Project Evaluation for Expand the Potential of the Teacher Network Award from the Princess Maha Chakri Award (PMCA) Foundation Towards the Development of Underprivileged Children in Thailand

Waraporn Erawan[1], Chatkaew Kanawapee[2] & Chowwalit Chookhampaeng[1,*]

[1]Faculty of Education, Mahasarakham University, Thailand

[2]Institute for Research on Education systems foundation, Thailand

*Corresponding: Faculty of Education, Mahasarakham University, Muang District 44000, Thailand. Tel: 66-97-197-9959

Abstract

This study aimed to evaluate the impact of a project aiming to enhance the empowerment of disadvantaged children and youth in Thailand, with a view to promoting educational equality in the country. The Kirkpatrick evaluation framework, comprising four dimensions - response, learning, behavior, and results - was applied. Data was collected from 93 teachers out of a total of 121 (76.85%) who participated in the project, as well as 28 teachers who were interviewed. The research tools included a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire comprising 26 items, and a 6-item interview guide. Statistical analysis using mean, standard deviation, and t-test was conducted to analyze the data. The results indicated that the project had a significant impact on teacher response and learning, as well as a positive impact on behavior and results. Implications for future research and practical applications are discussed.

The research findings indicate that the overall assessment of the project is highly satisfactory ($\overline{X}$= 4.17). Upon consideration of the individual domains, it was found that all domains were highly satisfactory, with teachers involved in the project expressing the highest level of satisfaction with the outcomes of the project's implementation ($\overline{X}$= 4.27). In particular, the domain of behavior in the application of knowledge in practice was highly effective ($\overline{X}$= 4.22). The level of response that individuals have to the environmental sustainability project and the feelings they have towards the project ($\overline{X}$= 4.13) and the learning aspect, including understanding the principles and theories, and the skills necessary to achieve the goals of the project ($\overline{X}$= 4.06). A significant recommendation is the development of an information technology system to collect and disseminate the innovative work of teachers in order to expand its impact. It is also important to link the dissemination system of the project with capable agencies in the field.

Keywords: project evaluation, potential of the teacher, children in Thailand

1. Introduction

The "His Majesty the King's Award for Excellent Teachers" is a prestigious award that honors teachers in Thailand and Asia. The selection process for deserving teachers to receive the "His Majesty the King's Award for Excellent Teachers" takes place every two years and is a distinct process from other award selections because teachers who are deemed worthy of receiving the award are those who have the participation of all sectors of society. Since the opportunity for alumni students to nominate teachers for the Provincial Selection Committee for the "His Majesty the King's Award for Excellent Teachers" has been opened, which covers all 77 provinces, the selection and evaluation of teachers by the committee is based on criteria set by the foundation, which is an important mechanism in the selection process, leading to the selection of high-quality teachers who have the ability to transform the lives of students and contribute to the education community. These are teachers who embody the spirit of teaching for Thailand in 2021, being the fourth cohort of teachers to undergo this selection process. There were a total of 170 teachers who received the award at the provincial level, distributed throughout the country.

The Princess Maha Chakri Award Foundation supports award-winning teachers by providing funding for expansion projects, recognizing them as a crucial component of the work. They serve as leaders in expanding and enhancing their

work, as well as in the role of mentorship, support, and development for children and youth to enable them to achieve their full potential and prepare for future careers. The Foundation for the Reward of His Majesty the King's Teachers (The Teacher Reward Foundation) and relevant organizations in Thai education have implemented the project to enhance the capabilities of Teacher Reward Foundation Award recipients in order to promote equal opportunities for disadvantaged children and youth in Thailand (2021) The project was funded by the Fund for Educational Equity and 121 teachers participated. In order to effectively evaluate the impact of the project and plan for the future, it is necessary to assess the project.

This assessment is a summative evaluation at the end of the project, which involves evaluating the impact of the project using Kirkpatrick's (1996) framework for evaluating the impact of training or the outcomes resulting from the project. This is a four-level evaluation framework for training programs designed to help individuals perform their jobs more effectively. It is important that any training program includes an evaluation of its outcomes, which is necessary to determine the extent to which the project has been successful and to identify areas for improvement and change in work practices. The goal is for those who have completed the program to have made changes in their approach to work that result in improved productivity.

This evaluation of the Princess Maha Chakri Award Foundation's teacher empowerment project in 2021) aims to assess the outcomes for teachers in order to present the gathered information to relevant parties for use in future decision making. Specifically, this evaluation will allow us to understand the results of the project on teachers in order to present the gathered information to relevant parties for use in future decision making.

