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Experiences of senior administrators in creating performance excellence in Thailand's private universities

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UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Greeley, Colorado

The Graduate School

THE EXPERIENCES OF SENIOR ADMINISTRATORS IN CREATING
PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE IN THAILAND'S
PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Sarun Saifah

College of Education
Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies
Higher Education and Student Affairs Leadership

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ABSTRACT

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Higher education in Thailand is challenged with increasing pressures. Like other kinds of organizations, universities have been challenged by external, uncontrollable forces. The increased challenges in Thailand's higher education have prompted senior institutional administrators to understand the nature of higher education institutional affairs, and to articulate new solutions and adapt the business world's operational paradigm in quality management to direct their institutions in allocating their limited resources. The purpose of the study was to discover and make meaning of institutional administrative affairs in private universities in Bangkok, Thailand, as perceived by senior level administrators. A case study methodology with constructivist epistemology was employed for the study. Eight university administrators in four institutions in Bangkok, Thailand were invited to join the individual interviews and focus group.

Findings were discovered how institution has addressed and moved on improving excellence in administrative performance. Utilizing Baldrige and ONESQA for their performance excellence development provided a detailed snapshot of the institutional system. Thailand's universities using the quality frameworks to transform their business start with an assessment. Universities need a new understanding of the nature of their quality initiatives system, and a measurement of their improvement. All participants recognized and understood

the benefits of the quality frameworks assessment. As a result of the implementation of the SAR reports, universities can produce a roadmap for continuous improvement, and also validate key performance areas, and set a process for improvement.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Higher education in Thailand is challenged with increasing pressures. Like other kinds of organizations, universities have been challenged by external, uncontrollable forces. As colleges and universities become larger, complex changes are needed to accomplish administrative tasks (Birnbaum, 1989; Kotler & Fox, 1995). The increased challenges in Thailand's higher education have prompted institutional leaders to understand the nature of higher education institutional business affairs. Administrators will increase their knowledge in a business background and gain expertise in effective institutional quality management for facing the financial challenges of the future. Likewise, Birnbaum suggested university administrators have to recognize, perceive, visualize, make meaning of institutional administrative circumstances, and apply their approach to effective institutional management.

In order to be an efficient and excellent university in the era of financial and economic constraints, administrators must be proactive rather than reactive, and universities must be innovative and improve management systems in order to grow and thrive in changing higher education circumstances (Veesakul, 2003). The growth of the demands placed on higher education for increased accountability has emphasized the role of administrative affairs supervisors. In Thailand, the economic problems create competition among Thailand's universities. Intense competition forces each institution to focus on higher quality in administration, academic and student affairs, lower costs, and effective institutional communication and response (Suwannavera, 1996).

Thai people believe the university is the highest level of education and it is the center of various fields of knowledge and scholars. Universities have held the expectation of Thai people to develop academic service to society, and to preserve and maintain Thailand's art and culture. Thus, each university administrator must realize this important responsibility of higher education and develop the finest quality in institutional administration and resource management. In this chapter, I discuss the history of Thailand's higher education, Thailand's higher education background, the private institution of higher education, and the quality management in private universities.

History of Thailand's Higher Education

The development of higher education in Thailand was quite different from those of its neighboring countries in the Southeast Asia, because Thailand is the only nation in that part of the world which has never been colonized by any western powers (Ekpaopun, 2005). The supervision of higher education in Thailand started with the Royal Court. King Wajirawoot Rama the Sixth created the first state university, Chulalongkorn University, in 1917 to educate administrative members of the government to serve in various branches of the Thai government (Koonchon, 2002). At that time, Thailand had been ruled by an absolute monarchy, and the national administration was highly centralized by the King. After the government system was changed from an absolute monarchy to a democracy in 1932, more state universities were founded to prepare Thai people in accelerating national, social, and economic conditions after both world wars. However, gaining admission to a state university was very competitive because there were limited seats and a large number of applicants. Consequently, in the late 1960's, Thailand's government faced the increasing demands for higher education by the

people, and began to study the establishment of private higher education institutions (Ekpaopun, 2005; Sriyanalugsana, 2008).

In 1965, the Private College Act of 1969 was promulgated by the government for considering the trends in supply and demand for higher education. This act lightened the government's burden of higher education service, and encouraged the private sector to assist in alleviating the forecasted shortage of seats in degree-granting institutions (Ekpaopun, 2005; Sriyanalugsana, 2008). The Ministry of Education by the Private College Commission controlled the establishment of a private university and its operations. The establishment had to be in accordance with the National Development Plan, and could not be a profit-seeking organization.

In 1970, the first six private institutions in Thailand were founded in accordance with the Private College Act of 1969. These institutions are Bangkok College, College of Business Administration, College of Commerce, Krirk College, Patana College, and Thai Suriya College (Koonchon, 2002). At that time, these institutions had to strictly comply with the rules and regulations in the four-year curricula programs of study, teaching aids, and library service. The Ministry of Education also supervised academic matters, financial matters, personnel administration, international cooperation, procedures, and policies of private higher education institutions in Thailand (Sudhipitak, 2000).

The current Private Higher Education Institution Act of 2003, which became effective on October 30, 2003 (Chantarasorn, 2008), was promulgated for increasing the social demand for higher education due to the expansion of compulsory education, from nine to twelve years. The concept of lifelong education and advancement in information technology has also created the need to restructure a private university system to be more flexible. Under this Act,

Chantarasorn mentioned that private higher education institutions must achieve academic excellence, obligate standards and quality assurance, and require administrators to be accountable for the utilization of the allocated institutional budget and resources. Increased systems for auditing, follow-up, and evaluation by internal units and national agencies has stimulated private university administrators to ensure academic and administrative activities, to supervise the curriculum implementation and instruction, and to assure the academic and administrative performance excellence.

Private universities in the era of the Private Higher Education Institution Act of 2003 have more authority to establish an institutional council. The institutional councils and the board of trustees have responsibilities for enhancing policy and control, approving the amendment to regulations, curricula, and new degree programs, and assigning internal quality assurance of the institution (The Office of Higher Education Commission, 2004). However, the Ministry of Education also monitors each university administration by assigning specialized experts and scholars to be seated in each university's Board of Trustees for helping an institution to control policy aspects and academic standards. Thus, private university administrators in the current Act have increased the responsibility in managing institutions to achieve the highest quality in all administrative and academic levels. The strengthened academic and administrative standards have increased student enrollments, and graduates from the private universities are well recognized by the labor market (Koonchon, 2002).

Thailand's Higher Education Institutions

Higher education institutions in Thailand are categorized by five types: public universities with limited admission, open universities, the Rajabhat Institute, the Rajamangala Institute of Technology, and private universities. The Office of National Education Council

(ONEC) (2008) stated that there are 22 public limited admission universities, two open universities, 36 institutions in the Rajabhat Institute system, 28 institutions in the Rajamangala Institute of Technology system, 67 private universities, and 19 community colleges. The public universities with limited admission are institutions that admit only those high school students who pass the highly competitive national entrance examination. There are 525,966 students enrolled in these institutions.

In the ONEC (2008), the two open universities are also public institutions supported by the government. They provide curriculum mostly in the social science concentration with 558,050 students enrolled. The Rajabhat Institute system is also funded by the government. They are formerly the Teacher Colleges, and offer the degree programs in the field of teacher education and social science with 533,192 students enrolled. The Rajamangala Institute of Technology, with 131,665 students, is subsidized by the government. They provide the baccalaureate degree in the technical and technological fields. Finally, the Private Universities are founded and funded by private resources according to the Private Higher Education Institutions Act of 2003. The approximate number of students in 2007 was 283,588.

Current Private Institutions in Thailand

In 2008, there were 67 private higher education institutions (Chantarasorn, 2008; ONEC, 2008). These institutions vary in type of ownership, including business ownership, foundations, and religious organizations. Chantarasorn further stated there are 48 institutions owned by business ownership, 12 institutions overseen by foundations, and seven institutions supervised by religious organizations. These institutions have progressively increased over the past several decades since the first enactment of the Private Higher Education Act. The number of enrolled students in private universities has also grown. Chantarasorn elaborated that 45

percent of the total Thai higher education institutions in 2007 are private with an enrollment share of 13 percent.

Private higher education institutions in Thailand must be entirely self-supporting (Veesakul, 2003). However, private universities have been subsidized with a small portion by the government by saving large amounts from public taxation (Chantarasorn, 2008). The Office of Higher Education Commission in the Ministry of Education has the responsibility to ensure that the institutional funds and supervision of private institutions are appropriately allocated for the central benefit of the institution and not for the personal advantage of owners, administrators, or officers (Ekpaopun, 2005; Sudhipitak, 2000). The government maintains regulatory control over private institutions' financial matters in four aspects: the sources of funds are tuition, charges, and fees; money and other properties given to the private university; income relating to providing education in the private university; and other income of the private university (The Office of Higher Education Commission, 2004).

The Need for Performance Excellence in Higher Education

Higher education is becoming more of “a product with varying customers and stakeholders, and what the latter now demand is satisfaction and value for money” (Sahney, Banwet, & Karunes, 2008, p. 511). Administrators in public and private higher education institutions concentrate the assessment, accreditation, ratings, and rankings in order to gain attention from students as customers. Sahney et al. further stated that most institutions aggressively seek new students, while these same students have a greater selection of universities and colleges.

To support this notion further, higher education institution in Thailand also faced the unpredictable challenges because their external stakeholders have questioned the quality of

universities. Therefore, administrators need to create a culture of quality performance excellence and improvement in order for maintaining a sustainable development in the institutions.

In addition to the quality improvement, Thailand's higher education institutions are required to improve outcomes, and to become more efficient, effective, and customer-orientated in order to gain a competitive edge. This circumstance in Thai higher education has promoted an increasing interest in the issue of quality in education (Veesakul, 2003). Sahney et al. (2008) provided:

The quality in education is a multiple concept with varying conceptualizations and this poses problems in formulating a single, comprehensive definition. It includes within its ambit the quality of inputs in the form of students, faculty, support staff and infrastructure; the quality processes in the form of the learning and teaching activity; and the quality of outputs in the form of the enlightened students that move out of the system. (p. 512)

The quality in higher education can be the measurement in accountability that is creating different expectations of institutional quality and success. In this study, continuous improvement at all levels of institutional administration is the core quality foundation. The Deming's wheel of PDCA (Plan, Do, Check, and Act) cycle is related to continuous improvement (Hirtz, Murray, & Riordan, 2007). The PDCA is derived from planning, doing, checking, and acting. Moreover, in this study, I utilized the foundation of quality management from Deming's theory and Juran's theory, which emphasized solving complex business problems. These philosophers identified the meaning of quality consideration as the role of management in the entire approach of supervising an organization.

Therefore, quality in higher education is the set of practices that emphasize the student in terms of customer satisfaction, employee involvement, and continuous improvement in order to improve quality, increase productivity, and decrease cost. Therefore, senior university

administrators are ultimately accountable for quality, and being the leaders of quality management implementation, creating values, goals and systems, and improving institutional administrative performance.

Quality Enforcement in Thailand's Private University

In Thailand, the concept of institutional administrative affairs and quality management was introduced after the financial crisis of the late 1990s (Suttiprasit, 2001). In 1997, the world experienced the effects of the East Asian crisis, which started somewhat innocuously with a run on the Thai currency. Thailand experienced a period of significant market weakness causing the Thailand government to request assistance from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to resolve the economic crisis by arranging programs of economic stabilization and reform. Further, in 2008, the next economic turmoil in the financial market happened at extreme levels and threatened economic growth, which originated from increasing defaults in the U. S. sub-prime mortgage loans.

The impact of both economic crises has stimulated Thailand's government to decrease spending on higher education. This impact limited enrollment growth and forced private university administrators to minimize operational costs and reduce quality (Suttiprasit, 2001). Administrators in private institutions are responsible for utilizing institutional budgetary allocation as a mechanism for supervising their institutions to function with quality (Levidow, 2001). The changes in economy, finance, and university management encourage private higher education administrators to increase standardized educational products and services, technical infrastructure, and institutional management effectiveness (Veesakul, 2003). Further, university leaders articulate the importance of quality assurance in the operation and delivery of its academic programs. Quality management challenges Thailand's higher education to enter the

education industry in which students (both domestic and international), and professionals demand quality services to meet their diverse needs.

The philosophy of institutional quality improvement encourages competitive environments among private universities in Thailand. First, institutions of higher education compete for students, faculty, research grants, rankings, facilities, technologies, libraries, and improved campus services (Sudhipitak, 2000; Suttiprasit, 2001). Second, the university has become a business enterprise and students have become more like consumers (Woodhouse, 2002). Third, the production of a sophisticated educational product has become the foremost objective in a significantly competitive market (Altbach, 1988). Thus, three aspects of competition among private universities pushed each institution to promote efficiency and accountability in institutional cost-effectiveness and management flexibility. Each institution emphasized institutional autonomy and governance with appropriate accountability measures.

Statement of the Problem

Economic crisis, financial constraints, and limited resources are issues facing in higher education in developing countries, there is no challenge that is more concerning than the financial stringency of institutions (Levidow, 2001; Ziderman & Albrecht, 1995). In many parts of Thailand and other developing countries, financial constraints impede effective academic development (Wongyai, 2000). The fiscal constraints experienced by institutions have further undermined their financial capacity to undertake expansion of the private higher education system while preserving satisfactory levels of educational quality (Krongkeaw, 2004; Levidow, 2001; Warwick, 2000). The lack of financial resources limits the expansion of facilities, and the expansion of enrollment.

