

Educational Human Resource Management Strategy SWOT Analysis for Thailand's OBEC

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The sample group consisted of 566 education and human resource management (HRM) professionals in one of 175 Educational Service Areas (ESA) under Thailand's Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC). A questionnaire concerning the HRM strategy was used for the SWOT analysis. The findings showed that the strengths (s) from the internal environment analysis included clear measures on manpower planning, good-governance recruitment and placement. However, the analysis also showed that weaknesses (w) included the establishment of an unlawful commission (OTEPC), difficulty regarding appointments due to various staff positions, and delayed disciplinary acts, investigations, and follow-up. Opportunities (O) included four external factors. These were having a redeployment policy, good-governance management, staff placement precedence determined by a rewards system and having duty awareness. The threats (T) comprised of Thailand's national policy which is constantly changing and affects educational and administration manpower planning, rules and regulations as well as the recruitment of qualified persons for legal work.

Key words: *OBEC, HRM, HRM Strategy, SWOT Analysis.*

Introduction

In October 2018 Thailand officially adopted the 20-Year National Strategy (2017-2036) which stated such visions as stability, prosperity, and sustainability ("20-year National Strategy comes into effect," 2018). Being strategic, security, competitiveness enhancements, human resource development (HRD), creation of opportunities and social equality, environmentally friendly growth, and public-sector readjustments were stated as objectives leading to a

developed country by 2037. The six strategies focus on working in a unified manner according to the Pracharat Project or Pra-Cha-Rat System concerning basic education, leader development and sustainable education (“Pracharat school development effort to continue,” 2018; Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 2017;). The National Strategy was formally incorporated in the 2017 Constitution in Section 65 which states that the goal of sustainable development should be implemented as a national strategy. Also, principles of good governance should be used as a framework for formulating consistent and integrated plans in a congruous force to achieve the stated goals (“HM King endorses 20-year National Strategy,” 2018). Furthermore, rebalancing and public sector development are focused on the improvement of the structure, role, and appropriate missions of the public sectors, the placement of an integrated government administration system, and the development of a manpower management system as well as government personnel for anti-corruption and misconduct. Modernisation, justification and internationalisation of laws and regulations, the development of government sector services, and administration management for revenue and expenses of government sectors are also significant. In Thailand, education is considered to be a fundamental factor of human resource development and a mechanism for developing the Thai economy and society as a whole (Office of the Education Council, 2017). Strategic human resource management (SHRM) has become a cornerstone in Thailand’s future development and human resource management (HRM) education will be the key for future leaders, teachers and managers .

Simultaneously, in both the Twelfth National Economic and Social Development Plan (2017-2021) and the Ministry of Education’s (MOE) Education Development Plan (2017-2021), the concept of HRM is discussed at length as the instrument for directing performance, which is comprised of strategies relevant to the production and development of teachers and educational personnel, the development of the administration system, and the promotion of involvement in all sectors for education provision. Furthermore, HRM strategy for the MOE’s Office of the Basic Education Commission’s (OBEC) Bureau of Personnel Administration, Development and Legal Affairs (BPADLA) is engaged in and committed to developing, promoting, and supporting all levels of HRM thoroughly and equitably. Consequently, goals have been set in which all personnel are allowed to develop their skills and standards within their professional tracks. In turn, OBEC selects qualified personnel with relevant knowledge and skills from this pool of teachers and administrators (Bureau of Personnel Administration Development and Legal Affairs, 2019).

Mišankováa and Kočišováa (2014) have also added that strategic management is essential and composed of three interconnected elements. These include strategic planning, strategic implementation and strategic control. Strategic planning is a disciplined effort and an effective tool in determining where an organisation is presently at through the use of SWOT (*strengths,*

weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis for strategy formulation (Robbins & Coulter, 2012; Dessler, 1997).