2. The Objective of This Evaluation

It is to assess the impact of the Princess Maha Chakri Award Award Foundation's teacher empowerment project in 2021 on the development of disadvantaged children and youth. This will be done through the use of Kirkpatrick's framework, which divides the evaluation into four components: 1) reactions, 2) learning, 3) behavior, and 4) outcomes. Specifically, this evaluation will assess the outcomes of the Royal Award Foundation's fourth cohort of teacher empowerment project using Kirkpatrick's four-level framework.

3. Methodology

This is a post-project evaluation that assesses the relationship between the project's outcomes and its goals or objectives using a 5-point Likert scale survey with 26 closed-ended questions and 3 open-ended questions. The survey will be administered to a total of 121 teachers who have participated in the project. However, 93 responses were received, representing a response rate of 76.85%. Additionally, 28 teachers were interviewed using 6 open-ended questions from Kirkpatrick's framework, which includes four components: 1) reactions, which measure teachers' attitudes towards the project; 2) learning, which assesses the knowledge and skills gained from the project; 3) behavior, which looks at the changes in behavior and work practices as a result of the project; and 4) outcomes, which evaluates the impact of the project on the teachers and their students. The research will inquire about the environmental conditions and the feelings that pertain to the project. 2) In terms of learning, the effectiveness of the training will be evaluated, and comprehension of principles and theories will be checked to determine if the project's objectives have been met. 3) In terms of behavior, it will be assessed whether the project teachers are able to effectively apply their knowledge in practice, and if there have been any significant changes in behavior in the desired direction. It will also be determined whether these behavioral changes are sustained over time. 4) In terms of outcomes, the relationship between the project's activities and its goals or objectives will be evaluated.

4. Results

4.1 Demographic Data of the Sample

Demographic data of the sample showed that the majority of project teachers were female, both overall and by region. Over 50% of the teachers were over 51 years old. Teachers in the age range of 40-45 years old were the smallest group, both overall and by region. Over 85% of project teachers were awarded the "Students' Favorite Teacher" prize, both overall and by region. The majority of projects (over 70%) were single-school projects, both overall and by region. Over 50% of project teachers have a degree in the social sciences, both overall and by region. Furthermore, more than 50% of project teachers teach more than 20 hours per week, and those who teach less than 15 hours per week are the smallest group, both overall and by region. These findings are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1. Number and Percentage of Teachers Receiving Funding for the "Empowering Outstanding Teachers" Program in the Princess Maha Chakri Award Foundation's in 2021 for the Development of Disadvantaged Children and Youth

Demographic data	Northern Region		Southern Region		Central/Eastern Region		Northeastern Region		Overall	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Genders										
Male	8	8.6	10	10.8	7	7.5	10	10.8	**35**	**37.6**
Female	11	11.8	10	10.8	12	12.9	25	26.9	**58**	**62.4**
Total	**19**	**20.4**	**20**	**21.5**	**19**	**20.4**	**35**	**37.6**	**93**	**100.0**
Ages										
40-45 years old	2	2.2	1	1.1	4	4.3	2	2.2	**9**	**9.7**
46-50 years old	3	3.2	4	4.3	3	3.2	10	10.8	**20**	**21.5**
51-55 years old	5	6.5	6	6.5	4	4.3	13	14.0	**29**	**31.2**
older than 55	8	8.6	9	9.7	8	8.6	10	10.8	**35**	**37.6**
Total	**18**	**20.4**	**20**	**21.5**	**19**	**20.4**	**35**	**37.6**	**93**	**100.0**
Types of awards										
Students 'Favorite	17	18.3	17	18.3	19	20.4	34	36.6	**87**	**93.5**
Outstanding Teacher Award	2	2.2	3	3.2	0	0	1	1.1	**6**	**6.5**
Total	**19**	**20.4**	**20**	**21.5**	**19**	**20.4**	**35**	**37.6**	**93**	**100.0**
Types of projects										
Group project	2	2.2	0	0	2	2.2	8	8.6	**12**	**12.9**
Single-school project	17	18.3	20	21.5	17	18.3	27	29.1	**81**	**81.7**
Total	**19**	**20.4**	**20**	**21.5**	**19**	**20.4**	**35**	**37.6**	**93**	**100.0**
Fields of study										
Science	8	8.6	6	6.5	4	4.3	11	11.8	29	**31.2**
Social Sciences	11	11.8	14	15.1	15	16.1	24	25.8	64	**68.8**
Total	**19**	**20.4**	**20**	**21.5**	**19**	**20.4**	**35**	**37.6**	**93**	**100.0**
Hours of teaching per week										
Less than 15 hours	2	2.2	1	1.1	3	3.2	1	1.1	7	**7.5**
15-20 hours	7	7.5	8	8.6	6	6.5	16	17.2	37	**39.8**
over 20 hours	10	10.8	11	11.8	10	10.8	18	19.4	49	**52.7**
Total	**19**	**20.4**	**20**	**21.5**	**19**	**20.4**	**35**	**37.6**	**93**	**100.0**