The most important mission of Thailand's private universities is to seek solutions of attracting more students and to keep them studying and graduating to generate a regular income flow (Krongkeaw, 2004; Veesakul, 2003; Wongyai, 2000). Higher education administrators' responsibilities become more important to assure and improve educational and management quality, to promote professional development, and to bring about an increase in institutional research and development activities.

The economic crisis and financial constraints in supervising private universities in Thailand raise the questions of how do university administrators understand and make meaning of their administrative affairs units and how do administrators manage and allocate their limited resources as well as conduct effective strategic plans when their institutions are facing transformation during Thailand's economic crisis. Institutional senior level administrators must articulate new solutions and perhaps adapt the business world's operational paradigm in quality management to direct their institutions in allocating their limited resources.

Purpose of the Study

As the researcher, I believe that effective and efficient administration and supervision are, and always have been, the most vital functions of higher education management. With diminishing financial resources, the intensification of the demands placed on education for increased accountability and management effectiveness accentuates the role of responsible administration. The implementation of a quality management model from business and the national quality assurance indicators from the Office of the National Education Standard and Quality Assessment (ONESQA) can prove inappropriate and inefficient for higher education institutions because administrators are able to consider an efficient performance measurement system that reflects an opportunity to improve on academic and administrative excellence

(Suttiprasit, 2001). Thus, the purpose of this study is to better understand how senior level administrators of institutional administrative affairs in private universities in Bangkok, Thailand.

Significance of the Study

Thailand's private higher education institutions are challenged with increasing competition for student enrollment, rising costs, higher tuition and fees. Several private higher education institutions in Thailand are currently confronted with financial problems more serious than have ever been predicted. Moreover, competition between institutions has become extremely intense, especially as all public institutions move out of the bureaucratic system to a more autonomous status.

In order to ensure institutional survival and growth, private university administrators need to articulate the institutional administrative effectiveness and internal and external assessment of their universities. Most administrators recognize that quality must focus on linkages among functions across entire institutions (Deming, 1996). At an administrative level, quality assurance systems and indicators are introduced to monitor their performance. University administrators then articulate the level of institutional assessment, institutional accountability measures, and institutional strategic planning objectives. Thus, the private institutions of higher education in Thailand are exploring the possibility of developing their quality management in the educational system and designing more effective production teams to achieve institutional administrative goals.

Most quality management studies examined workforces' perceptions and implementation frameworks. This study, however, examines the extent to which institutional quality assurance principles are embedded in the university administrators in private

universities. Many university administrators in Thailand are genuinely concerned about the issue of quality management (Sirichana, 2002; Suttiprasit, 2001; Veesakul, 2003). This study provides practical solutions for university senior administrators concerned with competing with neighboring institutions and surviving in the 21st century.

The interpretations of university administrators in their institutional responsibilities alerted university executives to the urgency of designing and implementing strategic plans based upon the quality assurance tenets. The research findings established best practices to monitor administrative performance, and promote understanding as well as provide essential indicators in quality management for private higher education institutions. Furthermore, these findings may be accessed to enhance administrative learning among the top level of executives in other private universities, colleges, and academic institutions.

Research Questions

Research questions in a constructivist qualitative study can “expect to evolve and change during the study... consistent with the assumption of an emerging design” (Creswell, 2003, p. 71). Thus, the research question in this study can be continually evaluated from the interview process and focus group conversation. The main research question focuses on: What are the experiences of senior administrators in creating performance excellence in Thailand’s private universities?

The sub-research questions of this study are:

- Q1. How do senior administrators create a leadership vision for performance excellence?
- Q2. How do senior administrators conduct strategic planning as a process in achieving performance excellence?

- Q3. How do senior administrators link the indicators of ONESQA (the Office of National Educational Standards and Quality Assessment) to their performance excellence strategic planning?

Limitations

This study was limited to university executives, including vice presidents and assistant vice president for administrative affairs. The study was conducted at a period of economic tension and declined student enrollment. It may create tension about institutional management, and university administrators were very careful about their answers during interviews and focus groups.

Delimitations

To make the study manageable, the research scope focused on private higher education institutions in Thailand. Four private universities were purposefully selected for this study. These institutions are owned and supervised by corporations and have approximately 10,000 students enrolled. The selected institutions are named Eastern University (EU), Central Bangkok University (CBU), Commerce University (CU), and Northern University (NU). These universities are located in the Bangkok metropolitan area and have similar characteristics in terms of programs offers, challenges, governance, management and institutional administrative structure.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the macro perspective, higher education institutions in Thailand are not able to disregard the global economic recession challenge at the end of 2008. This recession is derived from the inflationary pressure from unpredictable oil and commodity prices, tightening domestic monetary policy, and the U. S. economic downturn. Moreover, Thailand also faced the problem of inflation rate in 2010. Thus the roles, structures, and responsibilities of public and private higher education institutions in Thailand, particularly in the next decade, have to be committed to produce graduates with professional skills. Moreover, both public and private universities in the future needed to consider radical transformation in the areas of student participation, quality assurance, and institutional autonomy.

Higher education is facing extraordinary challenges emerging partly from the increase of globalization, which sees knowledge as the primary driver for economic, information, and communication development (Holm-Nielsen, 2001). Likewise, "higher education is indeed central to the creation of the intellectual capacity on which knowledge production and utilization depend and to the promotion of lifelong learning practices necessary to update one's knowledge and skills" (Holm-Nielsen, p. 3). The large numbers of challenges facing higher education in Thailand make it difficult for university administrators to successfully manage higher education organizations, educate students, and maintain all perspectives of educational qualities. Educational quality is the central importance in every higher education institution,

and is required at every level and in all the processes of the university. In order to understand the qualities in Thailand's higher education, administrators need to understand the higher education responsibilities that involve the needs of their students, partners, and communities.

Thai Higher Education Institutions' Responsibilities

Thai institutions of higher education are expected to perform four responsibilities in order to maintain university status and to conform to government policies: responsibilities in teaching, research, service to community, and the preservation of the arts and culture of the nation. The proportion of higher education responsibilities is 40-30-20-10 consecutively (Koonchon, 2002). However, higher education responsibilities in the U. S. are in teaching, research, and academic service, which are classified as 40-40-20 workload, consecutively based on the higher education institutional type (Zabriskie, Dey, & Riegle, 2002).

Responsibility in Teaching

The primary educational mission of Thailand's higher education is reflected in the teaching role. The university also encourages faculty to conduct their academic work by writing textbooks for teaching aids and functioning as sources of expertise in their subject matter (Altbach, 2003). Likewise, university administrators can invite professors, associate professors, assistant professors, and experts in business or corporate firms, both in government and private sectors, to provide lectures in each semester. Many institutions of higher education expect faculty to generate new knowledge in their field, as well as disseminate it to students, which is the source of conflict and tensions between the roles of research and teaching for faculty (Barr, 2002; Maddox, 1999).

Responsibility in Research

Thailand's universities encourage full-time faculty to conduct research in their related field in order to promote understanding and academic progress in developing learning theory and policies. The mission of the institution is related the degree to which faculty become involved in research. Larger institutions of higher education in Thailand more frequently recognize research and knowledge generation as an important part of their mission. The research may be in the genres of learning, teaching, and administration of the institutions. Additionally, most research funds are provided by the university and the Office of Higher Education Commission. The university encourages full-time faculty to do research by providing funds and financial rewards to researchers, but faculty often do not participate in research projects because of their demanding teaching schedules (Tien, 2008).

Responsibility in Service to Community

Some degree of service to Thailand's institution is expected of faculty members. Faculty must be serving on internal committees and advisory boards, assuming part-time administrative positions in the program, and mentoring and advising students are all aspects of service performed by faculty. Many Thailand's higher education institutions provide other community services such as teaching conversational English to students and other people, teaching Chinese, and teaching how to use the Internet.

Responsibility in Preservation of Arts and Culture

Preservation of the arts and culture is another specific goal of Thai universities. The phrase "cultural preservation" has been included in every university policy. The university can promote this preservation for example, by enhancing the Thai classical music club in student activities in the student affairs division. This responsibility can be also utilized as performing

Thailand's traditional activity and festival. Higher education must play the central role in encouraging students to realize the invaluable benefit in preserving their Thai culture.

Administrative Affairs Aspects in Thailand Private Higher Education

In Thailand's private higher education institutions, there are several aspects, which the administrators are concerned. Administrators could consider their institutional administrative aspects to support the institutional vision, mission, and values for ensuring that these aspects and responsibilities provide the most effective and efficient support for administrative and academic activities, faculty members, staff, and students. Therefore, many higher education institutions have attempted to restructure their administrative processes. Some have even begun to address the issue of change in their human resource management, leadership and management, and institutional governance activities

Human Resources Management

Human resource management is a business practice and concentrates on the theoretical and practical techniques of managing a workforce (Harris, 2000). It is based on the assumption that employees are individuals with ever-changing goals and needs (Weinstein, Randall, & Williams, 2007). Similarly, human resource management is a more innovative view of workplace management than the traditional approach that essentially emphasizes a productivity focus. Administrators in higher education also need to understand that the current trend in human resource management is in dealing with the unequal, complex and interconnected societal structure and rapid technological change (Sohail, Daud, & Rajadurai, 2006). University administrators must understand the personal goals of faculty and staff, and provide the resources needed for them to accomplish their work successfully. University administrators

consider as one of the methods used in supervising productivity improvements, cost control, and human management (Siengthai, & Bechter, 2001).

The simultaneous utilizing of human resources practices in universities relates to turnover, organizational productivity, and financial performance. Thailand's university senior administrators understand their institutions are the places of knowledge production and synthesize the human resource changes in order to finance institutional budgets effectively (Siengthai & Bechter, 2001). Thailand's higher education administrators need to understand the current organizational structures and different contexts in their institutions. They will understand the expectations of faculty members, staff, students, and communities that might involve the managerial abilities of university administrators. Human resource management in academic institutions is the link between the faculty and knowledge, and consists of understanding of faculty skills and university structures. Effective human resource systems will lead to a positive relationship between faculty and university performance, profitability, and retention (Sohail, Daud, & Rajadurai, 2006).

Faculty recruitment and retention. Thailand's institutions of higher education have lost the necessary human resources in their system due to an egress of faculty as a result of poor conditions of services in the university system (University Development Commission, 1998). The factors of faculty dissatisfaction such as higher salaries and fringe benefits offered by corporate organizations are considered to be major rationales behind faculty egress (Creswell, 1999; Ekpaopun, 2005). Koonchon (2002) noted that Thai faculty losses generate additional workloads for those who remain, produce a continuing need for costly staff development programs, and negatively effect and undermine the quality of the university enterprise.

Due to this situation, it may be difficult for Thailand's institutions to generate funds to support projects, retain faculty, and update physical resources. Faculty retention and recruitment have always been a major challenge to universities and colleges in Thailand (Chantarasorn, 2008). University administrators need to implement proper management styles that will reorganize their budget system (Ekpaopun, 2005). They can reduce the occurrence of faculty departing academia by providing opportunities for advancement and professional growth, a balance of responsibilities, salary, and evaluation system.

University faculty and staff development. Higher education institutions continue to encounter declining enrollments, low staff moral, demands for internal and external accountability, and increases in public scrutiny (Chaiyasarn, 1999). Moreover, prospective students are more cautious in choosing Thai private universities due to the program offerings, the institution's reputation, the qualifications of faculty, and supporting technology in the institution. The demands of accountability challenge university executives to ensure that their faculty and staff members are effective, and make staff development a priority among the entire division of academic affairs and administrative affairs.

Faculty development budget allocation is not a high priority in Thai universities (Koonchon, 2002). Moreover, faculty development budgets that do exist have been significantly decreased in the declining economic conditions. Many Thai institutions cut budgets for specialized training programs, research support, sabbaticals, conference participations, and faculty scholarship programs (Chaiyasarn, 1999). Private university administrators must consider faculty development activities as a secondary priority among their managerial duties and budgeting allocation, and they must be well-prepared to serve the large

number of new students, and their faculty members must be well-trained to serve mass education (Koonchon, 2002; Sriyanalugsana, 2008).

To serve Thailand's mass university education, university administrators also need to provide educational opportunities to the faculty in pursuing their educational degree at the doctorate level. Providing faculty funding to pursue the doctoral degree is also one of the most important areas in the development plan of private higher education institutions for the recruitment of faculty and staff who earn at least a doctoral degree. The number of doctoral faculty members in private universities in Thailand is currently approximately 6,000 from 20,000 in 2007, and the increasing number of faculty with doctoral degrees is expected to rise from 30 to 60 percent in the next ten years (Sriyanalugsana, 2008). Approximately, \$70 million per year must be circulated during the next ten years for scholarships for the existing and qualified faculty members to study at the local and international institutions to pursue their doctoral education. The faculty members with doctoral degrees potentially have abilities to develop their curriculum and instruction.

Institutional Management and Leadership

Management and leadership in higher education institutions is the collaborative process of making decisions, integrating activities, planning programs, coordinating people, and evaluating performance within the institution's objectives (Bennis, 2006; Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2001). The management of each higher education institution is strategically integrated with the institution's overall mission (Vera & Crossan, 2004). Higher education institutions also face similar challenges as the business organizations, that administrators must formulate strategies for attracting, developing and retaining a management and leadership ensuring that an institution will be survived in the era of financial constrain.

