better job opportunities. Second, the quality of

educational management on Vocational Education is still low. This low quality only sheds poor knowledge and work abilities to the graduates. Moreover the Non-Formal Education and the Informal Education have notoriously limited budget for supports. And at the end the higher level of education management happens only to the Higher Education level. Education expands itself in term of quantity more than in quality. Besides, the education only emphasizes on creating critical thinking rather than on improving the reality of the society. This emphasis reduces the graduates' general quality and practical abilities. For example, there is expansion of the courses in social sciences and humanities courses more than those in science and technology. About 200,000 students have graduated from bachelor degrees in social sciences, and there are also increasing level of unemployment at the time the manufacturers complains about difficulties in getting competent people to work in factory floors (Office of the National Education Commission, 2000, p. 1; Wittayakorn Chiengkul, 2006, pp. 1-2). The comparison analysis result of quality levels of universities in Thailand and other countries in Asiaweek Magazine in 2540-2542/1997-1999 revealed that the average quality score of three years of analysis among universities in Thailand was lower than the score of each of other countries; however, the component on financial resources is higher in Thailand than the resources in every country (Suwimon Wongwanit and Nonglak Wiratchai 1999, p. 13). This statistics shows that the efficiency and the effectiveness of the whole educational management of the country are still imbalanced against its educational investment. This is the likely result of the Thailand's poor quality in educational management in all levels (Wittayakorn Chiengkul, 2006, p. 130).

The data above exposes the crises in the Thai education system, especially in the higher education institution which is the highest education that aims to develop people in many academic fields. It is the necessary base for developing the country in terms of socio-economic and industry. But if the higher education institutions of Thailand remain weak for long, they will bring down the ability/competency of Thai students in oversea competition (Office of the National Economics and Social Development Board 2006, p. 28 ; Jarus Suwanmala 2002, p. 13). Therefore, the system needs not only improvement and development of educational quality but also the intellectual level, knowledge, morality, and ethical levels. With this reason, it is necessary to have an educational quality assurance which is the implementation on identifying educational standard, auditing process or evaluation to test the system's qualification based on the educational quality standard. This will assure the learning quality of the learners and create confidence and trust from parents, communities, and society that the school implementation follows the identified mission (Academic Affairs and Educational Standards Bureau 2006, p. 3; Rung Kaewdang 2002, p. 9; Narong Na Lamphun and Petcharee Roopwichet 2003, p. 19 ; and Pruet Siribanpitak 2002, p. 2).

Community college is one of the educational institutions under the Office of the Higher Education Commission (OHEC). The Ministry of Education implements the policy for community college following the government's policy. Former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra announced at the Cabinet meeting on 26 February 2001 on Education at the item no. 4 that "the community colleges must be established in the provinces that have no higher education institutions". And the cabinet resolution on 19 February 2002 decided to establish some community colleges in 10 provinces, which are Mae Hong Son, Tak, Pichit, Nongbualamphu, Mookdaharn, Burirum, Srakaew, Uthaitani, Ranong and Narathiwat. The cited reasons and necessities were the followings. First, the government allows the students who had finished the education in Matthayom Suksa (Secondary High School level) or equivalent but cannot pursue their study in the Higher Education Level for inconvenience in studying or the person who have jobs but requiring additional learning. Second, the government responses to the social economic development and supports the state's policy that aims to strengthen the local communities. Third, the government wants to develop knowledge and professional skill of the local people that they can develop their life quality, perform independent occupation, or work in the manufacturing sectors. Fourth, the government decentralizes the education to the locals by using the diversified resources in each of the localities and in different parent organizations to implement the education in the community colleges. The policy and the principle for the establishment are to utilize the existing resources in the provinces to implement the community colleges by using the already existing schools and sufficient potentials to be enhanced to be community college. There is no need to build new educational institution but to improve the usage of the educational organizations, manufacturing sectors both from the government and private sectors, community learning resources, and the locals to be the network for the educational management of the community college. The instructional management must response to the need and the occupational performance of the local communities. The community and the locals participate in the college administration. The two missions that the state has assigned are, first, the educational management in lower level than the bachelor degree in every field that responds to the need of the communities where the community college is located. The second mission is to train to enhance the occupational skills and life quality of the members in the communities. For such missions, the community colleges arrange the educational management on academic and vocational education side by side with the curriculum that is consistent with the social economic needs of the country. The educational management in the lower level than bachelor degree covers four areas of Diploma Program, Vocational Certificate and High Vocational Certificate Level, Short Courses, and Fundamental Courses. The method for educational management for formal, non-formal, and informal educations with various styles/models should be adjustable to the changes of the present world. There is flexibility on the course attendance, time table, learning sites, instructional