4.2 Results of Project Implementation Evaluation

Overall, the project evaluation results were rated high (mean $\overline{X}$= 4.17). Upon examination of each aspect, it was found that all aspects were rated high. These aspects were divided into four areas, as follows:

The assessment of responsiveness involves measuring the teacher's response to the project. This is done by asking about the environment, the feelings towards the project, and evaluating the results from a questionnaire. Of the 87 teachers surveyed, it was found that they had a high level ($\overline{X}$= 4.13) of feelings towards the project. Teachers who participated in group projects had lower feelings towards this aspect compared to teachers who participated in individual projects ($\overline{X}$=4.11) and ($\overline{X}$= 4.14, respectively). Meanwhile, teachers from the central/eastern region had the highest level of thoughts on this aspect ($\overline{X}$=4.50), followed by those from the eastern, southern, and northern regions ($\overline{X}$=4.23, 4.07, and 3.62, respectively). Additionally, most teachers saw this aspect of the project as appropriate and highly beneficial, with a range of feelings being experienced by this group of teachers. These included feeling a sense of pride in contributing to the common good, feeling grateful for the opportunity to participate in the project, feeling happy, impressed, and glad to have participated in the project, feeling accepted by the general public, feeling that they were benefiting others, feeling motivated to continue working, feeling satisfied, feeling more self-confident, feeling the magnitude of the rewards, and feeling a sense of determination in their work.

The evaluation of learning outcomes, the training results were assessed to determine the extent of learning that occurred. It was verified that there was comprehension of principles and theories and whether the skills aligned with the goals of the project. Results from the surveys showed that 87 teachers had a high level of understanding in this area (mean $\overline{X}$= 4.06). Among the teachers who participated in group projects, the level of understanding was higher compared to those who worked on individual projects (means of $\overline{X}$= 4.13 and 4.05, respectively). While teachers in the Central/Eastern region had the highest level of this opinion ($\overline{X}$=4.40), it decreased in the Eastern North, North, and South regions, respectively ($\overline{X}$=4.12, 3.84, 3.81).

The assessment of behavior, it is an evaluation of whether or not the project teacher is effectively able to apply their knowledge in practice. Specifically, whether there are any behaviors that have changed in the desired direction, and whether those behaviors are sustained over a longer period of time. It was found that 87 teachers had a high level of feeling towards the project ($\overline{X}$= 4.22). Teachers working in groups had a stronger feeling towards this aspect than those working individually ($\overline{X}$= 4.32 and $\overline{X}$= 4.20, respectively). Meanwhile, teachers in the central/eastern region had the highest opinion on this aspect ($\overline{X}$ = 4.45), followed by those in the eastern region, the north, and the south ($\overline{X}$= 4.26, 4.22, 3.90, respectively). The interview results showed that the behaviors of teachers changed after participating in the project, including having more structured work processes, such as planning work systematically, being able to solve specific problems as they arise, and listening to others more. They were also able to work with others more effectively. Self-confidence has increased significantly, including in communication, sharing knowledge and experiences, having a strong desire to continuously learn, and being brave in learning new things.

The assessment of the outcomes of the project, it involved evaluating the opinions that emerged following the completion of the project. The assessment considered the relationship between the project's outcomes and its objectives or goals. It was found that 87 teachers had a high level of appreciation for the project ($\overline{X}$= 4.27). Teachers working in groups had a higher level of appreciation for this aspect of the project than those working individually ($\overline{X}$= 4.41 and $\overline{X}$= 4.25, respectively). Central/eastern teachers had the highest level of appreciation for this aspect (mean $\overline{X}$= 4.42), followed by northern, northeastern, and southern teachers ($\overline{X}$= 4.37, 4.28, and 4.02, respectively). In addition, the interview results showed that the majority of teachers believed that the project was successful, but some felt that it was not as successful as it should have been due to the COVID-19 situation, which affected the project's ability to achieve its intended expansion.

5. Discussion

The assessment of responsiveness involves measuring the teacher's response to the project it was found that they had a high level of feelings towards the project. This aligns with the findings of the interviews, which suggest that the majority of teachers feel that the project's format is appropriate in terms of duration, budget, and structure. Additionally, there have been follow-up evaluations of participation in the project by experienced mentors. This is consistent with the research of Pissamai Rattanarojsaku, Jittima Juathai, and Tanya Rujisatiensap (2018). They consider that the motivation to become a "Heavenly Teacher," or a highly esteemed and respected teacher, is important in terms of inspiring creativity in teachers' work, as the role of a teacher is highly regarded by society at all levels, including families, communities, nations, and even the global community. These expectations are such that teachers are expected to serve as role models and work towards creating a more virtuous society. As such, the work of these teachers is driven by the "psychology of being a teacher" and the implementation of initiatives that help to increase this motivation.