The trend of leadership philosophy has been changed to understand the authenticity of people in organization. Kouzes and Posner (2002) noted that leadership is everyone's business. The fundamental concept of leadership in every position is to assist people within an organization to realize their essential roles and strengthen their abilities to lead and make positive differences in their responsibilities. The Kouzes and Posner's views should be utilized in the higher education environment at all levels especially in the senior administrative position. Therefore, university administrators should articulate the leadership philosophy for attaining an integrated comprehensive and reflecting their own identities as well as illustrating them clearly to faculty and staff. Administrators have to implement and maintain an environment of trust and honesty which must be the fundamental principle that defines their leadership philosophy. With understanding the leadership foundation, senior administrators can integrate opportunities to improve quality management and enhance performance excellence in gaining successful organizational outcomes.

Understanding University's Organizational Change

Higher education's organizational change is defined as modification in an existing system that is primarily due to managing, restructuring, or downsizing (Helms-Mills, 2003). Further, organizational changes may be derived from internal and external sources. Internal changes are initiated from within the organization, while external changes are the forces from outside of the organization (Cameron, 1984; Hendry, 1996; & Helm-Mills). Kabanoff, Waldersee, and Cohen (1995) asserted that organizational changes may affect an organizational performance, and cause job dissatisfaction of workforces, and the attrition of confidence in organization.

Although factors to implement organizational effectiveness in higher education are “productivity-efficiency, cohesion, information management-communication, and planning-goal setting, some higher education institutions still struggle with enhancing organizational effectiveness because of their culture and tradition” (Pounder, 2002, p. 460). Further, Birnbaum (2000) stated that “institutions of higher education are always under pressure to become more efficient and effective” (p. 1). Fundamental issues in higher education organizational change are grounded in the impact of an institution’s culture on change and managerial aspects of change (Tierney, 1997). Birnbaum also articulated that resistance to change in an institution is found among faculty member and staff because they believe that change is seen as a cultural threat to their universities.

Therefore, university administrators in Thailand have to understand that the forces in changing organizational behavior are increasing, and several institutions, regardless of public or private supervision, also experience similar challenges. This issue of organizational changes encourages university administrators to make strategic organizational changes in order to adapt to their current environments.

Institutional Governance System

The development of university governance in Thailand was instituted during the 1990s, in which private institutions have more authority in their governance, institutional finance, and administration. The governance issue was raised to look at the efficiency and productivity in the processes of the administrative scheme rather than to improve decision making and operational functions of universities. Three major ideas provide the rationale for instituting governance; 1) to increase the internal and external institutional recognition; 2), to develop and

utilize the managerial skills and interests of the members of the university; and 3), to enhance the speed of decision making and reduce the amount of staff time (Lockwood & Davies, 1985).

The role of senior university administrators, institution's board of trustees, and faculty in institutional governance process and decision-making authority is occasionally contested and conflicted (Bushman, Piotroski, & Smith, 2004; Herbst, 2007). In a managerial context, the university administrators must understand characteristics in contributing shared governance processes in their academic institutions. The idea of shared governance increases extensive faculty participation in institutional decisions allows those charged with policy implementation for enhancing faculty to concentrate on and participate in institutional issues and policies (Lockwood & Davies, 1985; Miller, McCormick, Maddox, & Seagren, 1996). Like in the corporate firm, the higher education supervisors must annually disclose their operational information to demonstrate transparency; such as the university reports must include the general information, the income statements, the balance sheets, the funds flow statement, the accounting standards, and the special items (Bushman et al., 2004; Jensen, 1993).

Further, in developing countries, and especially in Thailand, the quality of law enforcement in the higher education system emphasizes inclusive governance mechanisms that determine institutional performance. The number of board members and the proportion of selected or elected members on the board composition are also important in the internal shared governance mechanisms. Thus, in order to maintain the performance excellence, shared governance philosophy can be articulated in higher education institution within the relationships between the administration and the faculty in which the faculty participate in giving direction and advice to the university on important policy decisions (Lockwood & Davies, 1985; Xie, Wallace, Davidson, & DaDalt, 2003).

Quality Management in Private Higher Education

University administrators are responsible for maintaining academic and administrative excellence in an era of growing competition in the higher education arena. They must consider an efficient performance excellence system that reflects an opportunity to improve academic and administrative mechanism. The quality management tool should incorporate the perspectives of all institutional stakeholders in order to improve an appropriate method and to develop an administrative performance system in the universities.

Higher education institutions in Thailand are facing accountability pressures resulting from sustained dependency on governmental funding and affiliations with professional agencies. In 1999, the Office of Higher Education Commission in Ministry of Education stressed the need for increased accountability in higher education, and encouraged higher education administrators to consider a performance management strategy (Pitiyanuwat, 2002; Suttiprasit, 2002).

In manufacturing management, the issues of productivity, cost, and quality are critical. Productivity, the cost of operations, and the quality of the goods and services generate customer satisfaction and contribute to profitability (Blakeslee, 1999). Evans and Lindsay (2002) reported that excellent quality of goods and services can provide an organization with a competitive edge by reducing costs due to returns and by increasing productivity, profits, and other measures of success.

In higher education, administrators need to define and develop an integrated system that delivers on the set of quality indicators (Cullen, Joyce, Hassall, & Broadbent, 2003; Pitiyanuwat, 2002; Teay, 2006). In the performance excellence and quality philosophies, many frameworks in business practices can be utilized to investigate and implement such as total

quality management (TQM), Balanced Scorecard (BSC), Malcolm Baldrige criteria, or their Key Performance Indicators in Thailand's quality assurance system to ensure that organizations function more efficiently and effectively.

Total Quality Management

Total Quality Management (TQM) is a comprehensive principle of living and working in organizations that emphasizes the pursuit of continuous improvement. Lewis and Smith (1994) suggested TQM is the application of quality principles for "the integration of all functions and processes of the organization. The ultimate goal is customer satisfaction and the way to achieve it is through continuous improvement" (p. 230). Further, TQM is a philosophy of continuously improving performance at each level of operation and each functional area of an organization by using human and capital resources (Cullen et al., 2003; Spencer, 1994). The continuous quality improvement combines fundamental management techniques, existing and innovative improvement efforts and specialized technical skills in a structure focused on continuously improving all processes (Brocka & Brocka, 1992; Koch & Fisher, 1998).

Deming's theory is widely discussed as the foundation of a quality management paradigm (Hirtz et al., 2007; Koch & Fisher, 1998). Deming was an American economist and statistician, and is known as the quality expert in the U. S industry. His management philosophy influenced the Japanese economy after World War II (Cullen et al., 2003). Deming offered a new paradigm through his fourteen points for the practice of management. This paradigm framed a dramatic rethinking and replacement of traditional management techniques, and introduces the improvement of quality, productivity, and competitive position.

Deming's fourteen points are

1. Create consistency of purpose for improvement of product and service
2. Adopt the new philosophy

3. Reduce dependence on mass inspection
4. Avoid the temptation of awarding business on price tag
5. Improve constantly the system of production and service
6. Institutional training
7. Institutional leadership
8. Drive out fear
9. Break down barriers between staff areas
10. Eliminating slogans, exhortations and targets for the workforce
11. Eliminating numerical quota
12. Remove barriers to pride of workmanship
13. Institute a vigorous program of retraining and education
14. Take action to accomplish the transformation (Tuvin, 1995, p. 93)

In Deming's theory, university administrators can easily utilize each point to emphasize the importance of people in their institutions. Deming's 14 points most easily merge into the activities and values of educators, because the ideas and language were appropriate to almost any organization (Hirtz et al., 2007; Koch & Fisher, 1998; Tuvin, 1995). This theory can connect to the foundation of institutional quality management, improve the systems of educational product and service, and continuously develop productivity in all administrative activities.

Juran's theory is also known from the Japanese industry after World War II. He developed the quality trilogy, quality planning, quality control, and quality improvement (Edmund & Juran, 2008). Quality planning is the process for preparing to meet quality goals; quality control is the processes for meeting quality goals during operations; and quality improvement is the process for breaking through to unprecedented levels of performance (Deming, 1996; Edmund & Juran, 2008; Landesberg, 1999). According to this theory, university administrators should be involved in establishing the council of institutional quality, setting quality policies and goals, providing necessary resources and training, reviewing progress, and stimulating improvement.

Freed, Klugman, and Fife (1997) found that the quality principles are a management paradigm for enhancing higher education institutions more effectively. Freed et al. also provided indicators of excellence that senior university administrators can use to enrich the culture of an organization. The nine quality principles are: vision, mission, and outcomes driven; system dependent; leadership; systematic and individual development; employ decisions based on fact; delegate decision making; collaboration; plan for change; and supportive leadership. Quality principles are an important aspect of quality assurance because “the power of continuous quality improvement lies in its principles, which fundamentally are a conceptual shift in how an organization is managed to achieve its vision, mission, and outcomes” (Freed et al., p. 44).

The transfer of TQM philosophy to the higher education environment has been introduced because business paradigms can be beneficial in processing ideas and problem-solving (Dettman, 2004). An important fundamental concept from the theories of Deming and Juran supported that continuous improvement efforts can enhance improved products or service quality in a university system. However, TQM has not been applied widely in the higher education arena, because TQM forces internal stakeholders to depart from traditional practices (Sirvanci, 2004). Thus, university administrators may be reluctant to deviate from traditional practices because of their fear of failure. Manivannan and Premila (2009) stated that TQM is a higher education institution involved establishing shared vision, mission, goals and methods for focused improvement actions to understand expectations of students, faculty, staff, and community.

Therefore, Thailand’s higher education administrators may need to consider utilizing TQM paradigms that have proven to be effective in promoting strategies that strengthened

collaboration between faculty and administration, and built strategies that resolved a budgetary crisis (Pitiyanuwat, 2002). University administrators are responsible for creating an effective quality and initiating the performance excellence environment from mission statement to the implementation.

Dettman (2004) asserted the nine principles for effective quality. The effective quality

1. Is driven by vision, mission and outcome: All organizations, especially social organizations like education, exist for a purpose. Their vision, mission and outcomes are defined by the expectations of all the stakeholders. Without a clearly defined mission, an organization lacks a clear sense of direction and focus.
2. Is systems dependent: Institutional performance is defined as how well procedures and members interact as part of an interdependent system or process. Because changes in one part of an institution affect the other segments, most problems in an organization are the result of the work processes or systems, not the people. For example, a system problem is created when faculty are rewarded for presenting papers at conferences, but cannot do so because travel funds are limited.
3. Has leaders who create a quality culture: A different type of leadership is needed to create a quality culture. The leaders of an organization are responsible for systematically bringing the institution's culture into harmony through top-down leadership combined with bottom-up input regarding improvement processes. Leaders are responsible for helping members understand that new ways of thinking and behaving may be necessary to achieve the declared vision, mission and outcomes.
4. Exhibits systematic individual development: Because an organization is constantly changing, it is necessary to continually update all its members' knowledge and skills to meet the demands of existing changes and to systematically prepare for future changes. Organizational leaders who do not provide training opportunities to their employees may end up with a poorly performing workforce. A lack of training should be perceived as a problem with the system.
5. Makes decisions based on fact: The basic cause of a problem cannot be clearly understood unless all relevant data are systematically gathered. Three types of data are required before a problem can be understood rationally: (a) data measuring the desired outcomes, (b) data measuring the process, and (c) data

intended to develop a contextual understanding. Available data is meaningless unless it is put into some context and has a proven relationship (provides meaning).

6. Delegates decision-making: If individuals are to be held responsible for achieving a stated mission, they must be made aware of how their position and actions relate to the mission, as well as be given the flexibility to make necessary changes to their job tasks. The more individuals sense they can influence a process the more they take ownership.
7. Collaborates: Collaboration and teamwork produce results when individuals who have a stake in the outcome are involved in the decision-making process. Teams divide labor, based on individual strengths, to achieve a common goal. Collaboration results when employees who have a vested interest in an objective work together to achieve mutually satisfying results.
8. Plans for change: A fundamental assumption of the quality principle is that an institution's mission is based on stakeholders' expectations. Because it is assumed that these expectations change constantly, it is therefore reasonable to assume that an organization's mission also constantly changes. Institutions need to embrace change as a cultural value; they need to perceive change as a potentially positive force and anticipate it. Planning for change is a fundamental component of continuous improvement.
9. Has leaders who support a quality culture: Senior management need to support the implementation of the quality principles by ensuring that the necessary systems and resources are available, which will create and nourish a culture of change. Moreover, senior leaders must constantly support those who are making the changes. They must be ready to reinforce, through rewards based on quality principles, the changes necessary to make the voluntary adoption of quality principles both a personal philosophy and an integral part of the organizational values. These quality principles are interrelated. New systems and processes have the potential to improve quality; better quality is likely to increase pride and confidence, resulting in enhanced attitudes and behaviors. Thus, behavioral changes can positively influence an institutional culture that embraces change as a tool to increase quality. (p. 72)

The Balanced Scorecard

The balanced scorecard (BSC) was originally from a research project of Kaplan and Norton (Kaplan & Norton, 1996). Kaplan and Norton introduced this managerial tool for estimating an organizational financial performance. The BSC has been successfully utilized in

all types of organizations including both large and small manufacturing and service, public and private, and profit and non-profit organizations (Beard, 2009; Kettunen, 2005; Rompho, 2005).

