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Developing Data-Driven Administrative Policy for International Montessori Center, Thailand

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Abstract

This institutional survey research was used to improve administrative policies at International Montessori Center (IMC), a private international kindergarten in Bangkok, Thailand. The main goal of the study was to gather input from school stakeholders regarding daily conditions and functions, with the ultimate goal of improved administrative policy implementation. A literature review indicated no direct prior research. A survey gathered input from four stakeholder groups, including 15 teachers, 104 parents, 17 staff, and 3 administrators, regarding Physical Safety, Child Sense of Being Valued (classroom atmosphere), Classroom Conditions, Information Availability, Parent-Teacher Meeting Quality, Administrative Support, Parental Support (overall), Educational Tools and Technology, Quality of Peer Professional Relationships, and Availability of Needed Supplies. Stakeholders rated the daily operations areas using five-point Likert-style questions and responded to two open-ended questions. In sum, findings highlighted a number of useful perspectives for the little-studied early-childhood administrative community: a) seemingly mundane school functions are important to those who experience them on a regular basis; b) all stakeholder input is valuable when gathering school daily operations feedback; c) similarities *and* differences in stakeholder input help administrators develop a more holistic perspective of school functioning; and d) stakeholder input is a valuable tool for administrators to use when critically considering responsive policy formulation. Conclusions reached were limited to correlations and patterns found in one institution. However, it is clear that this original research is a valuable step in improving administrative policy implementation at the private international kindergarten level.

Keywords: Administrative Policy, Montessori, Thailand

INTRODUCTION

International Montessori Center (IMC), a small, private Montessori kindergarten, currently has an extended family orientation in its administrative policy implementation. The researcher, as the school's lead administrator, is too

often over-loaded with day-to-day tasks involving basic school operations, which require a case-by-case approach, because a comprehensive set of data-driven policies has not been developed.

Thus, it was clear that IMC's administration of everyday operations relied too heavily on an extended family model of decision-making and not enough on evidence-based policies. Gathering and interpreting such survey evidence was the focus of this study, with the ultimate goal being clear policy formulation and effective administrative policy implementation.

While there is little doubt that clear and written policies are necessary for schools in to function properly, a review of the literature found a paucity of research directly related to anonymous online school improvement surveys (or self-study survey instruments) that: a) target teachers, administrators, support staff, and parents as relevant stakeholders in a 360 degree or multi-perspective approach; and b) target stakeholder feedback regarding basic school operations, as a source of data for developing clear and relevant administrative policies that were intended to improve day-to-day private school operations, as well as stakeholder interest and cooperation, through transparent administrative practices.

More generally speaking, another reason this study was done was the distinct lack of literature regarding private schools in *developing* countries (Day Ashley et al., 2014, p. 47). Thus, the study was intended to augment the scarce literature regarding: a) private schools in developing countries; b) the use of anonymous, multi-perspective self-study surveys for private school basic operations improvement; and c) using stakeholder survey feedback to develop a more a data-driven basis for administrative policy implementation regarding day-to-day private kindergarten operations. (Note: IMC kindergarten students were not considered as relevant stakeholders for the purposes of this study because they lacked the requisite level of understanding to be able to respond to survey questions.)

Thus, it was clear that data needed to be gathered regarding basic school operations from relevant stakeholders, in the form of anonymous survey feedback, with the ultimate purpose of developing a clear set of policy guidelines that could lead to transparent and evidence-driven administrative policy implementation.

1. Related Literature

The studies reviewed below support aspects of the IMC study design directly or indirectly. Specific comments are added, when applicable.

1.1 School Administrator Credibility

According to Beam, Claxton, & Smith (2016), in private schools, such as IMC, leaders often suffer from a lack of credibility with the school stakeholders. A major part of building such credibility is creating a more professional administrative structure that is based on formal, written policies (Ayres, 2018).

1.2 Management Style

According to Ayres (2018), the development of policy-driven management can address five plausible disadvantages of IMC's current paternalistic management style, which include employee dissatisfaction regarding bad administrative decisions, employee over-dependency, loyalty-building issues, staff competition for administrator attention, and power struggles based on unclear roles (para. 11, 12, 13, 15, 17). Thus, an underlying purpose of the study was to transform the administration of IMC from an extended family model of management (Rouse, 2016, para. 1) to a more data-driven management system, which relies on systematic data collection, analysis, reporting, and exploitation, for improved school operations and communication with stakeholders (American Association, 2002, p. 2).

1.3 Stakeholder Input

According to Honig (2006), policy-making in a school should not be focused on the inherent nature of the policy to succeed, as if success is *preordained*, but on what's feasible for whom and under what conditions (p. 3). Logically, this means being transparent with and inclusive about policy formulation with school stakeholders and being responsive to their feedback. This is supported by a study by Olowoselu, Fauzi, and Muhamad (2016), that advises school administrators, who are interested in improved leadership, to recognize and be responsive to the input of parents, staff, and students (p. 61). Such responsiveness was key to the IMC study.

1.4 Evidence-based Decision-making

An interview study by Crum, Sherman, and Myran (2010) found that successful elementary school principals employ a constant stream of data for effective policy implementation choices. These school leaders' best practices included using data-driven introspection to honestly assess their own strengths and weaknesses, and improve their critical thinking skills (p. 55). Facts and evidence, rather than intuition, were reportedly used to address sagging student performance (p. 59), building infrastructure issues (p. 55), and pedagogical environment improvement (p. 53). Such self-reflection was key to the head administrator's decision to improve IMC through data-driven administrative policy choices.

1.5 School Policy Development

According to Berk (2005), policies that involve basic school operations should be developed using an anonymous needs-assessment instrument, which gathers views from any school personnel or parent who is in a position to comment effectively.

1.6 Data Gathering and Stakeholder Motivation

According to Moore (2009), a well-developed 360-degree, anonymous survey can improve school operations through increased stakeholder motivation, increased transparency, and relevant data that is valid and reliable, which can be used to build an improved policy base for more effective administrative policy implementation.