methods, and the educational completion requirements (Thong-In Wongsothorn et al., 2001, pp. 1-14; Office of the community college promotion 2002, pp. 1-2; Bureau of Community College Administration 2004, pp. 3-14; Uthai Dulyakasem 2006, pp. 1-3; Suchat Jaipakdee 2007, pp. 155-163; and The Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment 2008, pp. 1-10).

The educational quality assurance of the community colleges can be categorized into four quality groups, which are the production/outcome quality, administration quality, the developers' quality, and the quality in term of community's or people's perception. The standard and indicators for internal quality assurance consist of 10 processes and 104 indicators. The basis of the thought of quality assurance is the quality mind, quality process, and quality improvement. The awareness of the educational quality begins with the planning process, standard creation, the method for the efficient and effective activities implementation, and the improvement of work according to Demming (PDCA). This PDCA of Demming emphasizes the problem-solving process and the continuous improvement process with the application of the model for the process administration based on the concept of Total Quality Management (TQM).

The external quality assurance (the First Round) of the first ten community colleges were accomplished by The Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA), and Uthai Dulyakasem (2006, p. 2) synthesized the report on the external assessment (the First Round) of the community colleges. The report revealed that the external quality assessment of the community colleges utilized the same evaluation frame as that of the other higher education institutions. This generalization reduces capacity of the external evaluation result to clearly reflect the fact/truth on the implementation of the community college. Although the community colleges are in the Higher Education level but their targets and missions of implementation are vary from the other institutions in bachelor degree levels. Somwung Pittyanuwat (2005, p. 10) suggested as an urgent policy for the community colleges the following two strategies. First, to make a long-term strategic plan and mechanism for implementation based on the strategy the colleges should identify mission, vision, and a 3 to 5 year-long benchmarks. The implementation plan of the activity project is done by efficient tools such as balanced scorecard in order to get KPI which is consistent with the whole system. Second, to develop a clear internal quality assurance system for the education, the implementation process to perform the work must be done regularly. The system is done through the cooperation with the other community colleges to identify the educational standard and quality indicators for the quality assurance that are appropriate to the community colleges. The quality assurance system in the community college that has been developed with 10 processes and 104 indicators is quite a difficult frame. It is not certified by the external quality assurance, and at present the annual report of the community college still lacks of linkage in the external quality evaluation. These requirements do not respond to the

identified questions in the National Education Act in B.E 2542/1999 (Kittichai Wattananikorn 2550/2007, p. 1). The evaluation in the second round from The Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA), Somwung Pittyanuwat (2008, p. 23) states that based on the basic data on the evaluation of 4-5 community colleges revealed that the educational quality of the community college was in good level, especially on the arrangement of the short course training for the community. It can be arranged efficiently at a very good level. But the quality of educational management below bachelor degree or diploma levels is still in a moderate level. Therefore this system needs improvement on the readiness of personnel and others which are still the obstacle for efficient instruction at higher education level. Later, Bureau of Community College Administration develops 10 standards and 37 indicators with cooperation from experts and personnel from the community colleges. These standards and indicators will be used as indicators of success of the quality assurance in the community colleges. However, the model for the educational quality assurance in the community college is not concretized although it can be implemented already.

Based on such problem, Premjit Boonthum (2007) studied the condition and the problem in the implementation for the educational quality assurance of the community college. The objectives are to study the condition and problem in the implementation of the educational quality assurance in the community college. The research finding on the aspect of implementation of educational quality of the community college shows limited number of practitioners. They work in several positions with many burdens and limited experience on educational quality assurance. These practitioners cannot fully run the educational quality assurance of the community college. But on the budget, most of the administrators support in development of more efficient educational quality. The assessments on the implementation for the preparation for the personnel readiness, on assignment for responsible committee board, on planning for the implementation plan, and on making self-assessment report or the annual report as the whole picture are in high level. For on the implementation following the plan (Do), on the monitoring and evaluation (Check), on bring the evaluation result to improve (Action) as the whole picture is in moderate level. The assessment on the problem on implementation of the internal quality assurance finds that the personnel are confused with the implementation because the implementation guideline from the parent organizations and from the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA) on administration and management has problems on accomplishing the implementation step for clear quality assurance and the concrete perception. The implementation results are showing problems on standards and indicators. In addition, there are problems on standards and indicators, model for quality assurance, administration/support on the quality assurance work, structure/system in the college, roles of committee board of the internal quality assurance, cooperation among