SWOT analysis is a method of choice in strategic planning across a wide range of industries and institutions including ground transportation (Sornsarugt & Deebhijarn, 2017; Barrella, 2012), aviation (CAPA, 2016), education systems in Thailand (Ks, 2017) and Zambia (Education and Skills Sector Plan 2017-2021, 2017), and even entire countries (Vilnius, 2016). Madsen (2016) has also stated that numerous studies have shown that SWOT analysis is also one of the most widely used strategy tools amongst managers.

Therefore, this study employs a SWOT analysis of the HRM strategy for Thailand's MOE OBEC Bureau of Personnel Administration, Development and Legal Affairs. The external environments were comprised of opportunities and threats, while the internal environments consisted of strengths and weaknesses. While external analysis focuses on an organisation's environmental threats and opportunities, an internal analysis helps in identifying organisational strengths and weaknesses (Gürel & Tat, 2017). Thus, a SWOT analysis gives a summation of crucial external and internal elements that could affect an organisation's future, which are commonly referred to as 'strategic factors' (Gürel & Tat, 2017; Brebbia & Peneda, 2010).

Data from the study's 2 566 respondents was used for the formulation of organisational strategy. Subsequently, this leads to better strategic planning in accomplishing the goals stated in developing, promoting, and supporting HRM in Thailand's Ministry of Education (MOE) and OBEC's Bureau of Personnel Administration, Development and Legal Affairs (BPADLA).

Objectives and Research Scope

The study's goal is to develop a strategic assessment framework for the analysis of HRM strategy in OBEC's BPADLA. The research determined that a SWOT analysis is a widely accepted and commonly used tool for strategic planning (Gürel & Tat, 2017; Barrella, 2012). Furthermore, Thailand's MOE made use of SWOT analysis in their most recent Education Development Plan 2017-2021 (MOE, 2017).

Literature Review

Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM)

According to McMahan et. al. (1999), SHRM is the planned pattern of human resource (workforce) and the functional aspect of HRM deployments and activities intended to enable the organisation to meet organisational goals and objectives. Kidanemariam (2016) further added that SHRM involves relinquishing the mindset and practice of personnel management

and focusing instead on strategic issues rather than functional or operational issues. Managing people, therefore, becomes the most important priority in an organisation's strategy. SHRM realises that people make or break an organisation because all decisions made regarding finance, marketing, operations or technology are made by an organisation's human resource department.

Omebe (2014) also added that human resources (HR) are the key to quick socio-economic development and service delivery efficiency. The function of HRM in education includes staff maintenance, staff relations, staff development, procurement of staff and job performance reward. Strategically, educational HRM provides for adequate recruiting, incentives and rewards, professional development and investment, with the outcome being competitive strength (Omebe, 2014). Chadwick (2005) also highlighted SHRM's vital importance in education. Therefore, educational SHRM must be viewed in the same context as other high performing business organisations (Allui & Sahni, 2016) in other sectors such as financial, technological and commercial.

Furthermore, Schuler (1992) has reported that SHRM includes activities affecting an individual's behavior in his or her efforts to formulate and implement the strategic needs of an organisation's strategy. Purcell (1999) added that SHRM is how firms differentiate themselves from their competitors, while Boxall et. al. (2007) indicated that SHRM is the management of people and their work towards a desired outcome.

Ramguttu-Wong (2014) added to this by stating that HR staff must first be strategic partners with senior management and be more results-oriented. HR staff must also use tools to link goals and rewards to performance and have a clear understanding of how HRM decisions affect the organisation's mission accomplishment and how corporate-level decisions have an impact on people. However, according to Ramguttu-Wong (2014), research showed little evidence of this at a governmental level in the study's Indian Ocean county of Mauritius.