1.7 Better Policies and Better Education

Studies indicate that more effective administrative policy implementation can have beneficial effects on teaching and learning outcomes (Akpan, 2016; Shaari & Ahmad, 2016; Penn State Center, 2015).

1.8 Data-based Decisions, Work Flow, and Stakeholder Participation

According to van Geel, Visscher, and Teunis (2017), there is a growing global focus on improving school operations through evidence-based decision-making. Findings indicated that school dimensions that were strongly associated with successful implementation of data-driven administrative interventions included robust instructional leadership, proactive immersion in the intervention process, establishing a standardized work flow process, and strong participation of school staff (p. 443).

1.9 Physical Aspects of Schools.

(IMC survey question: Physical Safety Conditions) According to Penn State Center (2015), School facilities can have a significant effect on teaching and learning outcomes. School amenities impact instructor recruitment, retention, effort, and commitment. School facilities also affect student health, behavior, engagement, learning, and achievement (para. 1). The same study concluded that the quality of facilities, including their overall safety, support the physical and emotional health of teachers and students (para. 4). A 2016 study concluded that a school's physical learning environment has important effects on Malaysian preschoolers' school readiness (Shaari & Ahmad, 2016). Malaysian preschoolers are comparable to the Thai kindergarteners of IMC.

1.10 Classroom Atmosphere

(IMC survey question: Child Sense of Being Valued) According to Teachstone (2014), research found that emotionally positive teacher-student interactions or a *welcoming classroom* in early childhood education (ages 3 to 8, which includes kindergarten) were associated with more positive and less negative peer and teacher interactions, as well as higher engagement in learning activities such as mathematics and reading (p. 3).

1.11 Resources Including IT

(IMC survey question: Educational Technology Support) Clearly, reliable educational resources support school success. According to Usman (2016), there are a number of practices that schools can follow to ensure that educational resources are managed effectively. Those which are relevant to the IMC study include: a) school administrators developing a prudent resource management scheme; b) ongoing professional development training for administrators and staff, including an emphasis on respect for school property and resources; c) regular administrative oversight; and d) modernized resources to support the execution of school responsibilities on a more professional level (p. 36). Educational technology, common in classrooms across the world, can enhance teaching and learning if teachers are effectively trained and if there is a sufficient supply in the educational setting, according to Stosic (2015).

1.12 School / Administrative Support

(IMC survey question: Administrative Support) According to Crum, Sherman, and Myran (2010), the following aspects illustrate core best-practice themes for effective school leaders: a) evidence-based leadership; b) transparency and relationship-building with stakeholders; c) imbuing stakeholders with ownership and team spirit; d) recognition of leadership and support for its development among school staff; and e) pedagogical awareness and engagement. Of particular note is that these best-school-leader practices have been connected to high student achievement (p. 48). The above sources of school leader support are potential results of an improved policy implementation structure at IMC.

1.13 Teacher-parent Cooperation

(IMC survey question: Parent and Teacher Meeting Quality) Studies show that a cooperative and supportive relationship between parents and teachers is a key part of a school success, and has been connected to: a) more student involvement and higher academic achievement, particularly in school settings where there are language barriers (Albertson, 2012); b) greater parental perceptions of security and support (Sandberg & Ottosson, 2010, p. 741); and c) raising parental awareness for constructive cooperation (Bicaj, Bytyqi, Azizi, & Xhemajli, 2019, p. 94). One overall goal of the IMC research process included teachers and parents benefitting from an increase in relationship transparency.

1.14 Parental Involvement

(IMC survey question: Parental Support Quality) Bridgemoha's (2001) review of the literature reveals a number of advantages associated with parental involvement for elementary and preschool students. In summary, these include beneficial effects in the areas of student achievement, retention rates, behavioral issues, and school-work-associated enterprise and perseverance—as well as overall school effectiveness and educational progress from a policy-making and practitioner perspective (p. 2).

Ikunyua (2012), who studied the impact of parental involvement in early childhood education student socialization, found that parents tend to support the academic and social development of their children in a variety of ways that include providing school supplies, ensuring that there is time to study, supporting children during their study time, attending school meetings to discuss issues affecting children, supporting school programs, and communicating with teachers regarding concerns (p. 56-57).

1.15 Quality of Peer Professional Relationships

(IMC survey question: Quality of Peer Professional Relationships) Research shows that supportive relationships between and among teachers, administrators, and other school personnel help to promote school improvement. More specifically, cooperative professional relationships enhance knowledge exchange, shared leadership, learning outcomes, commitment levels, resourcefulness, teacher trust and openness, administrator engagement, and student confidence (Sorajjakool, 2017, p. 35).

1.16 Stakeholder access to needed information.

(IMC survey question: Information Accessibility) Research shows that when school stakeholders are welcomed and have unfettered access to information, they are more likely to participate in activities that promote improvements in school climate, in part, because of a more positive perception of factors that serve as learning conditions, such as physical conditions, relationships, emotional safety, teacher and staff practices, organizational activities, and support and connection mechanisms (Yoder et al., 2017, p. 1).

1.17 Availability of Needed Supplies

(IMC survey question: Availability of Supplies as Needed) A review of the literature indicates that availability of supplies is a source of job satisfaction for elementary and secondary teachers (Ouyang & Paprock, 2006). It is common sense that school stakeholders expect and need educationally-relevant equipment and materials to be present and readily available to support the smooth, day-to-day functioning of kindergartens. Teachers and support staff are often involved the organization and distribution of supplies during the school day and take this responsibility seriously.

It is the administration's job to adequately fund and plan for the procurement of needed materials in schools. However, it is not just a matter of spending more. More precisely, for countries where the cumulative spending per pupil, between the ages of 6 and 15, does not exceed 50,000 USD in purchasing power parity, which includes Thailand, there is a positive correlation between funding and student performance on the PISA international test (OECD, 2017, p. 32-33). In countries where such funding is higher than 50K USD, there is no such correlation. This indicates that it's how school resource funds are allocated, not the total amount spent.