personnel in the quality assurance work, understanding on the quality assurance system, and making self-assessment report or annual report.

The researcher as a teacher in the community college is aware of the necessity in developing the quality assurance in the community college by developing the indicators that can indicate the success of the quality of educational management. The college needs clear targets in constructing and developing the model for educational quality assurance in the community college that there is a clear and concrete quality assurance on the quality control, quality audit, and quality evaluation. This kind of clarity will show the relationship of standard and quality indicator on educational management, structure of administration on quality assurance, and steps for implementation process for the educational quality assurance in the community college. Therefore the researcher is interested to study on “The development on the Model for educational quality assurance in the community college which leads to the quality development on the educational management of the community college.” It will influence the quality of the graduates who are going to be accepted by the society.

Research Questions

1. What should be the standards and quality indicators on the educational management for community colleges?
2. What is the model for quality assurance in the community colleges which has highest appropriateness and feasible?
3. How are the results of educational quality assurance in the community college based on the developed standards and indicators?

Objectives of Research

1. To develop standard and quality indicator for the educational management in the community college.
2. To create and develop the model for quality assurance in the community college.
3. To try to evaluate the educational quality in the community college according to the developed standards and developed indicators.

Area of research

Area of Research in Step 1

This research is developing the standard and quality indicator for educational management at the community college. The researcher identifies the area of population and the area of contents as the followings.

Area of population

The area of population which is used for developing the standard and indicator covers two groups as the followings.

Group 1: this group is used as samples to check the appropriateness of the standard and quality indicators of educational management in the community college. The group covers the directors of the community colleges, the deputy directors of the community colleges, the heads of group work at community colleges, and the heads of educational quality assurance of the community colleges (a total of 133 people).

Group 2: this group is necessary to be samples to check the construct validity of the model through measurement of the empirical data. This group covers the groups of administrators and educational personnel in 19 community colleges consist of the directors, deputy directors, government teachers, and government employees (a total of 552 people) (Bureau of Community College Administration, 2008, p. 1).

Area of Content

The developed standards and quality indicators of the educational management at the community colleges are the synthesis of standards and indicators. Afterward the researcher starts a review of secondary data on the related literature and a check for the construct validity on the appropriateness of the measurement model and the empirical data. The standards and indicators are composed of six standards which are (1) educational management plan and academic development, (2) production of graduates and academic service to society, (3) student development, (4) research, (5) maintenance of religion and art and culture, and (6) administration.

Area of research in Step 2

Creating and developing the model for educational quality assurance in the community college. The read of population and the area of content is as following.

Area of Population

Area of population which is used for constructing the model for the educational quality assurance in the community college covers two groups as the followings.

Group 1: This group is used for constructing the model for educational quality assurance in the community college. They are the members of the team work on the educational quality assurance of the community college who are the representatives in each region (total of eight people).

Group 2: This group is used for the checking on the appropriateness and the feasibility of real application. They are the Advisors for Bureau of Community College Administration, the directors of the community colleges, the deputy directors of the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment, the internal evaluator of Office of the Higher Education Commission, and the researchers (total of 24 people).

Area of content

Creating and developing the model for educational quality assurance in the community colleges is creating the model which is derived from the standards and indicators found in Step 1 of the research. Then the researcher brings it as the database for constructing the model on both the quality control and educational quality assessment. It includes the processes for supervision and monitoring over the educational quality of the community colleges. The researcher checks the data as evidence and to be consistent with the standard and the indicators. This includes the judgment on the educational quality of the community college whether it is implemented based on the identified criteria and standards. Also asked is the level of the implementation as contrasted to criteria and standards.

Area of Research in Step 3

Testing the quality assurance in the community college based on the standard and developed indicators means the researcher must identify the area of population and the area of contents as the followings.