The BSC was designed as “a management system that can motivate breakthrough improvements in such crucial areas as product, process, customer, and marketing development” (Kaplan & Norton, p. 134). Heinz (2005) contended that the institutions that applied this paradigm to align their business and service units, teams and individuals around strategic goals were more effective at implementing their new strategies and achieved positive outcomes within one to two years.

The Balanced Scorecard is developed as the focal point for all key management processes. It covers the business and management paradigm from planning and budgeting to reporting and resource allocation (Rompho, 2005). The BSC concept is developed to measure in the customer perspective, the financial perspective, the internal business perspective, and the innovation and learning perspective (Kaplan & Norton, 1996). Further, the Balanced Scorecard has been developed for management as a tool that allows intangible mission and visions statements to be articulated and measured through tangible objectives and measures. Kaplan and Norton introduced:

The Balanced Scorecard should translate a business unit’s mission and strategy into tangible objectives and measures... The measures are balanced between the outcome measures- the results from past efforts- and the measures that drive future performance. And the scorecard is balanced between objective, easily quantifiable outcome measures, and subjective, somewhat judgmental, performance drivers of the outcomes measures. (p. 10)

The indicators in Balanced Scorecard must be originated from the organizational strategy, and provide critical data and information regarding key processes, outputs, and results. (Rompho, 2005) The indicators are measurable characteristics of products, services, processes, and operations that the organization applies to track and improve performance (Beard, 2009).

The BSC indicators are relied on its concept, which is the perspective of finance, internal business, customer, and learning and innovation (Kaplan & Norton, 1996). All perspectives should have a strong cause and effect relationship that successfully defines the organizational strategy.

First, from the financial perspective, administrators can consider the economic and financial indicator of past performance to develop strategies for the future. Second, learning and innovation is basic for employee skills development and information systems. Likewise, Kaplan and Norton (1996) suggested that learning and innovation are essential or perhaps more essential for strategic success than other perspectives, because this perspective involves the ability to launch new products and services, promote organizational knowledge management, and improve operating efficiency. Third, from the customer perspective, the balanced scorecard in higher education has required university administrators to translate their general mission statement on customer or student services in order to consider factors related to customers. Administrators tend to articulate into four categories: time, quality, performance and service, and cost. Fourth, the internal process includes indicators that check the progress of processes that are important to complete strategic goals. The BSC's internal process is combined into the customer and financial perspectives by delivering propositions that are important to its objective and by meeting shareholder expectations on financial returns (Evans, 2005; Kaplan & Norton, 1996).

In addition, university administrators can attempt to identify and measure their institution's core competencies, and have clear targets for actions, decision, and internal improvement activities in each mission (Rompho, 2005). Balanced scorecard in higher education creates a framework that provides tactical feedback and control of current operations,

and also helps institutional administrators to communicate the strategy to the faculty member and staff (Beard, 2009; Chen, Yang, & Shiau, 2006). Likewise, institutional communication and learning are key factors in realizing this collaborative initiative. This approach can help university administrators to communicate how the organization operates, how it can achieve the objectives and who is responsible for the achievement of the targets in the planning period (Kettunen, 2005).

In Thailand's higher education system, the balanced scorecard methodology is not widely applied in the university setting (Rompho, 2005). This concept can be applied as a systematic attempt to consider and utilize institutional educational resources more efficiently (Chen, Yang, & Shiau, 2006). It can avoid overlapping operations, improve the strengths of institutions and allocate resources to regional development that Thailand's universities are currently facing (Suttiprasit, 2002). Furthermore, Rompho introduced the inflexible and inefficient balanced scorecard implementation in the public universities in Thailand because most administrative techniques used in public universities are based on the government budgeting system. However, "a de-bureaucratization process is underway for Thailand's public universities, and it is worth for private universities to investigate the benefits the Balanced Scorecard as a management tool could achieve should it be applied" (Rompho, p. 76).

Thammasat University, one of the Thailand's largest public universities is chosen as a case study in Rompho's research. This institution was also searching for a new performance measurement system, implementing the Balanced Scorecard (Rompho, 2005). The research aims to discover the balanced scorecard in foreign universities and the perception of Thammasat University's stakeholders. The research found that several universities were

applying the balanced scorecard only in the revenue-generating units rather than to academic units. Rompho (2005) reported:

When applying the Balanced Scorecard at universities, a strategy map of the entire university is rarely defined. Most universities that apply the Balanced Scorecard for the university as a whole categorize the performance measures into the four prescribed perspectives, but fail to provide a causal linkage to strategic objectives of those measures. There was also no evidence that a university's stakeholders are involved in the process of building the Balanced Scorecard. (p. 77)

Therefore, the balanced scorecard model is a performance management system and a strategic management tool for higher education administration. The model must be supported by senior university administrators, and the outcome of implementation is promising and successful. By emphasizing missions and visions, universities can learn from business and focus more attention on educational costs and benefits in implementing performance management (Chen, Yang, & Shiau, 2006). The implementation of a strategy requires active contributions by everyone in the university. Each member of the university needs to understand this strategy and, beyond that, to conduct day-to-day business in ways that contribute to the success of the strategy (Cullen et al., 2003). It can increase educational quality improvement and create critical success factors highlighted for higher education institutions in Thailand.

The Malcolm Baldrige Quality Framework

The framework of Malcolm Baldrige was introduced in 1987 when the United States Congress created the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA) to provide an interdisciplinary standard of quality management for business (Malcolm Baldrige National Quality, 2009). The purposes of this Act stimulated the United States businesses to create the environment of performance excellence, profitability and efficiency. The effectiveness of the Baldrige Criteria is described as a tool for higher education institutional self-assessment and for improving institutional performance practices and capabilities (Evans, 2010). The higher

education institutional administrative effectiveness can be identified with the Baldrige education criteria for performance excellence as a strategic tool for university administrative improvement (MBNQA, 2009). Evan explained that the Baldrige framework captured the attention of educators in the early 1990s as a possible paradigm for improvement in higher education. This framework has been introduced to promote awareness of quality as an increasingly important element of higher education's competitiveness, and it has shared information on successful institutional quality strategies and the benefits derived from implementation of these strategies (Getkin, 2009; Kachakoch, 2008).

Some institutions utilizing a Baldrige framework as part of their quality management approach have won the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award in Education. They are, for example, the Montfort College of Business at the University of Northern Colorado, the University of Wisconsin-Stout, and Richland College. These institutions utilized the Baldrige education criteria process as a framework in continuous quality improvement and improvement in student success (Beard, 2009; MBNQA, 2009). The growing interest in the Baldrige framework resulted in the formal release of Baldrige education criteria in 1998, and revisions were incorporated into the release of each subsequent annual edition of the criteria.

The Malcolm Baldrige Education Criteria for Performance Excellence are the basis for institutional self-assessments, for making awards, and for giving feedback to applicants (MBNQA, 2009). Likewise, the Education Criteria have additional important purposes to help improve organizational performance practices and capabilities; to facilitate communication and sharing of best practices information among education organizations and among organizations of all types; to foster the development of partnerships involving schools, businesses, human service agencies, and other organizations by related Criteria; and to serve as a working tool for

understanding and improving organizational performance, and management systems (MBNQA).

However, Baldrige framework is not an accreditation system, however, the Baldrige principle is focused on continuous improvement and improved excellence (Beard, 2009; Getkin, 2009; MBNQA, 2009; Ruben, 2007). University administrators articulate the Baldrige model as a self-assessment of their organizational effectiveness. Pitiyanuwat (2002) and Suttiprasit (1998) contended that a national higher education accreditation system in Thailand has applied part of the Baldrige paradigm as a basis for its accreditation system because the Baldrige framework has the power to help Thailand's universities integrate programs and innovate for the benefit of students, faculty, and their administrative performance. Ruben also stated that the Baldrige principle in education can improve the admissions process, institutional cost controlling, awarding of scholarships, academic and student services, and quality services on operations. For example, the Kenneth W. Monfort College of Business at the University of Northern Colorado has applied this framework and successfully built a high-quality student population, maintained high-quality faculty, maintained adequate financial resources, and developed a market reputation consistent with program excellence (Beard, 2009).

The Malcolm Baldrige education criteria can provide the accountability measures being demanded of higher education (Beard, 2009; Seymour, 1996). This criteria's focus is performance excellence and the assessment, results, and improvement cycle suggested by the demands of accountability in educational organization. Kachakoch (2008) and Pitiyanuwat (2002) concluded that the Baldrige framework has influenced Thailand's universities and the national education agencies, such as the Office of National Education Standard and Quality

Assessment (ONESQA), and the Commission on Higher Education (CHE), to produce similar educational quality assessment criteria.

The Baldrige education criteria are grounded on a set of organizational core values and concepts that have been found to be integral beliefs and behaviors in high-performing organizations, and produced methods used to improve institutional management systems (Getkin, 2009; Ruben, 2007). Likewise, the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Program (2009-2010) identifies seven core values and concepts that comprise the philosophical foundations of performance excellence in education including: visionary leadership included an enhanced focus on sustainability and societal responsibilities and the senior administrators' role; strategic planning introduced core competencies as a strategic concept; customer focus promoted customer engagement and the voice of the customer; measurement, analysis, and knowledge management emphasized both the importance of information and knowledge management and the management of information technology and systems; workforce focus understood important aspects of workforce engagement; process management reorganized for a more logical flow of the questions; results aligned with the changes in six categories to encourage the measurement of important and appropriate results (MBNQA, 2009).

The Baldrige Education Criteria is created upon core values and concepts that are the drivers for high performance organizations:

1. Visionary Leadership: Leaders are required to create and sustain a learning-centered, student-focused climate that seeks and achieves excellence in performance and motivates faculty and staff toward innovation and creativity.
2. Learning-Centered Education: Focuses on the real needs of the learner, requirements of the market, and responsibilities of citizenship.
3. Organizational and Personal Learning: Infuses learning in all aspects of the organization, practiced regularly by the organization as well as individuals, and leads to knowledge sharing, process improvement, and problem-solving.

4. Valuing Faculty, Staff, and Partners: Requires a commitment to satisfaction, improvement of skills, and development of the creative energy in the climate for learning and work.
5. Agility: Seeks responses to students and university stakeholders that are fast and flexible.
6. Focus on the Future: Requires a long-term commitment to students and stakeholders that anticipate change and respond with appropriate strategic planning.
7. Managing for Innovation: Provides direction for organizations that are structured to promote innovation and creativity.
8. Management by Fact: Uses measurement and analysis in the direction-making process improvement, and strategic planning.
9. Public Responsibility and Citizenship: Serves as a role model for equal opportunity, ethical practice, and protection of the public health and safety.
10. Focus on Results and Creating Values: Balances the key performance measures based on desired results of students and stakeholders and focuses on monitoring actual results and performance improvement.
11. System Perspective: Requires synthesis and alignment by focusing efforts on satisfying the needs of students and stakeholders and connecting key processes and resources toward that goal. (MBNQA, 2009, p. 51).

In Thailand, the Baldrige education criteria are incorporated within the ONESQA standards and external key performance indicators (Pitiyanuwat, 2002; Suttiprasit, 2001) and the nine internal indicator guidelines of the Commission on Higher Education (CHE). The indicators from ONESQA and CHE were designed to be adaptable to the needs of a broad range of Thailand institutions. The Baldrige framework is appropriate for academic and administrative departments, which is a benefit to students and is applicable for considering the effectiveness of the institutional administration.

Previous Studies in Quality Management in Higher Education

Winn and Cameron's study (1998) indicated that higher education TQM pioneers applied quality management concepts within their institutional administration. Winn and Cameron pointed out that Oregon State University utilized TQM to improve their administrative process in budget preparation and grant documents in 1990. Further, the University of North Dakota utilized the application of the Deming cycle in the chancellor's office, because of the

inefficient manner of institutional administration. After applying TQM, the university saved \$70,000 over three years.

Koch and Fisher (1998) explained that TQM has little to contribute to the fundamental questions surrounding universities; allocation of faculty time, teaching verses research, faculty status and tenure, student access, distance learning, use of technology, governance and leadership arrangements, and faculty compensation. Koch and Fisher further emphasized that “TQM can do little to improve an administrator who lacks values, purpose and a compelling vision, what is needed is inspirational, value-driven leadership” (p. 667).

The studies of Ruben (2007) and Tang and Zairi (1998) also agreed that the important achievement in a university is from the contribution of the senior level administrators to develop an overall institutional policy, and quality management could help administrators to articulate vision, mission, and action. Quality management perspective can be used by administrators as a guide for conceptualizing and identifying specific issues for organizational excellence at the departmental or institutional level.

Chen, Yang, and Shiau (2006) conducted a study about balanced scorecard as a quality management in performance evaluation, quality indicators, and strategic management tools. This study utilized a case study methodology in Taiwanese higher education institutions. The research findings pointed out that quality management must be supported and visualized by senior university administrators, and they are required to emphasize missions and visions, and also pay more attention to educational costs and benefits in implementing performance management.