1.18 Classroom Conditions

(IMC survey question: Classroom Conditions) Research shows that comfortable physical conditions in classrooms help promote engagement, learning, and a sense of well-being among students. These include lighting, air quality, hygiene, spaciousness, safety, and user-friendly desks, tables, and other educational equipment (Paul & Kumari, 2017). However, Paul and Kumari also took into consideration the individual learning styles of students, in suggesting that classrooms have lighter and darker spaces to work in and that classrooms afford students the ability to move about as they learn (p. 214). These findings are particularly relevant to kindergarten students, who are sensitive to environmental conditions and who may show a host of learning preferences that need to be practically and reasonably supported in classrooms.

2. Conceptual Framework

2.1 Research Objectives

The study sought to connect the status of IMC specified day to day factors with the stakeholder feedback that impact the administration of those factors, as they may be operationalized in new administrative policies regarding those factors. Figure 1 shows the IMC study conceptual framework, which embodies the following research objectives:

- To study the current status of implementation of school administrative operations in terms of: a) school safety; b) physical and social teaching environment; c) educational resources, including IT; d) parent and administrative support; and e) parent-teacher cooperation.
- To study the factors that influence the implementation of school administrative oversight of the aforementioned daily operations parameters.
- To collect information regarding said influential factors, with the goal of administrative, data-driven policy development, with the ultimate goal of improving school administrative policy implementation for daily school operations .

2.2 Literature Support for Conceptual Framework

According to Walker and Quong (2003), school leaders can used 360-degree (i.e. multi-rater) school operations surveys of administrators, teachers, parents, and staff (i.e. stakeholders), regarding school operation strengths and challenges, to: a) promote trust and teamwork among stakeholders; b) build a highly-motivated team; c) clarify bottlenecks to administrative success; d) identify administrative performance goals; and e) delineate leadership strengths (p. 3).

Multi-rater stakeholder feedback has been shown to improve validity and reliability of results (Edwards, 1996, as cited in Moore, 2009, p. 39) through codification, which can be used to improve the school leader's organizational management skills, which are associated with improved school performance (Grissom & Loeb, 2009, p. 28). Improved school administrator performance can provide a foundation for formulating: a) policy implementation strategies (Hanover Research, 2014, p. 6); and b) administrative policy implementations goals, as well as increased delegation of authority and responsibility to school personnel (Morake, Monobe, & Mbulawa, 2012, p. 155), based on their specific roles.

Improved school leadership can also produce a more transparent, multi-perspective administrative structure (Morake, Monobe, & Mbulawa, 2012, p. 161), which can foster greater satisfaction among relevant school stakeholders due to increased participation in the process of school improvement (Edwards, 1996, as cited in Moore, 2009, p. 39) via policy clarification and planning, which leads to: a) more effective communication between and among all stakeholder groups regarding needs-based interventions (Taguma, Litjens, & Makowiecki, 2012, p. 15); and b) increased administrator awareness of school operations, augmenting business & instructional leadership, leading to improved educational outcomes (The Wallace, 2013, p. 19).

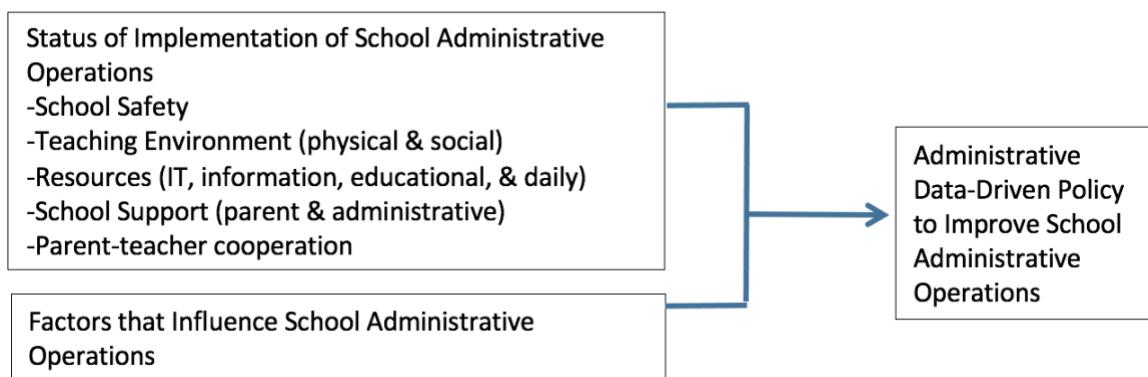


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3. Methods and Materials

3.1 Research Design

The basic study design was Summative School Evaluation, which is the collection of quantifiable or category-prone data from all school stakeholders with the purpose of clarifying and addressing specific school operation

problem areas (Agresti, 2007). More specifically, this institutional research (Alford, 2011) was designed to address administrative policy implementation issues, with regard to IMC daily school operations. The scope of the study was a single school, since there are no comparable, small, private Montessori kindergartens in Thailand. Thus, this was a descriptive study, which used the strength of association (correlation) between certain variables and data patterns to draw conclusions, whose application were limited to IMC.

3.2 Data Collection

An online survey was created using Google Forms, which covered 10 basic areas of IMC school operations, had questions in Thai and English, gathered stakeholder group information, and gathered email addresses for tracking purposes. Each of the ten major school operations sets of questions included: a) a five-point Likert-scaled question for respondent ratings (i.e. from excellent to needs significant improvement); b) open-ended questions that provided space for respondents to make positive remarks and critical comments; and c) open-ended questions that provided space for respondents to make suggestions to address specific areas of concern. The ten areas of investigation regarding daily IMC operations included: a) Physical Safety; b) Classroom Atmosphere (i.e. Child Sense of Being Welcome); c) Educational Resources (including IT); d) School / Administrative Support; e) Quality of Teacher-Parent Meetings; f) Parental Support (i.e. overall); g) Availability of Needed Supplies (i.e. daily support materials); h) Information Availability; i) Quality of Peer Professional Relationships (i.e. within school personnel); j) Classroom Conditions (i.e. physical conditions that support learning).