SHRM in Thailand's OBEC

In 2004, the Public School Teacher and Educational Personnel's Act gave authority for public school teacher personnel administration to Thailand's Ministry of Education (OTEPC, 2019; Pinyakong et. al., 2007). Furthermore, the Act stipulated that all public school teachers and education personnel in all 175 educational districts fell under the authority of the central government's Teacher Civil Service and Educational Personnel Commission (TPEC), with the Office of the Teacher Civil Service and Educational Personnel Commission (OTEPC) as a secretariat office that runs all tasks for the TEPC commencing on 24 December of that year. OTEPC is also responsible for policies relating to teachers' deployment, promotion, compensation and workload (OECD/UNESCO, 2016), as well as overseeing a teacher's

established career paths and their career advancement process. Finally, teacher promotion is dependent on their application to OTEPC and their local Educational Service Area (ESA) describing how they meet certain criteria for ‘academic standing.’

Moreover, there is probably little disagreement with the statement that teachers and school leaders are critical to learning and key partners in educational reform (OECD/UNESCO, 2016). Other studies have also determined that the quality of teachers and their teaching are the most important school-related factors in student outcomes (Darling-Hammond, 2000), with well-designed teacher preparation also acting as a powerful vehicle for education reform, which prepares a follow-on generation of teachers to implement new curriculum and innovative teaching methods (Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2012; Jensen et. al., 2012).

Therefore, education SHRM is paramount in importance within education with enhanced efficiency of teachers and staff if educational leaders know which HRM strategy is appropriate to be used at which time (Badri et. al., 2013). If managed well, human resources can be a source of competitive strength for education (Bahrami et. al., 2013).

SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis is a powerful strategic management and planning tool, which stands for *strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats*. Albert Humphrey is first credited for SWOT’s conceptualisation who was the leader of a group at the Stanford Research Institute (SRI). Beginning in the 1960s, the team used data from Fortune 500 companies to help them identify each organisation’s core competencies, along with increasing their abilities to focus on future events (Gürel & Tat, 2017). SRI researchers also gave guidance in helping enterprises become aware of when to make U-turns when weaknesses were found, as well as helping them build on their observed strengths. SRI also developed mechanisms to use data as strategic planning and marketing tools as well as helping groups better redefine their overall objectives.

Research Methodology

Population and Sample Group

The study population consisted of individuals working in one of 175 educational districts’ Educational Service Areas (ESAs) under administration by Thailand’s OBEC. The sample consisted of directors, deputy directors and HRM officers within each ESA during 2018. The targeted sample group of 625 persons was determined from Yamane’s table (Yamane, 1973) at a 95% confidence interval, with a 4% margin of error, and randomised by multi-stage random sampling (Singh & Masuku, 2014).



Research Instrument

The instrument implemented in this research was a questionnaire concerning the use of SHRM by OBEC's Bureau of Personnel Administration, Development and Legal Affairs (BPADLA). The checklists and questions covered four distinct aspects of BPADLA's external and internal environments according to a needs analysis framework for HRM in basic education for Thailand (Suksup & Sukkamart, 2019). These included:

- Manpower planning and positioning analysis
- Recruitment and appointment
- Rewards and Registration
- Laws, Discipline, and Legal Affairs

The questionnaire passed a direct check by five experts who have expertise or instruction in HRM. The questionnaire's index of consistency (IOC) ranged from 0.60-1.00.

Data Collection

Data was collected from the sample group comprising of directors, deputy directors and HRM officers within each Thai OBEC ESA. Some participants received and returned their questionnaires by Thai Post while another group opted to participate in the survey by use of Google forms. Five hundred and sixty-six questionnaires, or 90.56% of the sample group, were deemed complete enough for use in the subsequent study analysis.

Data Analysis

The SWOT analysis was conducted by analysing the external environments (opportunities and threats) as well as the internal environment (strengths and weaknesses).