In Ahmad, Francis, and Zairi’s research (2007), they conducted empirical case studies collected from three private universities in Malaysia that have preceded the business process

reengineering successfully. The study suggests quality management systems are one of the processes in reengineering implementation. The process of reengineering implementation consists of teamwork and quality culture, effective change management, less bureaucracy and participation, information technology/information systems, effective project management, adequate financial resources, and quality management systems. The finding emphasized that quality management is an essential mechanism in higher education. The performance improvement system of the University of Wisconsin at Stout was introduced as a successful institution that generates a continuous improvement environment by performance measurement and benchmarking.

Liston (1999) provided foundational framework for a quality management system in higher education to foster improvement. The findings concluded senior administrators are responsible for supervising the advancement of quality through monitoring and reviews to collaboratively identify best practices using key performance indicators (KPIs). University administrators, faculty members, and staff must consider that quality philosophy and continuous improvement are necessary for all elements of the institution. University administrators are required to understand quality management principles as operational and strategic plans, and also to provide adequate resources to support quality management processes.

Srikanthan and Dalrymple (2004) introduced a model for quality management in education. This particular model is developed from managerial and educational literatures. Srikanthan and Dalrymple emphasized that senior administrators have to understand the models of the transformation, the engagement, and institutional learning. Similarly, Becket and Brookes (2006) further stated that this model requires senior administrators' commitment, the continuous improvement culture, and teamwork from administrators, faculty, and staff. Becket

and Brookes supported that higher education administrators need to generate and collaborate on the environment of learning culture for continuous improvement in quality.

Sirvanci (2004) stated that higher education has applied quality management ideas and methods from business to improve the output of their students. The study of Sirvanci introduced the benefit of applying quality management in higher education. The research findings reported that quality management in a higher education can improve academic and administrative processes performance, and to control the effectiveness of the teaching process.

India's higher education has also concentrated on the implementation of quality management in university systems. The study of Sahney, Banwet, and Karunes (2008) was conducted empirically across engineering and management institutions in India. The findings indicate quality in higher education is vital and it has been realized that educational institutions need to focus on customer centric philosophies. This study used the interpretive structural modeling technique to identify the driver, facilitator, and dependent variables, and further found that quality management in higher education involves stakeholder accountability, customer satisfaction, and issues of assessment, accreditation, ratings and ranking.

Khampirat (2009) conducted research about the application of Baldrige Education Criteria on the assessment of an Autonomous University in Thailand. The participants were from the university autonomy. The university autonomous system is in a beginning stage, and its topic is widely discussed in Thailand's higher education. The institutional administrators aimed to utilize the Baldrige criteria to provide a comprehensive framework as a tool for self-assessment, and to help an institution develop a communication and philosophy about quality.

The research methodology was a quantitative paradigm. 190 samples were in public autonomous higher education institutions in Thailand. The researcher applied the seven

dimensions of the Baldrige Education standard as guidelines to create the research instrument. After using the structural equation model to find the dependent relationship among the Baldrige standards, the researcher found that leadership, as the first dimension of Baldrige standard, is the most important enabler for achieving higher educational performance excellence. Further, the researcher also ranked the seven enablers of quality and performance excellence in Thailand's higher education: strategic planning; faculty and staff focus; student stakeholder and market focus; process management; and measurement, analysis and knowledge management.

Wilson and Collier (2000 cited in Khampirat, 2009) conducted the research utilizing a survey instrument. They found that leadership position is an influenced driver of overall system performance. In addition, Baldri et al. (2006) using 220 respondents from 15 institutions of higher education in the United Arab Emirates also agreed that leadership significantly has a direct positive causal influence on process management, faculty and staff focus, strategic planning and measurement, analysis, and knowledge management.

Mizikaci (2006) provided that higher education administrators can merge the quality management system and the systems thinking in order to acknowledge the way that their administrative actions or initiatives affect the university stakeholders. Mizikaci elaborated that the system thinking philosophy can help university administrators to understand quality assurance and quality enhancement in order to create the institutional strategic plans. The findings of this study reported that systems thinking of higher education administrators influenced the mission in continuous quality improvement to educational and administrative perspective. Systems thinking process can establish the state of processes' performance, and also holistically provide an indicator to achieve administrative excellence for long-term success.

Thus, university administrators need to consider system thinking to understand the changes and depth of change requirements for institutional performance excellence.

From the previous studies in the quality management and performance excellence, university senior administrators must possess performance excellence concepts to understand how they can engage all university stakeholders in achieving the performed institutions, and understanding the impact of the approaching change.

Quality Assurance Principle in Thailand's Higher Education

The issue of quality assurance in higher education has been a continuing concern (Grady-Bogue & Bingham-Hall, 2003; Kaewdang, 2001; Suttiprasit, 2002). Academic institutions are currently experiencing challenges such as increased competition, globalization, emerging technology, resource constraints, and the consequences of unethical behavior (Teay, 2006; Yorke, 1999). As universities progress in an era driven by accountability environment, it is essential that they provide evidence of high quality programs and services to internal and external stakeholders (Pitiyanuwat, 2002). Therefore, higher education institutions throughout the world are articulating increased attention to designing and implementing new quality assurance systems in order to ensure that students receive high quality and relevant education and that their degrees and academic excellence are widely recognized.

In perspective of administration and management, university administrators articulate the possibility of understanding and utilizing business practices that could improve the organizational performance of institutions (Suttiprasit, 1998). They are more often recognizing the importance of being customer focused by identifying performance evaluation and continuous improvement (Grady-Bogue & Bingham-Hall, 2003). Similarly, Freed et al. (1997) defined the quality principles as “a management approach for making higher education more

effective, in addition to creating an improved place to obtain a degree and a more enjoyable workplace (p. 2). Grady-Bogue and Bingham-Hall also emphasized the need for quality in higher education. Their definition of quality as it relates to education is “conformance to mission specification and goal achievement--within publicly accepted standards of accountability and integrity” (p. 14).

The quality assurance indicators are designed for the ability of the quality concept in each institution to facilitate the perspectives of a range of stakeholders who have differing conceptions (Cullen, Joyce, Hassall, & Broadbent, 2003). University managers have to scrutinize the philosophy of their institutions, the definition of quality being used, and the performance indicators chosen to measure their internal and external quality (Pitiyanuwat, 2002). Therefore, quality assurance is a challenge to produce a performance evaluation framework, and to ensure that the program in academic and administrative services satisfies relevant quality standards.

In practice, the processes of establishment, documentation, implementation, maintenance, and continual quality improvement will be considered by university administrators in regard to two quality management aspects in how to deliver a quality program that meets the stakeholders’ satisfaction, and realizes how to provide quality academic units (Yorke, 1999). Further, the fundamental concepts of quality in higher education are vision, mission, and outcome; systems dependence; transformational leadership; systematic individual development; decision based on facts; delegated decision making; collaboration; plan for change; and supportive university administrators (Freed et al. , 1997). The vision, mission, and outcomes quality principle is the roadmap to quality assurance success. University

administrators who are concerned about developing a quality-driven organization must implement a strategic plan that is inclusive of core quality principles.

Thailand's Quality Assurance Framework

In Thailand's higher education system, the Ministry of University Affairs, currently named the Office of Higher Education Commission in Ministry of Education, affirmed the policy to encourage the idea of quality assurance (Commission on Higher Education, 2003; Suttiprasit, 2001). Quality assurance in Thailand was first introduced in 1996 to supervise 23 public and 53 private higher education institutions (Bureau of Higher Education Standards, 1999). The universities were required to establish quality assurance systems as a driver towards maintaining high standards in quality teaching. Further, Kaewdang (2001) and Pitiyanuwat (2002) contended that the quality assurance principle was extended to serve as a methodology for continuous improvement in all aspects of institutional academic and administrative activities.

The grounded philosophy of quality assurance in Thailand was for the Ministry of University Affairs' inspection procedure in curriculum, managerial, and administrative areas in both public and private institutions of higher education (Suttiprasit, 2001). The quality assurance consideration also increased because of a lack in the public trust of the higher education system (Laksana, 1998). Thai people do not trust the system to produce graduates, shrink inequality of the educational service and quality of graduates, and decrease the competitiveness in higher education. Thus, the improvement of the quality assurance system was the important transition in the changing of the National Education Act in 1999 (Teay, 2006).

From the National Education Act in 1999, all institutions of higher education have been required to improve their own quality assurance systems (Teay, 2006). The continuation and strengthening of the institutional quality assurance requirements of the Office of Higher Education Commission is a well-conceived and sensible strategy (Suttiprasit, 2002). The quality in institutional management practices require that all Thailand institutions should have appropriate quality assurance and improvement plans.

The National Education Act in 1999 has required higher education institutions to implement the internal quality assurance (IQA) and external quality assurance (EQA) (Bureau of Higher Education Standards, 2002). For internal quality assurance, institutional indicators are the standard criteria to ensure minimum standards of degree programs at all levels, and also for institutional administrative quality control, audit and assessment. Universities are responsible for supervising the continuing management system and strictly conducting and monitoring their institutional administrative performance. For external quality assurance, the Office of the National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA) is responsible for the external assessment of institutions at all levels, and the quality of each university is externally evaluated once each five year period.

The Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (Public Organization) is a government organization that supervises an educational quality evaluation. ONESQA has the objectives of enhancing the quality of the education provision system in Thailand, enabling the educational institutions to provide quality education to learners, who will be endowed with virtue, competence and happiness (Office of the National Education Standards and Quality Assessment, 2006). This organization is founded with the aims of developing the criteria and methods for external quality assessment by assessing educational achievements in

order to estimate the quality of educational institutions. The major responsibility of ONESQA is to develop the external assessment system by setting of the framework, direction, and methods for efficient external assessment. ONESQA (2006) also has to develop standards and criteria for external quality assessment in all educational levels from elementary to higher education.

ONESQA plays a prominent role in designing the models and methods for external quality assessment of educational institutions. It serves as an essential instrument for improving quality of educational institutions to reach the standard desired, which is well recognized by the international community. (www.onesqa.or.th)

Internal quality assurance. The internal quality assurance framework is set by the approval of the Commission on Higher Education (Commission on Higher Education, 2003). All academic programs offered in public and private colleges and universities are required to meet these standard criteria before approval and commencement. Each institutional board of trustees and administrators has the responsibilities for the quality of management and educational provision including supervising of academic standards to be assured of quality control and consumer protection systems (Suttiprasit, 2002). Suttiprasit further stated that the key performance indicators for internal quality assurance are based on the quality control, audit, and assessment.

The key performance indicators in the internal quality assurance framework consists of nine aspects of quality factors; philosophies, commitment and objectives; teaching and learning; student development activities; research; academic services; preservation of art and culture; administration and management; finance and budgeting; internal quality assurance system and mechanisms (Commission on Higher Education, 2003).

External quality assurance. External quality assurance in higher education institutions “is the processes of assessment and monitoring of quality and standards of the

education from outside, which are carried out by the ONESQA or by persons of external agencies certified by the Office” (Suttiprasit, 2002, p. 13). ONESQA is responsible for external assessment of all educational institutions including elementary and high school. At the higher education level, ONESQA requires each university to reach eight standards for higher education’s institutional performance in the standards for graduates quality; learning process; learning facilities; management resources; research, service, and innovation; academic services to community; preservation of art and culture; internal quality assurance system (ONESQA, 2006).

The review cycle of ONESQA is indicated to be five years with a focus on institutional assessment to ensure that each university is developed to the standards of academic and administrative levels (Teay, 2006). The institutional administrative philosophies are operated under the objectives, principles and directions of their institutional policies and the National Education Act with the integrity of transparency and accountability.

In essence, the external and internal quality assurance indicators are important for university administrators to monitor performance and to ensure continued administrative improvement. On the management aspect, university executives can understand the criteria that need continuous attention and improvement. The quality assurance principles are the indicators of performance, presenting what needs to be improved on the next audit and assessment cycle.

Therefore, alignment of Malcolm Baldrige Education Criteria, Quality Assurance System, Total Quality Management, and Balanced Scorecard can be enhanced by higher education administrators to create a culture of excellence in their institutions. University administrators can eliminate inefficient processes and move toward perfection using these quality management models. Effective alignment of the university administration through use

of these models can formalize leadership commitment, ensure appropriate resource availability and allocation, and operate a university organization effectively and transparently. In essence, the quality management models have implemented the principles of a balanced approach among the ideals of the academic service and administrative excellence in higher education.

Developing Higher Education Strategic Plan

Private higher education institutions in Thailand are being forced to rapidly change to respond to an increasing number of pressures both inside and outside the institutions. Inside pressures are from the students, faculty members, university administrators, institutional board, and organizational structures. Outside changes are from the economic crisis and the rapid change of technological innovation (Praprangpatanpon, 2006). Moreover, outside changes include the substantial assessment that demonstrates the improvement of learning and teaching in a university. The decline of physical resources with little ability to renovate or prepare for increased student enrollment is also part of the current external changes for higher education institutions.

In higher education institutions, Rowley and Sherman (2002) explained strategic planning as a formal method designed to assist a university identifies and maintain an optimal alignment with the most important elements within the university current circumstance. Rowley further asserted that higher education institutions use strategic planning to make effective decisions and implement advantageous strategic changes.

Thus, Thailand's private university could utilize the strategic planning to improve their educational product as well as their administrative management, which includes hiring better faculty, recruiting stronger students, upgrading facilities, and strengthening academic programs and student services (Suttiprasit, 2001; Suttiprasit, 2002). The institutional supervision may

address the strategic planning process created by fundamental shifts in the institutional demographic and economic forces. Higher education institutions and systems may need to be substantially restricted to effectively serve the future needs and expectations of societies and stakeholders.