3.3 Statistical Analysis

Quantitative data from Likert rating questions (Joshi, Kale, Chande, & Pal, 2015) were analyzed with one-way ANOVA for nonparametric data, using the Kruskal-Wallis test, because study samples did not fit the definition of normally distributed data (Chan & Walmsley, 1997). Mean ratings across groups and patterns were examined. Considering this study's highly variable and generally smaller sample sizes, a 90% confidence level was used ($p < .10$).

Qualitative data from open-ended questions were analyzed thematically based on the 10 areas of school administrative operations surveyed. Response data were transformed into categorical and numeric data (Agresti, 2007), so that group differences and patterns could be analyzed more clearly (Powers & Xie, 2000).

4. Results

4.1 Quantitative Analysis: Summary of Kruskal-Wallis Test for Likert Ratings across Groups

Table 1 indicates that the distribution of Likert ratings varied significantly by group for survey questions regarding Child Sense of Being Valued (CSBV), Educational Technology and Tools (ETT), and Administrative Support (AS). Figures 1 and 2, respectively, depict significantly lower IMC staff ratings for CSBV and AS compared to parents, teachers, and administrators. Figure 3 depicts a significantly lower parent rating for ETT compared to teachers and staff.

Table 1: Kruskal-Wallis Hypothesis Test Summary

	Null Hypothesis (Ho)	Test ^c	Sig. ^{a,b}	Decision
1	Distribution of Physical Safety is the same across groups.	ISKW	.560	Retain Ho
2	Distribution of Child Sense of Being Valued is the same across groups.	ISKW	.003	Reject Ho
3	Distribution of Classroom Conditions is the same across groups.	ISKW	.188	Retain Ho
4	Distribution of Educational Technology & Tools is the same across groups.	ISKW	.000	Reject Ho
5	Distribution of Availability of Supplies is the same across groups.	ISKW	.137	Retain Ho
6	Distribution of Information Accessibility is the same across groups.	ISKW	.590	Retain Ho
7	Distribution of Quality of Peer Prof. Relationships is the same across groups.	ISKW	.178	Retain Ho
8	Distribution of Administrative Support is the same across groups.	ISKW	.084	Reject Ho
9	Distribution of Parent-teacher Meeting Quality is the same across groups.	ISKW	.102	Retain Ho
10	Distribution of Parental Support Quality is the same across groups.	ISKW	.414	Retain Ho

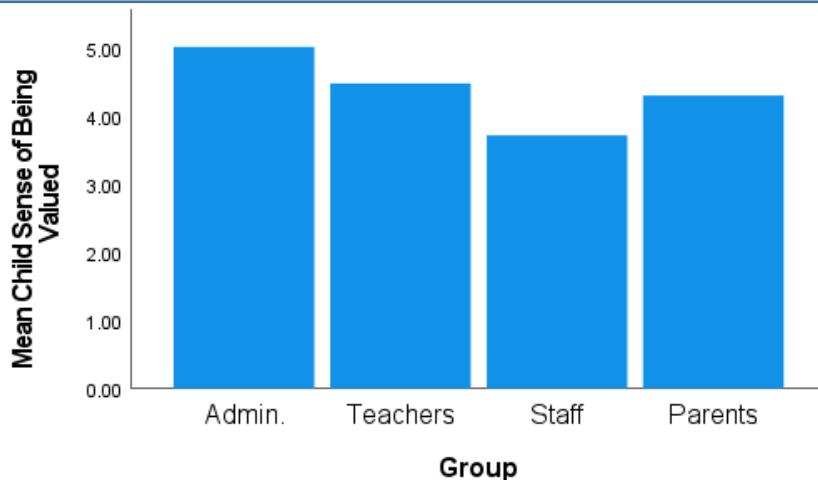


Figure 1: Means of Likert Ratings for IMC Child Sense of Being Valued by Group

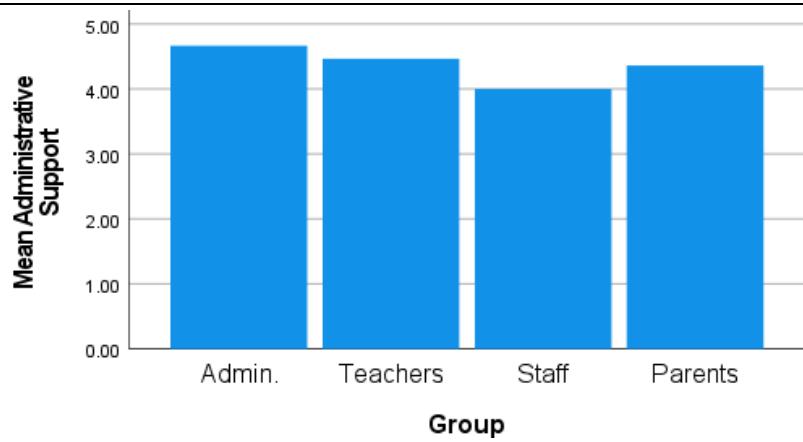


Figure 2: Means of Likert Ratings for IMC Administrative Support by Group

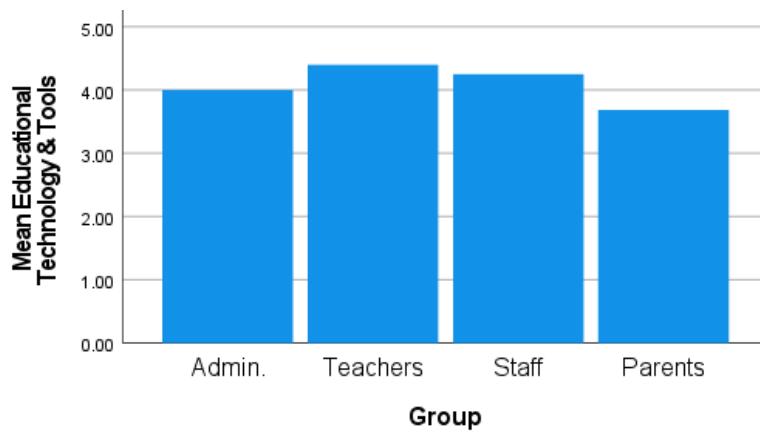


Figure 3: Means of Likert Ratings for IMC Educational Technology & Tools by Group

4.2 Qualitative Analyses of Responses to 10 Open-ended Survey Questions

Figures 4 and 5 are bar chart exemplars of respondent critical comments and positive remarks regarding the survey question on Child Sense of Being Valued (CSBV), by group (space does not permit all 20 charts). Below, question responses are analyzed from the most criticized to the least (i.e. 10 to 1).