The evaluation of learning outcomes, showed that teachers had a high level of understanding in this area. In addition, the majority of teachers also expressed the belief that if given the opportunity to expand their expertise through another project, the thing they would most like to do to improve the project and maximize its impact on the target group, include: continuous expansion of results, surveying the needs of the target group in order to address problems and develop solutions that align with their needs, developing more systematic plans, and monitoring the progress of the project to understand its outcomes. They followed the outcomes for the target group. Moreover, they coordinated with related agencies, building a network of partnerships to work as a team, increasing the time spent on the project and focusing on practical implementation to maximize benefits for the target group, increasing public awareness of the project, using technology more extensively to expand the project's reach, organizing learning exchange events, creating role models, and working with determination.

In addition, the results of the interviews found that the main thing teachers learned from this project was management skills related to project administration, such as purchasing materials and equipment, preparing bills and expenses for materials, writing project proposals, and reporting on project progress. Teachers also developed new

teaching techniques and utilized technology to enhance teaching and learning, and were able to try new things and expand their own learning networks by gaining new experiences. For example, they gained hands-on experience in problem-solving during the COVID-19 situation, coordination with related agencies, presenting as a speaker, receiving follow-up supervision after the end of the project, and understanding team work and collaboration. This aligns with the research of Anan Sipitakiat, Siri Phitakkit, Pian Sriphummanee, Pacharaporn Pichitpajan, and Chaiwut Tingsombat (2021) that studied the Thai teachers' learning experiences during the COVID-19 situation by analyzing their lesson plans. They found that there was an adaptation by all parties involved, including school administrators, teachers, support staff, and students, as mentioned in this article. Initially, this adaptation may have been on a small scale, but as all parties involved found ways to adapt, they were better able to cope with various situations. This also holds true for the project mentioned, which was largely managed online through coordination and communication. It was found that teachers learned and adapted well, both in terms of coordinating the project and expanding the project to involve other teachers.

The assessment of behavior, it is an evaluation of whether or not the project teacher is effectively able to apply their knowledge in practice. The changes in behavior are a result of the systematic management system designed for the project from the beginning. Extension teachers had to design a systematic approach to managing the project based on the evaluation framework outlined in the "Manual for Managing Educational Research Projects" published by the Educational Research Institute Foundation in 2021. This is congruent with the views of many scholars who argue that successful projects require various factors, including the organization's structure, policies, and organizational culture, as all personnel must adhere to and carry out the policies established by the organization. The extension teacher developing the project is also a significant factor. Training participants or extending project teachers must have interest, commitment, and recognize the importance of the project (Kannikar Cheksangrat, 2010; Chutikan Siwiboon, 2014; Suphanee Saritwanich, 2013; Sakul Leksanaseran, 2015) in accordance with the research of Siripassorn Wongthong (2013), Suthinee Luekkham (2014) which found that work behavior improves if it receives policy-oriented support, effective management systems, and recognition of the importance of the project by the recipient of the development or project initiator.

The assessment of the outcomes of the project. It was found that 87 teachers had a high level of appreciation for the project. The majority of teachers also agreed that the factors contributing to the project's success included the interest and enthusiasm of the target group, who participated in the project with satisfaction, as well as the recognition of the importance and benefits of the project by relevant stakeholders, such as school administrators, teachers within and outside the school, and parents. Furthermore, other relevant agencies, supervisors, and the community provided acceptance and support for personnel within their jurisdiction to participate in and carry out the project, and were able to apply the knowledge gained from the project to their daily lives. Additionally, teachers believe that the project's success can be increased with support and promotion from the responsible agency, including financial resources, materials, and opportunities for personnel within their jurisdiction to participate in the project. Continuous monitoring and supervision to provide assistance when problems arise during the project's implementation are also necessary. Furthermore, it is beneficial if they can collaborate with organizations that are proficient in various areas to assist in the execution of the project. For example, personnel from universities experienced educationists, and experts who possess the knowledge and capabilities relevant to the nature of the project, in order to provide the most targeted recommendations throughout the duration of the project. Additionally, conducting a project of this nature fosters a sense of pride and satisfaction among most teachers, as they are able to aid students, fellow teachers, and enhance the knowledge of fellow teachers and students, thereby establishing a network of work and learning, and generating innovative and suitable learning approaches for the target group.

6. Conclusion

The research findings indicate that the overall assessment of the project is highly satisfactory. It was found that all domains were highly satisfactory, with teachers involved in the project expressing the highest level of satisfaction with the outcomes of the project's implementation, the domain of behavior in the application of knowledge in practice was highly effective. The level of response that individuals have to the environmental sustainability project and the feelings they have towards the project and the learning aspect, including understanding the principles and theories, and the skills necessary to achieve the goals of the project. A significant recommendation is disseminate the innovative work of teachers in order to expand its impact.

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