The strategic planning process in Thailand's higher education institutions comprised the vision of the institution, the translation of the vision into actual proposals, defining the mission for the business, formulation of functional strategy, and consolidation of business and functional strategies (Prapangpatanpon, 2006). The institutional vision, mission, and outcomes quality principle is the roadmap to quality assurance success. Higher education administrators who are responsible for developing a quality-driven institution must implement a strategic plan that is inclusive of core performance excellence principles.

Institutional administrators in this era are challenged to analyze complex issues and deliver justifications for decisions that affect stakeholders, academic programs, university budgets, and institutional reputations (Kettunen, 2005). They must apply strategic management and effective quality tools to inform their decision making regarding the performance excellence. Sriyanalugsana (2008) stated that university senior-level administrators must work collaboratively to develop a strategic plan for the entire institution that was based upon the corporation model of quality management for performance excellence. University administrators implemented an assessment component designed to identify strengths and weaknesses of the university. The assessment system allowed stakeholders to make continuous changes that had a tremendous impact on the institutional management (Prapangpatanpon, 2006).

Therefore, the definition of strategic planning at each university can be defined differently. Sriyanalugsana (2008) asserted that the issues of strategic planning, politics, leadership, and learning capability are the most recent definition of strategic planning in Thailand's higher education society because these issues emphasize a vision and mission that allies institutions. Sriyanalugsana further stated that strategic planning could provide a conceptual view of what particular activities an organization should undertake to align its mission, vision, and values with its environment.

Conclusion

In an era of constrained resources, higher education institutions in Thailand are in a situation of realizing the needs for pursuit of performance excellence. Quality consideration and maintenance in institutions is a policy and measurement issue which is key to revitalizing and fostering excellence in their academic enterprise. The issue of quality for performance excellence will become a matter of necessity that every university develops a more sophisticated understanding of what constitutes excellence and how excellence can be measured.

Chapter three includes information about the methodology for the present study including epistemology, methods, research participants, procedure and data collection, and method of data analysis.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

In order to discover the meaning of private higher education institutions in Bangkok, Thailand, I used qualitative research methods for this study. A constructivist approach was epistemologically grounded and formed as the research paradigm of this study. Further, a case study methodology focuses on the administrative practice of four private universities in Bangkok, Thailand. These universities were Eastern University (EU), Central Bangkok University (CBU), Northern University (NU), and Commerce University (CU). Eight senior administrators and two administrators from each institution provided their administrative experiences. These universities and administrators were chosen because they could provide various experiences in the process of administrative practices, and their institutional administrative systems are similarly followed by a business organization philosophy. The main research question focused on: What are the experiences of senior administrators in creating performance excellence in Thailand's private universities?

The sub-research questions of this study were:

- Q1. How do senior administrators create a leadership vision for performance excellence?
- Q2. How do senior administrators conduct strategic planning as a process in achieving performance excellence?
- Q3. How do senior administrators link the indicators of ONESQA (the Office of National Educational Standards and Quality Assessment) to their performance excellence strategic planning?

I utilized a case study methodology approach to understand the insights and perspectives of those in administrative affairs in EU, CBU, CU, and EU, regarding patterns of management, administrative strategies, quality management supervision, and performance evaluation approaches. Therefore, in order to establish appropriate methodological procedures, I will explain the theoretical framework, the foundations of qualitative research, constructivist epistemology, and the case study methodology. The case study procedures for data collection in the conducting of qualitative semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and document analysis will be discussed.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was the systems thinking paradigm. Systems thinking is a foundational concept meant to help understand the ability of university senior administrators toward their overall administrative processes in an institution (Galbraith, 1999; Senge & Fulmer, 1993). An internal environment of higher education institutions is interrelated, and administrators have to understand the relationships between administrative aspects and institutional quality management. Further, the Baldrige education criteria also have system thinking as its core value for performance excellence institutions. Baldrige implies university administrators should articulate systems thinking and promote that focus throughout the institution at all levels, and also have an ability to achieve institutional goals and sustain continuous quality improvement performance.

Systems thinking is arguably a necessity in helping higher education institutions to move to the level of becoming an institution of quality. It is beneficial to view the change and effectiveness movement of institutional quality management from within the framework of a systems thinking approach of university administrators. Ison (1999) stated the continuous

improvement and institutional quality management are accomplished through the development of the systems thinking paradigm in higher education institutions, and systems thinking can be applied to the course design, and the effective change in organizations in holistic higher education. The systems thinking paradigm is ability for creating, acquiring, and transferring knowledge, and at modifying administrators' behaviors to reflect new knowledge and insights of institutional performance excellence (Galbraith, 1999).

I utilized Senge's theory in systems thinking from the five disciplines: systems thinking, personal mastery, team learning, shared vision, and mental models. Further, Senge provided the systems thinking aspects to define how organizations acquire knowledge, make decisions, learn, and succeed in order to create an environment of continual product and service improvement (Senge & Fulmer, 1993).

Senge's theory can provide an institutional continuous improvement, the quality framework that composes the extent of shared vision, institutional learning, personal mastery, and use of mental models in a university (Lloyd & Louis Flood, 2000); Senge & Fulmer, 1993). System thinking involves developing an extensive understanding of institutional quality systems, and also comprises elements and processes that cross traditional boundaries of the thinking systems of university administrators.

Thus, in this study, I applied and integrated the Senge theory of systems thinking into a single theoretical model of finding the meaning of quality management from the perspectives of private university administrators. Systems thinking can help university administrators in reviewing all key processes and engaging the university's goals, establish priorities, allocate resources, and especially identify key performance indicators and driving improvements.

Therefore, administrators can understand how to embrace systems thinking and promote that focus throughout the institution at all academic and non-academic sections.

Foundation for Qualitative Research

This study attempted to make meaning of research participants' experiences of the accomplishments and contributions of the institutional administrative affairs divisions of private university administrators in Bangkok, Thailand. I was faced with a choice between quantitative or qualitative approaches, which demonstrate different answers to the research questions. A quantitative methodology statistically provided variables that are correlated or comparatively related. However, as the researcher I believed that the qualitative research paradigm becomes an effective instrument for understanding how different stakeholders view the contributions of the institutional administrative affairs in private higher education institutions in Thailand. While quantitative design measured the performance and the factors related to the administrators' performance or ability to manage their organizations, I believed that the explanation of those numbers is best understood by conducting a qualitative study.

Glesne (1998) stated that "the research methods you choose say something about your views on what qualifies as valuable knowledge and your perspective on the nature of reality or ontology" (p. 4). Utilizing qualitative methods provided the researcher with multiple perspectives in analyzing the research questions. Consequently, qualitative approaches enhanced improved understanding of the different perspectives provided by university administrators, presidents, and boards of trustees regarding their general administration, strategic implementation, and helpfulness of the institutional supervision.

Likewise, using a qualitative research paradigm was beneficial for the research outcome. This study was based on the fact that when conducting research in diverse

environments of private universities, one needs to be immersed in the culture of the people and allow participants to speak for themselves without manipulating the data (Creswell, 2003). Creswell also stated that qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. To study this problem, qualitative researchers used an “emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is inductive and establishes patterns or themes” (Creswell, 2007, p. 37).

Patton (2002) noted the construction of knowledge using “qualitative inquiry means going to the field into the real world of programs, organizations, neighborhoods, street corners and getting close enough to people and circumstances there to capture what is happening” (p. 48). Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) further suggested that the outcome of qualitative research can “discover meaning and interpretations by studying cases intensively in natural settings and by subjecting the resulting data to analytic introduction” (p. 767). Additionally, what made qualitative methodology persuasive for this study is its degree of permissibility in the cultural context of Thai tradition and the insightful and productive information, which can be constructed by listening to the views and ideas of people who are in private higher education.

Constructivist Epistemology

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) provided constructivism is a subjective and dialectic methodology. A reality is constructed in the individual’s mind, and that it is multiple and holistic (Fox, 2001; Ponterotto, 2005). In the constructivist epistemology, the researcher is concerned with understanding how interactions among individuals create meanings of knowledge within their own historical and cultural context (Rossman & Rallis, 1998).

Therefore, understanding a phenomena and learning, occurs when individuals are involved in social activities within their communities.

Creswell (2003) suggested the constructivist paradigm is the understanding of reality, and knowledge is based on an ability to socially construct experiences and make meaning of them. Using a constructivist paradigm in qualitative research is an attempt to offer participants the opportunity to construct their views and perceptions about the way they observe and understand a phenomenon. Understanding institutional administrative affairs in higher education in Thailand, by using a constructivist epistemology, enabled me to demonstrate different experiences and perceptions of the institutional management in Thailand. I was better able to understand the experiences of the administrators and provide recommendations for future university supervision and management.

Case Study Methodology

This study utilized the case study approach as a research methodology. Many scholars have differing opinions as to the definition of case study methodology. For example, a case study methodology is defined as “an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit” (Merriam, 1998, p. 21). Merriam explained “a case study is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved” (p. 19). Yin (1994) argued that a case study methodology is “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 13). Patton (2002) indicated that while some case studies are quantitative in nature, most are qualitative to tap the fuller range of individuals’ experiences about the process in question. It can convey

understanding of a procedure or incident as perceived by the university administrators in that incident.

This study employed a case study design focusing on four private universities, with varying higher education demographics. The data collection process was extensive, drawing on multiple sources of information (Creswell, 2007). I agree with Patton (2002) that the case study methodology can “produce a wealth of detailed information about a much smaller number of people and case and increases understanding of the cases and situations studied” (p. 14). This methodology used different data gathering techniques, such as interviews and focus groups to increase research trustworthiness (Glesne, 2006). I viewed the process and examined the participants’ experiences holistically, and this information is gathered through intensive strategies.

Thus, eight Thailand private university administrators were selected as cases studies for this research; reflecting the different stages of institutional administrative affairs in a unique system. Although the eight administrators do not share the same system of administration, they do share the processes of administration, decentralization, and delegation. In chapter four, I will describe the practice and procedures of senior level administrators, based on institutional administrative affairs, the quality assurance system, resource allocation and management, visions, missions, and institutional strategic plans. The research findings proved essential for private universities in Thailand in an era of economic constraints.

Methods and Procedures

Sample Selection of Participants

There are two types of sampling: random sampling and purposeful sampling (Merriam, 1998). Qualitative research mostly employs a purposeful sampling method because

generalizing is not the main goal of this research style. Purposeful sampling in qualitative research is “based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (Merriam, p. 61). A purposeful sampling in this constructivist qualitative study also focuses on a specific research participant and does not randomize the selection of subjects (Rossman & Rallis, 1998).

The success of this case study research was dependent on effective recruitment. Patton (1990) indicated that “When the typical site sampling strategy is used, the site is specifically selected because it is not in any major way atypical, extreme, deviant, or intensely unusual” (p. 173). Thus, purposeful sampling was used to solicit those senior level administrators in private universities. This research began by focusing only on eight private higher education institutions’ senior level administrators in the Bangkok metropolitan area, Thailand. The Bangkok metropolitan was where I practiced in the field of administrative affairs; it is located in the central area of Thailand. I was most familiar with this region and the private universities’ administrators in this area.

One of the critical aspects of purposeful sampling was discovering which criteria were to be used when selecting the case study (Merriam, 1998). For this study, participants had experiences and knowledge of challenges facing private universities in Bangkok, Thailand, and especially problems associated with institutional administrative affairs. Second, participants had either served on university committees or are currently involved in university policy decision-making. Third, participants were currently or previously involved in the senior administrative positions in private universities. Fourth, participants understood the quality assurance system, the goals and objectives of quality management in administrative affairs responsibility.

I selected the senior administrators from Eastern University (EU), Central Bangkok University (CBU), Commerce University (CU), and Northern University (NU). These universities had similar characteristics in terms of programs offers, challenges, governance, management, and institutional administrative structure. Similarly, these institutions considered quality management as the institutional mission. The institutional administrators emphasized the quality of the educational product as measured by the acquired knowledge of the graduates, their ease in finding work, or their social responsibility and accountability.

These institutions were the initiators in applying quality management in administrative and academic activities in Thailand, which was the reason for choosing them as case studies. They concentrated on two aspects, (1) in developing indicators of quality and their own quality measures, and, (2) in developing quality in academic and administrative aspects of the institutional operation. The administrators, faculty, and staff in EU, CBU, CU, and NU trusted the quality management system focus must be on process and not on people, and people at all levels in institutions are involved. Therefore, I believe that the quality management philosophy in these private institutions is a systems approach to management, and the use of a system approach and the vision of administrators can raise opportunities in improving institutional efficiency and effectiveness.

After official approvals from the IRB office at the University of Northern Colorado, I wrote the requested letter to the university presidents to undertake the study. Appointments were made with the university administrators for personal in-depth interviews, and focus group conversation after individual interviews. Eight senior level administrators of each university agreed to be interviewed and shared their experiences in institutional performance excellence. All interviews were conducted individually at the interviewees' offices or the conference rooms

for their convenience and freedom from noise and interruption. The interviewees showed up at their scheduled time and individual interviews were conducted in a friendly environment, where trust and sincerity were developed. The duration of individual interviews lasted 90 minutes, and all of research participants agreed to be audio-recorded.