Area of population

The area of population which is used for testing the evaluation of educational quality in the community college is composed of two groups as the followings.

Group 1: The administration team and personnel of the community college who are composed of the chairpersons of the committee board of the community college council, the directors, the instructors, the special instructors, staff, students, alumni and people (total of 40 people).

Group 2: They are three evaluators who are composed of (1) the evaluators whose names are registered as evaluators of the internal educational quality under the Office of the Higher Education Commission (OHEC), (2) an evaluator who has experience on educational management of the community college or has the research results related to community college, and (3) a personnel from the other community college who has experience on the evaluation of the educational quality.

Area of Content

The test and evaluate the educational quality in the community college according to the developed standard and indicators, the researcher sets a trial-use of these standard and indicators at one community college. The components of the evaluation are the committee board to evaluate the internal educational quality, annual report of the community college, the standard and indicators, the evaluation method, the evaluation criteria and the judgment of the evaluation result on its application, and the problems and obstacles. These components are important to improve the system for better appropriateness and applicability.

Definition

Community College means the 19 educational institutions that arrange the education in the level that is lower than bachelor degree in all subjects that are consistent with the need of the community. The college works on four curricula which are Diploma Program, Vocational Certificate Program and Vocational Diploma Program, Short Course/Program, and Fundamental Program.

Internal educational quality assurance means implementation of educational management of the community college by having quality control, quality audit, and quality evaluation. The personnel participate in improving, developing, and creating the confidence to the society in implementation based on the mission of the community colleges to address the educational quality standards.

Model for internal quality assurance of education means the model that can be used as the sample for certifying the educational quality in the community college. It is composed of three components which are (1) target for the educational quality assurance, (2) standards and quality indicators and educational management, and (3) implementation for educational quality assurance such as quality control, quality audit, and quality evaluation.

Quality control means the process to supervise, monitor the educational quality of the community college so it follow the standard and quality indicator of educational management. It's done through appointing the committee board to assure the quality together and make the implementation plan together. In developing the personnel to have knowledge, understanding, good attitude toward the educational quality assurance and implementing following the implementation plan.

Quality audit means the process of seeking for trace/evidence and monitoring the implementation according to the quality control to improve the education of the community college so it follows the educational standard by appointing the committee board to check and to give supervision.

Quality evaluation means the decision-making process of educational quality of the community college and the implementation as based on the criteria and identified standards. The evaluation components are the committee board of the educational quality evaluation, the annual report of the community college, the standard and indicators, the evaluation method, the evaluation criteria, and the judgment for the evaluation results.

The result of testing the internal educational quality assurance means testing the educational quality evaluation in the community college based on the standard and developed indicators. The components for evaluation are the committee board for quality evaluation, the annual report of the college, the standard and indicators, the quality evaluation method, the quality evaluation criteria, and the judgment for evaluation result.

Standards mean the identifications on the quality of the educational management of the community college which is developed by the researcher. It will be used as the principle for comparing, judging the implementation, and certifying the educational quality in the community college.

Indicators mean the information in terms of quantity and qualitative which reflect the qualification, the implementation of the educational management in the community college, the problems, and obstacles according to the specific/identified schedule when compared with the set of criteria.

Criteria mean the level that is used for judging the success of educational management of the community college based on the developed indicators.

Appropriateness means the model for the educational quality assurance that can be used as guideline for implementation for internal educational quality assurance based on the context of the community college.

Feasibility means bringing the model for the educational quality assurance in the community college and used in the context of community college. It should be convenient and less complicated in the implementation.

Benefits gained from the research.

1. To get standard and indicators for educational quality assurance in the community college which response to the mission and the establishment of the community college. It reflects clearly the implementation result.
2. To get the model for educational quality assurance in the community college that is the sample model on educational quality assurance in the community colleges for the whole country.
3. To know the testing or experimental result on the evaluating of the educational quality evaluation in the community college based on the standard and developed indicators.
4. It makes the community colleges to have the model for educational quality assurance in the community college that is appropriated and applicable.
5. To get a guideline for identifying policy for developing the system for educational quality assurance in the community college.
6. It makes the people who are interested on the internal quality assurance in the school can bring the guideline for educational quality assurance in the community college and to apply it later.