Research Results

Education Officials' Characteristics

Table 1: Respondents' Characteristics

General information of respondents	Number	%
1. Gender		
Male	263	46.47
Female	303	53.53
Total	566	100.00
2. Education		
Bachelor Degree	324	57.24
Master's Degree	179	31.63
PhD	63	11.13
Total	566	100.00
3. Management work experience (years)		
1-5	131	23.14
6-10	184	32.51
11-15	127	22.44
16-20	72	12.72
Over 20 years	52	9.19
Total	566	100.00
4. Position/Title		
Department of Education	3	0.53
Provincial Education Officer	7	1.24
Director of Educational Service Area (ESA)	21	3.71
Deputy Director of Educational Service Area (ESA)	94	16.61
Director of Personnel Administration Group	216	38.16
Staff Officer within the Personnel Administration Group in an Educational Service Area (ESA) Office	225	39.75
Total	566	100.00
5. Divisional Region		
Central and Eastern regions	188	33.22
Northern region	147	25.97
Southern region	96	16.96
Northeast region	135	23.85
Total	566	100.00



From the survey's 566 respondents (Table 1), 53.53% were males and 46.47% were females. Respondents indicated that 57.24% had attained a Bachelor's degree level, another 31.63% had finished a Master's degree, while the remaining 11.13% had completed their Ph.D. Work experience results showed that 32.51% had 6-10 years of educational management experience while 1-5 years and 11-15 was almost even in experience, with 23.14% and 22.44% respectively. Another 12.72% said they had 16-20 years of management experience, while the remaining 9.19% said they had over 20 years of management experience. This is consistent with OBEC data from the 2013/14 school year, in which it was reported that there was a shortage of 825 educational administrators in schools (OHEC, 2015), while also adding that OTEPC has predicted that 66% of basic education administrators will retire between 2013 and 2027 (OECD/UNESCO, 2016). OBEC has also reported that as of November 2014, there were 39,168 school principals and deputy directors in the basic education system (OECD/UNESCO, 2016).

Table 2 shows the internal environment of strengths and weaknesses in the results of SWOT analysis while Table 3 shows the external environment of opportunities and threats through the results of SWOT analysis .

Table 2: Results of Internal Environment Analysis

<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
<i>Human resources and positioning plan analysis</i>	
1. Clear measures on preparing manpower planning	1. Regulations which result in the establishment of unlawful and inoperable oversight commission (OTEPC) according to the Ministry's announcement .
2. Staffers understand their determined roles and duties.	2. Delayed human resource policy, which delays responses to schools' needs.
3. Promote and support the substantial implementation of human resources and position plan	3. The determination of rules lacks the involvement of diverse locals.
<i>Recruitment and appointment</i>	
1. Fast, precise, and transparent recruitment and appointment according to good-governance principles	1. Difficulty in determining a position's class due to staff having identical positions, but different affiliates
2. The appointed staff has knowledge and capability according to designated roles and duties.	2. Abundant work processes and approaches, which cause delays and complications
3. The determination of staff in work performance and capability in pursuing work.	-
<i>Rewards and Registration</i>	
1. Clear and verifiable implementation for control, regulation, and supervision of quota and salary increments	-
2. Clear rules and regulations for promotions and rewards	-
3. Clear and verifiable salary determination	-
<i>Laws, Discipline, and Legal Affairs</i>	
1. Systematic check on laws and legal affairs	1. Delayed process for discipline, investigation, and follow-up
2. Study and analysis concerning discipline and penalty standards for all concerned	-
3. There are facts, proof, and document collection for drafting testimony or indictments.	-