I considered the integrated questions that derived from the first interviews. During the interview procedure, I proceeded and conceptualized the integration of the participants' views. Therefore, at the same time, new questions were framed according to what had been found from the previous conversations, and then further interviews were conducted.

All of the interviews cited in this study were conducted in the months of March and April 2010. Before conducting interviews, I explained the research information, purpose of the study, rationale, and their rights to stop sharing their experiences. All participants signed the informed consent forms prior to the start of the interview. The interview protocol included a set of semi-structured questions designed to solicit as much information as possible from the research participants. I made a few adjustments to the questions after the first few interviews.

I conducted the focus group session on April 30, 2010. The focus group conversation lasted two hours. The seven administrators selected met the selection criteria: administrators from private universities in Bangkok, Thailand. Prior work included working with all administrators during the individual interviews to acquire permission to conduct the focus groups and to arrange a meeting room for the focus group conversation. The discussion was held at the Eastern University in the afternoon. Prior to beginning the focus group session, a form was handed out, and submitted as part of the institutional review process (IRB), describing the study, intent of the focus group, protecting participants' identities by using pseudonyms,

confidentiality of the data collected, and ability of any participant to leave at any point during the conversation.

Data Collection

The qualitative research approach uses multiple and humanistic data collection methods. In this study, I used semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and document analysis. Deciding on the data collection techniques was one of the most important aspects of any research. Data collection in qualitative research was not a discreet and separate task, but it was “a series of interrelated activities aimed at gathering good information to answer emerging research questions” (Creswell, 2007, p. 118), and the researcher’s interest in the topic (Stage & Manning, 2003). The method indicated what the researcher viewed as valuable knowledge and the researcher’s perspective on the nature of reality or ontology (Glesne, 1998).

Since this research discovered participants’ perspectives of their roles in institutional administrative affairs, it made the most sense to apply a case study methodology that allowed focused questioning of participants using open-ended and semi-structured questions. Patton (1990) asserted that the “most elementary forms of qualitative inquiry, namely responses from open-ended questionnaire items, is the major way in which qualitative researchers seek to understand the perceptions, feelings, and knowledge of people is through in-depth, intensive interviewing” (p. 25).

Semi-structured interview questions. In qualitative research, the interview process is a “conversation with a purpose” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), p. 268). Qualitative interviewing was also “the art of hearing data” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. vii). Interviewing allowed a researcher to understand other people’s experiences and the meaning they have attached to those experiences (Fontana & Frey, 1994; Merriam, 1998). Qualitative interviewing is a systematic

process of asking and answering questions toward the end view of better understanding a given problem and finding appropriate steps for its resolution (Glense, 1998).

This case study research used semi-structured interviews as a mode of qualitative approach. The semi-structured interview is “guided by a set of questions and issues to be explored” (Merriam, 1998, p. 8). The objective of semi-structured interviews is to discover more extensively and to encourage the research participants to express their thoughts, ideas, opinions and emotions. The semi-structured interview gave the researcher the opportunity to establish a personal relationship with the research participants in order to obtain the necessary information for the study (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Using this interview technique, the interviewer “can probe for clarification and ask questions appropriate to the respondent’s knowledge, involvement, and status” (Merriam, p. 86).

Creswell (2003) discovered that the qualitative interview can gather important data that a researcher cannot acquire from observation. Participants can provide historical information and vivid experiences, as well as current practices. Likewise, semi-structured interviews can explore and probe participants' answers to gather more in-depth data about their perceptions, opinions comments, and perspectives. In-depth interviews can examine attitudes, interests, feelings, concerns, and values more easily and deeply than observation alone.

In-depth interviews were valuable for learning the perceptions of an individual rather than a group. Merriam (1998) suggested that the researcher is able to get insights into the multiple perspectives of the different interviewees. By being attentive to the causal explanations participants provide, knowledge regarding interviewees experiences allow for additional, probing questions that may identify relationships or connections. Thus, using a semi-structured and in-depth interview format allowed me to respond to the “situation at hand,

to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic” (Merriam, p. 74). In-depth interviews can provide the interviewee's experiences on institutional administrative affairs, its implementation, and its impact on institutional development, and to identify alternative approaches to its exposure and sustainability.

Moreover, a semi-structured and in-depth interview format allowed participants to describe what is important to them using their own words rather than being restricted to predetermined categories. In essence, interviewers had the flexibility to use their knowledge, expertise, and interpersonal skills to explore interesting or unexpected ideas or themes raised by participants (Patton, 2002). In addition, as the researcher I had to maintain neutrality, ensure empathy, and provide supportive comments when necessary.

While a semi-structured interview was used for this study, it is important to point out that the mechanics for gathering data are very crucial. The structure of the interview began with some ethical assurances to the participants. I proceeded with responsive interviewing approach and a semi-structured interview guide. The most important consideration was receiving the necessary information from interviewees because the purpose of the interview is to gather information about a phenomenon (Patton, 2002; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The order of questions can be altered to appropriate the specific interview and follow-up questions can be asked as needed (Merriam, 1998). In addition, interview data consisted of the audio-taped interview, typed transcriptions, and the researcher's personal field notes. These notes are helpful in that they may gather supplementary information regarding the interviews content, the participant, or the context of the interview (Merriam, 1998). The selected university administrators participated in two individual interviews lasting approximately 60 minutes each.

I assured the confidentiality of their identities through use of pseudonyms, and time commitment.

The guided interview questions were:

1. Could you describe your role and the areas for which you have responsibility?
2. Could you please share the values you espouse as a leader of your university?
3. Which values do you wish your institution to implement and achieve? Why are these values important?
4. When considering performance excellence, how do you frame and define performance excellence?
5. What are your leadership values with regard to performance excellence?
6. How do your present actions as a leader reflect commitment to performance excellence?
7. How do you create an organizational environment committed to performance excellence?
8. How do you sustain an organizational environment of performance excellence?
9. What do you believe to be your organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats?
10. Could you please describe how you implement the process of strategic planning?
11. What are your current institutional ONESQA indicators?
12. What is your process in linking the ONESQA indicators in your strategic planning?
13. In thinking about the implementation of the ONESQA indicators within your strategic plan and the future of your institution, what do you expect the outcomes to be? To what achievement will you point?
14. What advice would you give to other senior administrative affairs officers engaged in performance excellent strategic planning?

In order to prepare for the interviews for this study, I sent a letter of information, consent form and interview questions to the participants prior to the interviewing process. I

conducted interviews to obtain the participants' thoughts, opinions, and judgments regarding their professions in institutional administrative affairs among different private universities' structures. These semi-structured in-depth interviews provided descriptive, broad, anecdotal, and constructive information.

Focus group. After conducting the semi-structured interviews, focus group method was used to discover the university administrators' experiences. This method engaged university administrators in methods, and the eight administrators agreed to reflect on their executive experiences in a collective group.

Focus groups are communication activities that have the capacity to alter participants' affective and cognitive states and facilitate change (Krueger & Casey, 2000). The focus group process emphasized my desire to engage participants as research-partners who could be empowered to make meaning out of their own experiences. Ideas, thoughts, and discussions built one upon another with the energy flow of the group, and lead to further, more in-depth constructive ideas (Morgan, 1996). Focus groups brought a diversity of voices and extensive range of opinion that distribute the influence of the interviewer-facilitator (Frey & Fontana, 1991; Krueger & Casey, 2000).

On May 2, 2010, the focus group was conducted. Seven administrators attended for an average of 90 minutes to discuss the topic of inquiry. Seven administrators and I agreed to have a focus group conversation at Eastern University. I had permission from the Vice President of Eastern University to conduct the focus groups and to arrange a meeting room for the focus groups conversation. I explained to all participants that all comments, mentions, or phrases of their identities. I was the moderator and took four semi-structured general questions and posed these questions to the group. Prior to beginning a focus group conversation, I resubmitted an

IRB handout in order to describe the study, intent of the focus group, confidentiality of the data collected, and ability of any participant to leave at any point during the session.

The focus group questions were derived from individual interview data. The focus group participants provided additional range, specificity, depth, and personal experiences. In order to record the focus group data, I also used note-based analysis and audio-tape during the focus groups to identify various themes that emerged from the discussions. The focus group questions were:

1. What is the meaning of performance excellence in your perspective?
2. How do you conduct your strategic planning?
3. How do you connect the ONESQA indicators in your institutional strategic planning?
4. What are the most important criteria to make your institutions achievement?

Document analysis. Document analysis was used as one of the important approaches of getting information for qualitative research. A review of public and internal documents enables the researcher to obtain the language and words of the participants (Coleman & Briggs, 2002). Documents captured for this research includes documentation from daily notes and transcriptions of all in-depth interviews; as well as university annual reports, policies, and quality assurance manuals. These documents from appropriate sources were analyzed and synchronized for this study.

The documentation was accessed from specific academic departments and supporting units including the Ministry of Education, the Commission of Higher Education, the Office of Education Council, and the private universities. In order to request this information, academic departments, public relations departments, and supporting units of each university were approached by telephone calls, official letters, and personal visits.

I began contacting university administrators through email, phone, and personal visits for giving an overview of the project and some examples of areas covered by the interview questions. A brief overview of the study was provided for each participant and they were allowed to ask questions of clarification prior to the start of questioning. I also disclosed to the participants that each interview would be digitally recorded, with an electronic transcript being provided to them for review, upon their request.

Fortunately, several research participants did refer me to other informants on their campus that they thought would be more appropriate resources for the study. I had conversations with a minimum of two administrators on each campus. During campus visiting, I observed elements of the departments' operations, such as the front office staff, in order to gather information regarding general working environment that might be relevant to the project.

I protected the confidentiality of the research participants, and in accordance with standard research practices, the names of the institutions will not be revealed. I assigned pseudonyms to the participants in order to maintain their privacy and honor the promise of confidentiality. These pseudonyms are found in quoted passages from the interviews in the discussion of findings. In order to give the reader a general sense of the interviewees' background experiences in higher education, I also wrote a brief description of the administrators' demographic characteristics.

Researcher Stance

I was the researcher, and a doctoral student at University of Northern Colorado, with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration (Management), and a master's degree in Business Administration (Organizational Leadership). I have had professional experiences in Kasem Bundit University in Bangkok, Thailand. I spent five years as a lecturer and university

administrator in the Planning and Development Division. I had an opportunity to be involved with the institutional strategic planning, and internal and external quality assurance system. This experience encouraged me to discover the meaning of institutional administrative affairs and the quality management practices in private universities in Thailand, and how university administrators successfully apply efficient business models to their institution.

Role of Researcher

A researcher in a qualitative study is sensitive to how his personal experience and background shapes the study. In many cases, “The personal-self becomes inseparable from the researcher-self” (Creswell, 2003, p. 182). Thus, the instrumentality of the researcher in qualitative study makes the research process subjective, which can relate on the findings of the study. As a researcher who has an interest in the topic of research, there obviously would be some biases and subjectivities in the research process (Crotty, 2003). Corbin and Strauss (1998) also argue that “it is not possible to be completely free of bias” (p. 97).

As a qualitative researcher who is closely involved with participants in the construction of knowledge, I explained my relationship to the participants and my research role in data collection and analysis. I believed that it is important for researchers to release their feelings and emotions regarding the research topics in obtaining information. I would not understand participants’ experiences if I failed to express the feelings regarding the research topic to my participants. Likewise, there is the need to discover such feelings to help me understand respondents’ concerns about the research topic. Participants’ experiences were discovered with openness, flexibility, brainstorming, and avoiding linear thought (Patton, 1990).

Further, I articulated the ethical considerations. Most qualitative researchers have to address the importance of ethical considerations to respect the rights, needs, values, and desires

of their research participants (Guba & Lincoln, (1994); Marshall & Rossman, 1999). I followed this statement by adhering to the ethical protocols and principles established by the University of Northern Colorado. I submitted the proposal for the study for being reviewed and approved by the institution review board (IRB) to obtain informed consent before collecting data. The data gathering process was conducted to protect the privacy of individuals participating in this study. The intent of the research was fully disclosed, and all information was shared verbally and in writing with the university administrators at each institution.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is one of the major components of any research, quantitative or qualitative. The research paradigm and methodology adopted affects the results and conclusion of the study. Utilization of the data analysis techniques not only affects the results of the research but also reveals how the researcher is able to blend and merge the research information acquired in the entire study. Which procedure is consistent with Merriam's (1998) assertion that data analysis "involves the development of conceptual categories, typologies, or theories that interpret the data for the reader" (p. 133).

Similarly, data analysis in a case study methodology is a holistic analysis of the whole case or an embedded analysis of a particular component of the case. Corbin and Strauss (1998) provided:

Analysis is the interplay between researchers and data. It is both science and art. It is science in the sense of maintaining a certain degree of rigor and by grounding analysis in data. Creativity manifests itself in the ability of researchers to aptly name categories, ask stimulating questions, make comparisons, and extract an innovative, integrated, realistic scheme for masses of unorganized raw data. (p. 13)

Marshall and Rossman (1999) provided that the six steps in qualitative data analysis involve "(a) organizing of the data; (b) generating categories, themes, and patterns; (c) coding

the data; (d) testing the emergent understanding; (e) searching for alternative explanations; and (f) writing the report” (p. 152). I followed these steps and also utilize the multiple sources of qualitative research data as a form of triangulation in verifying that the information or conclusions from the data are authentic and make meaning by the participants (Creswell, 2003).