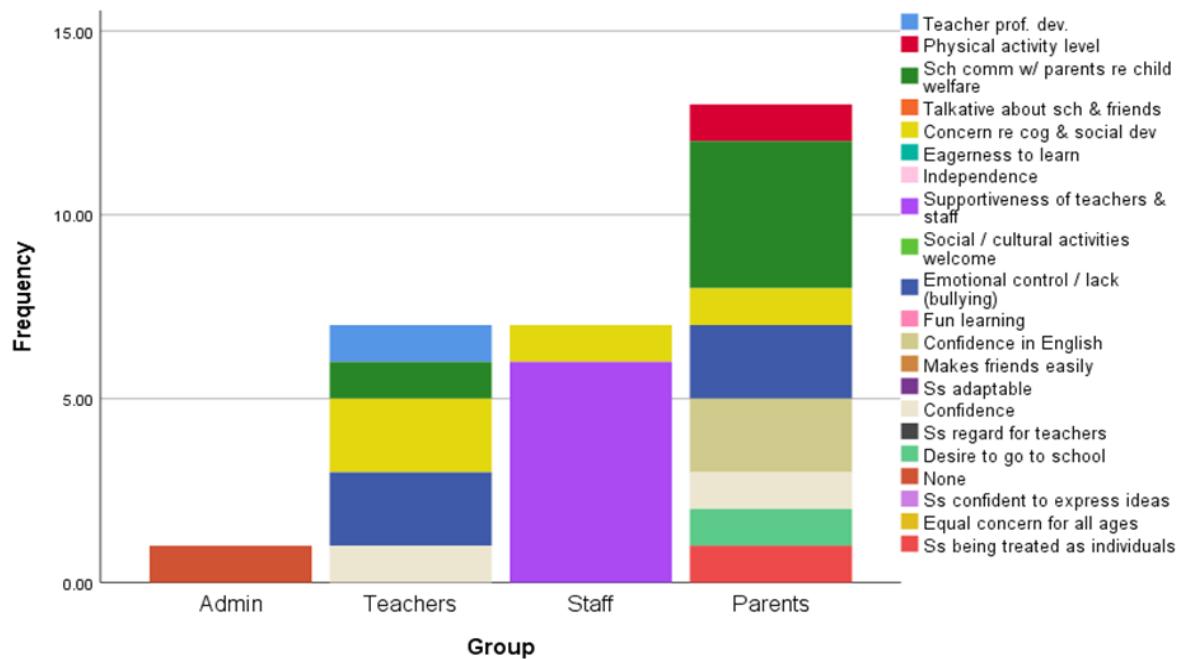


Figure 4: IMC CSVB Aspects that Need Improvement, by Group

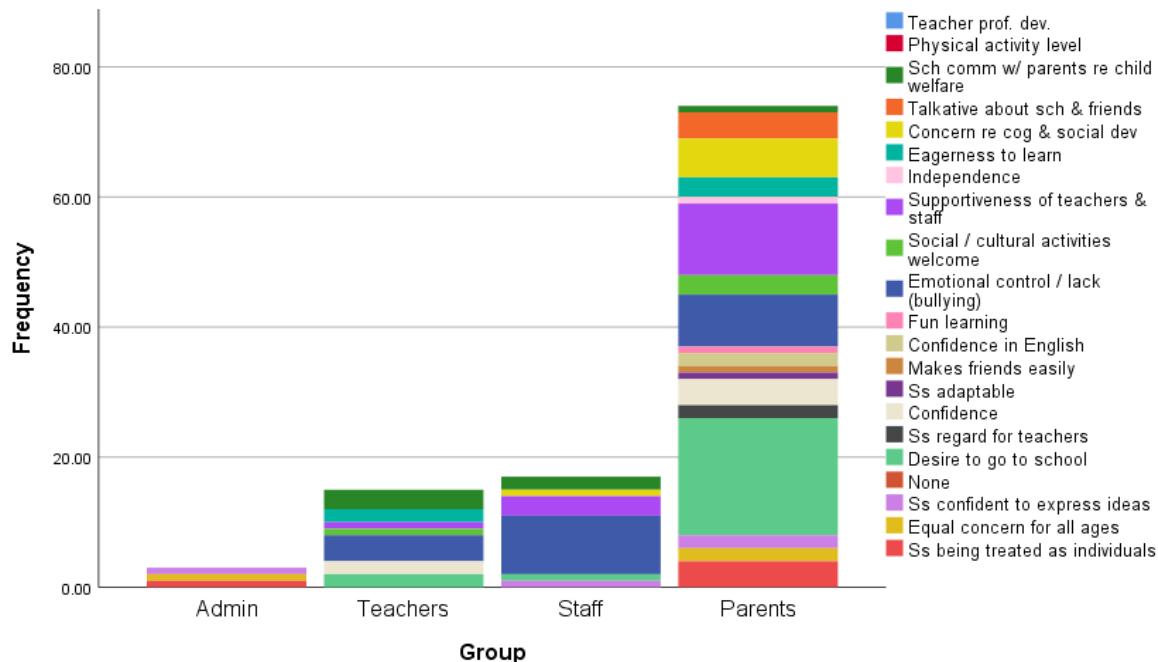


Figure 5: IMC CSBV Aspects that Work Well, by Group

4.2.1 PT ranked 10

The area regarded least well was Parent-teacher meeting quality, for which negative comments made up 32% of 94 total comments (i.e. 68% positive comments). There were 30 total negative comments and 64 total positive remarks.