Table 3: The Results of the External Environment Analysis

<i>Opportunities</i>	<i>Threats</i>
<i>Human resources and positioning planning analysis</i>	
1. Prepare a proposal about redeployment	1. Change national or affiliate strategy which affects human resources and positioning planning
2. Promote and support the earnest implementation of human resources and a positioning plan	2. Change or relocation of the organisation's administrators affecting in-house administration
3. Human resources and positioning plan are suitable for administration.	3. Determination of human resources and persons on duty, which depend on temporary duty
<i>Recruitment and appointment</i>	
1. The administration follows good-governance principles.	1. Rules and regulations related to many sectors and personnel
2. Clear practice, recruitment, competitive examination, selection, and appointment	-
3. The determination of qualifications, recruitment, placement, and appointment by relevant educational sectors result in the acquisition of qualified persons.	-
<i>Rewards and Registration</i>	
1. Priority is given to teachers and all concerned as it's about morale at work.	-
2. Measures and regulations on salary increment/ quota and credit appropriation, as well as the measure of financial appropriation, are committed to good governance principles.	-
3. Capability to set up an effective reward and registration process and the ability to respond precisely and quickly	-
<i>Laws, Discipline, and Legal Affairs</i>	
1. Staffers are conscious and careful in their work.	1. Difficulties in recruiting qualified staff
2. A clear framework which is based on the same laws and regulations	2. Performance affects the lifestyles of staff, which affects human resource management as a result.
3. Many people are interested in studying and giving precedence to this aspect.	-

Discussion

Strengths and weaknesses were found from the internal environment analysis. Opportunities and threats in operation were found from external environment analysis.

Strengths

Strengths included clear measurement in making a human resource plan, staff's understanding of their roles and rights, as well as fast, precise, and transparent recruitment. This is consistent with Schuler (1992) who stated that the largest factor affecting SHRM is the experience in planning.

The study also determined that another strength was that appointments were undertaken according to good-governance principles, along with staff being selected due to their knowledge and competency within their roles and duties. Also, there was transparent and clear measurement and regulations concerning salary increments, systematic checks on laws and legal affairs, and study and analysis concerning discipline. Finally, there were penalty standards for all concerned, facts, proof, and document collection in drafting testimony or indictment.

Weaknesses

Weaknesses included the establishment by MOE in 2004 of the unlawful and inoperable Office of the Teacher Civil Service and Educational Personnel Sub-Commission (OTEPC, 2019). Respondents felt that OTEPC's creation delayed manpower policy, which in turn delayed responses to schools' needs. Furthermore, existing regulations precluded local school and administrator involvement as well as difficulty in determining a position's class due to staff having identical positions but with different affiliates. Finally, numerous work processes and approaches caused delays and complications, delayed discipline processes, investigations and follow-ups.

Opportunities

Opportunities include having a redeployment policy, substantial implementation of a human resource plan, good-governance administration, clear practices, recruitment, competitive examination, selection, and appointment, as well as staff's precedence to a good-governance rewards system, rules and regulations in salary increments, staff's awareness and carefulness in work as well as having a clear framework under the same laws/regulations.



Threats

Threats consisted of changes in national policy/affiliates, which affect human resource planning, change in an organisation's administrators which affects organisational performance, and the determination of human resource and personnel, which depends on temporary duty. The study's findings are also consistent with Omebe (2014), who reported that HRM challenges include poor working conditions, staffing problems, funding, and incessant teacher transfers. This is also consistent with Allui and Sahni (2015) who also reported on Saudi higher education and the major challenges within. These included human capital development (especially by SHRM practices by faculty members), staff recruitment and selection processes, and a performance appraisal and compensation system which does not guarantee a highly motivated core of staff, especially if they are expatriate educators. Other threats include having rules and regulations related to many sectors/personnel, difficulty in recruiting qualified staff for legal work, and the effects on staff's lifestyles due to legal work, discipline, and legal affairs.

Conclusion

From the external and internal environments' SWOT analysis, it was found that work on human resources and positioning plan contains the most threats and weaknesses. It is apparent that work on human resources and positioning plan of OBEC's Bureau of Personnel Administration, Development and Legal Affairs, needs improvement, development and revision. This is especially true in terms of human resources policy, change/transfer of administrators, temporary duty assignments, and lack of involvement in determining human resources and positioning. Consequently, the BPADLA, as the main sector is tasked with developing, promoting, and supporting HRM for OBEC and should conduct further research to set up an effective action plan for the development, promotion, and support of systematic HRM previously detailed.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

Acknowledgments

There was no funding received for this research or the article processing fee (APC).



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