Of the critical PT comment areas, parents focused on parent-teacher meeting preparation and management; staff on parent cooperation for sharing vital information and general involvement, as well as on preparation and management; and teachers and administrators exclusively on parent cooperation for sharing vital information and general involvement.

Of the positive PT remark areas, parents and teachers focused their complements on the useful, clear, and detailed nature of parent-teacher meetings for problem-solving regarding child development; administrators on the regularity of parent-teacher discussions; and staff on the collaborative, friendly, inclusive, and cooperative nature of meetings.

4.2.2 ETT ranked 9

The next higher-ranked area was Educational Technology & Tools, for which negative comments made up 30% of 115 total comments (i.e. 70% positive comments). There were 35 total negative comments and 80 total positive remarks.

Of the critical comment areas, parents were focused on sufficiency of educational technology and tools (ETT), as well as on their necessity and suitability; staff on ETT child development quality; administrators united on ETT necessity and suitability; and teachers on parental involvement in ETT use, teacher training, student training, and sufficiency of ETT.

Of the positive remark areas, parents focused their compliments on educational tools and technology modernness, necessity and suitability, and variety; staff on modernness; teachers on variety; and administrators on modernness.

4.2.3 Physical Safety ranked 8.

The next higher-ranked area was Physical Safety, for which negative comments made up 27% of 166 total comments (i.e. 73% positive comments). There were 45 total critical comments and 121 positive remarks.

Of the critical comment areas, parents focused on physical safety planning and safety for the play area and equipment in general; staff on planning, washroom equipment, and IMC security; and teachers on monitoring. Administrators had no major concerns about IMC safety.

Of the positive remark areas for physical safety, parents focused their support on IMC staff assistance for arrival and departure of children, IMC security, monitoring, play equipment and area safety, general equipment safety, and safety planning; staff on IMC security; teachers on monitoring; and administrators split on IMC security, planning, and monitoring.

4.2.4 IA ranked 7

Information Availability was the next higher-ranked area, for which negative comments made up 25% of 119 total comments (i.e. 75% positive remarks). There were 30 total critical comments and 89 total positive remarks.

Of critical comment areas, parents focused on the quality of management of information availability, as well as on its problem-solving quality regarding safety and in general; staff on ease and equality of access; teachers on problem-solving quality regarding safety and in general, as well as on management of access; and administrators split on speed and update management.

Of positive remark areas for information availability, parents focused on information being equally accessible to different levels of stakeholders and the technologies of access to that information being user-friendly; staff on ease and equality of access; teachers on technologies of access, as well as on ease and equality of access; and administrators on ease and equality of access.

4.2.5 CSBV ranked 6

Child Sense of Being Valued was the next most criticized area, for which negative comments made up 20% of 137 total comments (i.e. 80% positive comments). There were 28 total negative comments and 109 total positive remarks.

Of the negative comment areas for children's sense of being valued, administrators focused on concerns that children be treated as individuals; teachers on concerns regarding cognitive and social development, as well as on children's emotional control; staff on concerns regarding supportiveness of teachers and staff; and parents on concerns regarding IMC communication with parents regarding child welfare.

Of the positive remark areas for children's sense of being valued, notable areas of support were as follows. Both teachers and staff complimented children's ability to control their emotions, parents applauded their child's desire to go to school, and administrators were equally split in complimenting students' confidence to express ideas, IMC's equal concern for all students, and IMC's treatment of all students as individuals.

4.2.6 CC ranked 5

Classroom Conditions was the next most criticized area, for which negative comments made up 20% of 166 total comments (i.e. 80% positive comments). There were 33 total negative comments and 133 total positive remarks.

Of the negative comment areas for classroom conditions, parents focused their concerns on environmental control measures (i.e. air quality, lighting, cleanliness), the developmental nature of toys, and parents' ability to anonymously observe children in the classroom. Teachers focused on teaching preparedness and administrative curriculum guidance; and staff on environmental control measures, quality of teaching materials, overall classroom appearance, teacher-student connection, and teacher preparation and curriculum guidance.

Of the positive remark areas for classroom conditions, the greatest aspect of CC praise for administrators was age-appropriateness, for teachers and staff cleanliness, and for parents classroom spaciousness.

4.2.7 QPP ranked 4

Quality of Peer Professional Relationships was the next most criticized area, for which negative comments made up 15% of 92 total comments (i.e. 85% positive comments). There were 14 total negative comments and 78 total positive remarks.

Of the negative comment areas for quality of peer professional relationships, administrators, teachers, staff, and parents focused their concerns on administrative support.

Of the positive remark areas for quality of peer professional relationships, notable areas of support were as follows. Administrator, teacher, staff, and parent praise was focused on QPP's positive impact on school, peers, parents, and students. Teacher praise also focused on cooperation and collaboration. Parent praise also focused on cooperation.

4.2.8 PS ranked 3

Parental Support was the next most criticized area, for which negative comments made up 15% of 93 total comments (i.e. 85% positive comments). There were 14 total negative comments and 79 total positive remarks.

Of the negative comment areas for parental support, teachers and parents focused their concerns on improved parental commitment, while staff focused on improved school management of parental support.

Of the positive remark areas for parental support, notable areas of support were as follows. Administrator and teacher PS praise was focused on the supportive quality of parental involvement for students, teachers, and parents themselves; staff on cooperation; and parents on parental focus on activities and commitment level.

4.2.9 AS ranked 2

Administrative Support was the next most criticized area, for which negative comments made up 14% of 95 total comments (i.e. 86% positive comments). There were 13 total negative comments and 82 total positive remarks.

Of the negative comment areas for administrative support, teachers focused their concerns on administrative management of safety and hygiene; staff on improved openness to and cooperation with staff, teacher, and parent input; and parents on improved parent education and information.

Of the positive remark areas for administrative support, notable areas of support were as follows. Administrators focused AS praise on administration direct accessibility for problem-solving and information; teachers on administration openness to and cooperation with staff, teacher, and parent input; and staff on administration care, friendliness, supportiveness, helpfulness, and responsiveness (via staff) to parents and students, as well as on administration information usefulness, accuracy, and clarity.

4.2.10 ANS ranked 1

Availability of Needed Supplies was the least criticized area, for which negative comments made up only 12% of 116 total comments (i.e. 88% positive remarks). There were a total of 14 critical comments and 102 positive remarks.

Of the negative comment areas for availability of needed supplies, staff focused concerns on cost management for supplies, on their variety, and on their child-development quality; and teachers focused concerns on supply chain management.

Of the positive remark areas, parents focused their supportive comments on IMC's sufficiency of needed supplies (ANS), as well as on their child-development quality; staff compliments focused on ANS sufficiency, availability for teachers and students, and the quality of their preparation for class activities; teachers focused their compliments on ANS sufficiency and their age-appropriateness; and administrators were united in their praise for ANS sufficiency.

5. Discussion

5.1 Quantitative Results Discussion

Regarding overall stakeholder ratings comparisons, the average Likert rating for all stakeholder groups, across all questions, was 4.2 (ranging from 3.8 to 4.3). Thus, stakeholders, on average, viewed all surveyed IMC daily operations areas favorably, as 4.2 would be slightly better than a ‘very good’ rating.

The Likert questions for which there were significant differences in group responses suggest three conclusions. It is possible that IMC staff, in their positions *behind the scenes*, have a different perspective about the degree to which IMC students feel valued, having rated CSBV significantly lower than parents, teachers, and administrators. Exactly why staff perceive the that students feel less valued in IMC classrooms than other stakeholders is not clear. It is possible that staff experience the degree to which the administration supports IMC daily functions differently than other stakeholders, having rated AS significantly lower than parents, teachers, and administrators. Precisely why staff ranked administrative school support lower than other stakeholders is unclear. Finally, it is possible that parents experience the degree to which existing IMC educational technology and tools support daily classroom functions differently than other stakeholders, having rated ITT significantly lower than teachers and staff. Parents may feel that ETT are not supporting IMC well enough or that ETT are less essential, as compared to teachers and staff. And, since no significant difference was found between teacher and administrator ETT ratings, it is possible that these two stakeholder groups rated educational technology lower than teachers and staff for the same possible reasons delineated above or for different reasons entirely.

5.2 Qualitative Results Discussion

5.2.1 Critical comments

For all 10 categories of survey questions, critical comments tended to be consistent with stakeholders’ natural interests. Several questions (below), however, garnered critical comments from administrators, staff, and / or teachers that were noteworthy and need further exploration.

5.2.1.1 Classroom conditions (CC). It is not clear exactly why no CC aspects rose to the level of concern for administrators, why staff seemed inordinately concerned with teacher-student connections and teacher preparation, why parents seemed overly focused on being able to observe their children surreptitiously during class time, or why teachers expressed a distinct concern over their own preparation time and curriculum guidance.

It is interesting that parents expressed a desire to secretly observe their children in the classroom, as there are competing concerns regarding classroom observation, including parent’s rights to see their children’s education, teachers’ rights to professional privacy, and students’ rights to privacy in the learning process. Although there are no reliable data confirming best practices, evidence suggests that teachers and parents need training to optimize parental involvement outcomes for children. Such training can make teachers more comfortable with parental involvement and teach parents how to best support their child’s learning experience (Goodall & Vorhaus, 2010), especially given that kindergarten students can easily be distracted by parents’ presence or the knowledge that parents are watching.

5.2.1.2 Parent-teacher meeting quality (PT). The origin of staff concerns about PT cooperation are not immediately apparent as staff do not appear to be directly involved in this relationship.

5.2.1.3 Physical safety. It is not clear what may have led administrators to make no major critical comments about safety, although a perspective of years of experience, improvements, and monitoring may be in play.

5.2.1.4 Quality of peer professional relationships (QPP). Clearly, IMC stakeholders viewed maintaining effective administrative leadership as a foundational element for QPP, although exactly why clearly needs to be explored in administrative policy development process.

5.2.1.5 Parental support (PS). It is not clear if parents' expressed concerns about *parental commitment* meant their own commitment or that of other parents. The source of staff concerns about parental support of school management are not immediately clear. It is not known why no aspect of IMC PS rose to the level of concern for administrators.

5.2.1.6 Administrative support (AS). It is not known why administrators evinced no criticisms of their own level of school support and that for other stakeholders.

5.2.1.7 Availability of needed supplies (ANS). The origin of staff concerns regarding supplies' costs, variety, and child-development characteristics is not immediately apparent. It is not clear why both administrators and parents submitted no critical ANS comments.

In sum, the precise nature of these parent, teacher, staff, and / or administrator heightened concerns (or lack thereof) are not clear. Further exploration may be useful, as such data could contribute improved administrative policy formulation for IMC daily operations.

Another not altogether unexpected, but not completely understood result was the keen interest in the day-to-day functioning of IMC displayed by the support staff. As a professional educator, head administrator at IMC, and author of this study, I have found that support staff are not only vital in their expected role of providing safe, hygienic, and well-organized classrooms and school grounds, but also play important roles in the daily lives of students, teachers, parents, and administrators. Indeed, *LeaderInMe*, a website that supports best practices in education, asserts that noncertified staff offer a diverse set of perspectives and experiences that can lead to better school environments (Leader, 2019). Clearly, this little-studied area needs further exploration.

5.2.2 Positive remarks.

For all 10 categories of survey questions, positive remarks made were consistent with stakeholder natural interests. Some notable themes across all stakeholder groups were as follows: a) support for the modernness of Educational Tools and Technology; b) defined praise for ease of Information Availability and equality of access; c) a clear priority on sufficiency of Availability of Needed Supplies; and d) distinct approval for direct access to the administration as an aspect of Administrative Support. Some notable areas of positive focus for different stakeholder groups were as follows: a) for teachers, monitoring was a prominent aspect of Physical Safety; and b) regarding Administrative Support, IMC staff seemed to highly prize their role in communicating information from the administration to parents and children. These results will be further explored in the post-study phase of administrative policy development.

5.2.3 Shared areas for concern and praise

It is notable that within both teacher's *safety* criticisms and compliments, monitoring was prominent. This is logical since safety monitoring for young children is a never-ending process for which there may be unexpected events with each new school day.

Within CSBV comments, it is notable that teachers showed focused concern and staff showed focused praise for IMC kindergarteners' abilities to control their emotions. This particular facet of childhood development, known as *delay of gratification*, has vast implications for emotional and cognitive well being well into adulthood. Research has consistently found that children who are able to delay short-term gratification in favor of longer-term rewards will enjoy greater overall success over the course of their lifetimes (Carlson et al., 2017).

5.3 Quantitative Significance Versus Qualitative Results

A comparison of quantitative and qualitative findings reveals that statistically lower ratings for three stakeholder groups for particular survey questions in the quantitative section may or may not have correlated with a greater variety of critical remarks from those groups for those respective questions in the qualitative section. This distinction depended on the exact nature of stakeholder views.

For example, staff rated Child Sense of Being Valued lower than teachers and parents, but made less and / or a lower variety of critical comments than teachers or parents, focusing almost exclusively on the supportiveness of the teachers and staff. In addition, staff rated Administrative Support significantly lower than teachers and parents, but made less and a lower variety of critical comments, focusing on improving administration updating of staff, as well as on improving openness to and cooperation with staff, teacher, and parent input.

In contrast, staff rated Child Sense of Being Valued lower than administrators, and made more and a greater variety of critical comments. Staff rated Administrative Support significantly lower than administrators and made more and a greater variety of critical comments. Parents rated Educational Tools & Technology lower than staff and teachers and made more critical comments than those two groups, which tended to focus on improving sufficiency and suitability of ETT.

5.4 Ultimate Use of Survey Results Discussion

5.4.1 Administrative policy formulation

Stakeholder interest, as highlighted by the richness of survey results, indicates that IMC needs to formalize its policy structure concerning various aspects of daily operations. While it would be wise to address all survey question topic response sets in terms of policy formulation, those where there was a significantly lower quantitative rating, as well as a greater number and / or variety of negative comments would certainly be logical place to start. These include lower staff ratings for Child Sense of Being Valued and Administrative Support, as compared to administrators, as well as lower parent ratings for Educational Tools and Technology, as compared to staff and teachers.

Policy formulation should also address survey questions where administrators made zero negative comments. In no case did other stakeholder groups submit zero negative responses to survey questions. Thus, it is clear there is a perceptual difference regarding certain IMC daily operational issues, which include Physical Safety, Classroom Conditions, Availability of Needed Supplies, Administrative Support, and Parental Support Quality. The basis for such perceptual differences needs to be clarified so that developed policies are relevant.

5.4.2 Administrative policy implementation

An OECD literature review study suggests a number of planning guidelines for educational policy implementation, which are adapted herein: a) focusing on a limited number of basic and measurable goals for each policy; b) using stakeholder monitoring to get ongoing and trustworthy data regarding the implementation process; c) using stakeholder feedback to adjust the implementation process; d) determining the proper resources for policy execution; e) formulating a practical schedule; and f) ensuring that plan requirements are sustainable for the duration of implementation (Viennet & Pont, 2017, p. 45).

5.4.3 Administrative delegation of authority

Policy implementation will include opportunities for the head administrator to delegate selected responsibilities to either teachers or staff. Viennet and Pont (2017, p. 45), as part of their coherent implementation of policy scheme, list several strategies that are relevant to delegation of authority regarding policy implementation in educational settings. These are adapted for the purposes of this study. The head administrator will consult with teachers and staff (key players) to: a) develop delegated responsibilities; b) make delegation practical; c) agree on the redistribution of responsibilities and tasks; d) build key players' capacity to take on delegated tasks; e) develop a fair accountability scheme; and f) develop or ensure clear and easy communication mechanisms for key players.

6. Conclusion

Private international kindergartens are often founded in circumstances that present an exceptional set of educational needs in terms of language, culture, religion, and economic factors. This may be the reason for the paucity of research regarding administrative policy implementation for daily operations at the private international kindergarten level.

Indeed, there are no comparable schools to IMC in all of Thailand. Nevertheless, the same basic need for effective administrative policy implementation exists in all private early-education settings. Therefore, the IMC study was able to suggest a number of new perspectives to the early-childhood administrative community, which include the following; 1). What seems like mundane aspects of everyday school functions are actually important to those who experience these features on a regular basis, as the concern for young students' daily health and welfare is of equal importance to pedagogical issues. 2). It is valuable to include all potential stakeholder input when gathering school daily operation feedback, as it gives an opportunity for those who have ideas or concerns to be heard and have influence, regardless of their level; 3). It is not only the differences between different stakeholder group's input regarding everyday aspects of school functioning, but also the similarities, that help administrators address gaps, but also continue to build on existing best practices; and 5). Stakeholder answers can be used to build more comprehensive information that helps administrators respond to stakeholder concerns, through responsive policy formulation and implementation.

7. Recommendation

Regarding future, related survey research, it is recommended that question structure and vocabulary be extensively checked for clarity, especially in a multi-language setting, to reduce the need for follow-up, clarification interviews. Conclusions reached were limited to correlations and patterns found in one institution. However, it is clear that this original research is a valuable step in improving administrative policy implementation at the private international kindergarten level.

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