In the process of analyzing data, I transcribed each interview as it was completed, and then reviewed each interview for accuracy by reading the transcript while listening to the original audio version. I analyzed the data for this study by first reading through transcripts, field notes, and document remarks for general ideas and themes. I then coded units of data ranging in size from phrases, sentences and paragraphs to entire passages of discussion. I organized these data into categories, starting with those initially suggested by my problem statement and conceptual framework, including boundary spanning activities such as searching and promoting, actual and intended roles, and decision influences (Creswell, 2003).

The original interview transcripts are made in Thai language, thus I have to translate them to English language. I transcribed each interview that had relevance to the purpose of study in its entirety. For example, if a research participant shared a detailed explanation of financing data, I noted only the topic; however, I did not transcribe that report in detail.

Regarding analysis of the transcripts, each complete transcript from individual interview and focus group conversation was considered the unit of analysis. I read through each transcript several times, and highlighted elements of that transcript that seemed to be present in the majority of the transcripts. However, data analysis began after the first interview and continued throughout the data collection process and for nine weeks post interviews to ensure data themes were fully discovered. Further, I developed broad categories that helped to define

what I had discovered. These broad categories helped me in drawing a picture of information, and making the data more manageable.

Trustworthiness

Researchers using a qualitative paradigm must understand two criteria in order for their research to be considered trustworthy. Rossman and Rallis (1998) stated that the research must conform to standards for acceptable and competent practice, and must be conducted in an ethical approach, being sensitive to settings associated with the topic. Further, data verification in qualitative research has received a considerable degree of criticism from proponents of the quantitative research tradition. Because of the position of the qualitative researchers and their roles as the instrument, qualitative research is relatively subject to biases that question the validity and reliability of research findings. Therefore, understanding a variety of methodologies aided me in creating the strength of the method of data collection while minimizing the weaknesses of any single approach (Patton, 2002). Qualitative research has led to the development of alternative methods to establish trustworthiness of research using qualitative methods.

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) argued that “qualitative research is inherently multi-method in focus... the use of multiple methods, or triangulation, reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question” (p. 5). Research methods are used in a systematic, interactive, and subjective way to describe life experiences and give them meaning. Guba & Lincoln, 1994) identified the four components in ensuring trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

I increased the comfort level of the participants and provided friendly rapport in the relationship. A transcript from individual interview and focus group was provided to the research participants to determine if they wish to change the content on the document or eliminate some point before the data analysis process.

Rossmann and Rallis (1998) noted that the essence of qualitative research relies on how well the researcher honestly and fully renders the participants' viewpoints. Through the interviewer establishing a trusting relationship with the interviewees, truthfulness on the part of participants can be developed but not guaranteed. I began the interview process with an unrecorded and informal conversation, and requested the permission to start recording.

I utilized the triangulation approach to gain credibility. I triangulated data from multiple sources to gain a fuller understanding of the research topic. Member checking techniques confirmed conclusions, established truthfulness and avoided misinterpretation by allowing the interview participants to share in the analysis of their responses (Guba & Lincoln, 1994); Yin, 1994). Thus, each university administrator was offered a copy of the interview transcript and asked to verify that the transcription reflected the interview and accurately represented his or her meaning and ideas.

Transferability

Transferability relates to the generalization of the research results to other groups of people, settings, situations, or circumstances (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The purpose of qualitative research within a constructivist paradigm did not make a generalization about a particular phenomenon. Transferability of this study was increased through a variety of methods. I utilized thick description to describe administrators' experiences. Thick description

in this study enabled readers to determine how closely their own experiences in different circumstances can be matched in the research situation (Merriam, 1998). I provided rich, in-depth, and detailed information about the responsibilities in administrative affairs and quality management of private university senior administrators.

I offered readers the opportunity to make their own assessment about the transferability of my findings to other higher education settings in other public or autonomous higher education institutions in Thailand or other countries. Likewise, I considered providing verbatim transcriptions, using direct quotations to support and substantiate emergent themes.

Dependability

Dependability relates to the consistency of findings and involves the process of data collection and analysis (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Dependability can be established when another research, or consumer of the findings, can be assured and audited. Merriam (1998) suggested that dependability can be enhanced by investigator position, triangulation, and audit trail. As an investigator position, I provided a clear statement in research methodology, purposeful sampling procedure, and participants. I used a triangulation to confirm my research rigor. An audit trail was utilized when I described the precise methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation. I ensured that the interview transcriptions and field notes were collected, reviewed, and interpreted. My findings were consistent, organized and dependable. Dependability in this study was obtained through the use of a standard protocol for every interview. My interview script was also used in all discussions with interviewees to provide consistency. However, I used individual probing questions based on the information yielded from each participant.

Confirmability

Guba and Lincoln (1994) argue that confirmability is the “degree to which the findings are a function solely of the informants and conditions of the research and not of other biases, motivations, and perspectives” (p. 216). Maintaining confirmability in this study, I developed a considerable degree of accuracy in interview transcripts and documents. I avoided misrepresentation of interviews, desisting from substituting my own opinion and experiences for those of the interviewees. Likewise, using member checking and triangulation provided an effective approach of confirming the results of the study. The transcripts and categories were given to the research chair to ensure the fit of the categories and define finding themes.

Prior to each interview, I familiarized myself with documents relevant to that participant, whether it was the institution’s self-assessment report, university strategic plan, annual report, or biographical information. Moreover, I read the biographies of the university administrators on the university’s website prior to interviewing them, thus I would have some insight into their backgrounds and experience, and also understand the participants and their current role in institutional quality assurance and performance excellence prior to meeting with them.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed what I did to address the research methodology. I explained the rationale for the research design, commented on the research participants, gave an institutional overview, mentioned the research setting, discussed data collection and analysis, addressed standards of quality issues, and the actions taken to assure its trustworthiness and authenticity. Chapter four provided administrative experiences as a “thick description” of the context of the study as discovered from in-depth interviews, and “a process of co-creation as participants’

stories infuse researchers' interpretations in a way that the boundaries between the two become at once distinct and blurred" (Jones, 2002, p. 468).

CHAPTER IV

PARTICIPANTS AND CONTEXT

This study was conducted to discover how senior administrators create a leadership vision for performance excellence, how senior administrators conduct strategic planning as a process in achieving performance excellence, and how senior administrators link the indicators of ONESQA (the Office of National Educational Standards and Quality Assessment) to their performance excellence strategic planning. In this research, I have studied four universities in the Bangkok metropolitan area that constitute the administrative performance excellence in this case study research.

The objective is to gain a clear understanding of the operation, management, and meaning making of university administrators about the performance excellence in their institutions. Interviews and focus groups, brochures, written documents, and institutions' websites provided information regarding the selected universities and their administrative views on the institutional performance excellence.

There are four case studies in this research. I used pseudonyms to protect the real names of the institutions and participants. The four universities included Central Bangkok University (CBU), Northern University (NU), Eastern University (EU), and Commerce University (CU). Further, the participants were senior level administrators who work in the selected institutions. They are in various positions of administration including vice president, assistant to the president, and assistant to the vice president. Eight administrators in various

positions were interviewed to see what university performance excellence and quality management mean to higher education institutions. The four case studies were all medium, private, social science extensive institutions, with student enrollment of over 55,000 students. They all employ 10,000 or more people and have annual budgets over \$1. 2 billion.

The findings reported in this chapter stem from the combination of three types of data collection: individual interviews with semi-structured questions, focus group conversation, and document analysis. The data were also collected from documents containing institutional mission statements, plans, institutional annual report, and SAR (Self-Assessment Report) of the studied sites.

The Research Participants

The eight senior level administrators who participated provide backgrounds diverse in leadership experience, administrative discipline, and gender. All university administrators shared individual interests, passions, and perspectives to the study while concurrently offering conversation themes. This section begins with a group demographic profile followed by a more detailed sketch of each of the administrators. The latter provides an understanding of their unique backgrounds.

Four Institutions of Higher Education

The case studies were conducted to discover the experiences of senior level university administrators in institutional performance excellence in the Bangkok metropolitan area. The semi-structured, in-depth interviews and review of documents provided an opportunity to understand their personal administrative experiences, and to construct knowledge of institutional management and performance excellence in an economic downturn era. The institutions selected to participate in the case study were Central Bangkok University (CBU),

Eastern University (EU), Commerce University (CU), and Northern University (NU). The following provides information on the context of each case, their vision and mission, their organizational structure and management strategies, and their performance excellence consideration.

Central Bangkok University

Central Bangkok University is a well-established private university recognized as a leading education institution in Thailand for more than 40 years. This institution has 13 schools and offers courses both in English and Thai. Programs are offered for both Thai and international students offering bachelor, master, and doctoral degrees. CBU was originally known as the Polytechnic Institute until 1965 when it became a college, the first private college in Thailand, and was granted university status by the Ministry of University Affairs in 1984.

CBU is a private, non-profit co-educational institution. The inspiration for the establishment of this university came from the founders' desire to establish a higher educational institution to educate students in theoretical and practical experiments and academic ability.

The Thai program leading to a bachelor's degree is available in Business Administration, Accounting, Economics, Communication Arts, Humanities, Laws, Science majoring in Computer Science, Fine and Applied Arts, and Engineering. The international program is available in the International College (IC) offering courses in the Schools of Business administration, Communication Arts, Accounting, and Humanities. Likewise, CBU has several institutional centers; such as, University Alumni Association, University Co-operative Store, University Co-operative Savings Store, University Research Institute, Institute of Research and Evaluation, Human Resources Center, Language Institute, and Law Center for Citizens.

With 22,400 students enrolled, CBU has two campuses in Bangkok, named city campus and suburb campus. The city campus occupies approximately 15,000 m², serving students in their third or fourth year, the international college, and most academics in special programs. This campus is also the location of the president's office. The suburb campus is 265,000 m² in size, serving students in their first and second years. This campus houses the university stadium, library, and communication arts complex, which is well equipped with exceptional facilities allowing students to gain the essential skills for Communication Arts.

Central Bangkok University's administrators emphasized quality management for the organizational performance. This institution is the only university in Thailand certified ISO 14001 from the International Standard Organization. This certification stands for the International Standard Organization, regarding Environmental Management Systems Standard. Certification was achieved for the Environmental Management System (EMS) in place within the University's Building and Infrastructure Department. This certification as well as a strong emphasis on quality assurance reforms demonstrates its eagerness to continuously improve its performance and the ability to achieve quality of education at all levels.

Mission statement. The CBU aims at developing its students to become graduates with the highest potential in academic and practical contexts. They are to have vision, flexibility and self-adjustment ability in order to pursue their career confidently in this competitive, fast changing world. The University serves as an academic center where academicians, experts, and researchers meet. Together they work to encourage development and to exchange knowledge, within the country and internationally. The outcome is betterment of education and a greater service to the society that adheres to the theme "Advanced Knowledge and Expertise."

Objectives. The Central Bangkok University is able to provide professional education in preparing young men and women to serve the community with self-confidence and pride, to educate men and women in the fields of social science, natural science, humanities, and technology, to provide the opportunity to conduct research which is of benefit to the country and the individual, and to preserve and transmit the cultural heritage to students and society.

Organizational structure. The Central Bangkok University is supervised by an institutional council. The university president has to report directly to the council. There are seven divisions under the president's supervision; financial affairs, academic affairs, administrative affairs, student affairs, planning and development, special affairs, and suburban campus. Vice presidents and assistant presidents monitor each division and report to the president.

Northern University

Northern University was founded in 1986 as a college status and changed to the university status in 1990. NU is located about 30 kilometers north of the Bangkok center. NU offers Thai programs at both undergraduate and graduate levels and international programs at the undergraduate level only. With enrollment at 18,000 in the undergraduate and graduate programs, The university aims at providing a learning and living environment dedicated to the nurturing of academic and social values which are liberal in outlook and focus on the specific needs of the students and society in general.

NU's administrators believe their students should achieve a significant depth of understanding about life and society while they are engaged in their academic pursuits at the university. NU aims to produce graduates in the sciences, technologies, social sciences, humanities, and other fields that support Thailand's specific needs.

There are nine schools offered at Northern University; the school of accountancy, the school of humanities, the school of business administration, the school of communication arts, the school of engineering, the school of science and technology, the school of graduate studies, the school of architecture, and the school of liberal arts.

The grounded principles of Northern University are based on the institution's commitment to pursue academic excellence; to encourage free inquiry and the free flow of the information; to tolerate and understand different views and opinions; to promote freedom of expression, whether in speech or writing, in work or academic endeavors, or in religious beliefs and worship; to support the ideal of a just and compassionate society based on equal opportunity for all and equal justice under the law; and to plan and execute academic programs that reflect the best in academic traditions, while constantly evolving to keep pace with advances in knowledge, educational methods, and technology.

Northern University emphasizes the standard of education and academic excellence, developing the curricula, study programs, and areas of study which are related to the economic and social changes. Further, the administrators also aim to promote theoretical study in combination with practice. Students at NU will be trained or learn directly from businesses, industries or enterprises in the area of their own study; further effort is made in encouraging the various school programs in the institution to become units of operation in themselves and to be part of education.

In order to internationalize the private institution, NU's administrators aim in improving the academic and service support programs to become consistent with the changing social conditions with the aim of becoming more international in nature.

Institutional philosophy. Northern University aims to provide education with international standards producing high quality graduates.

Mission. NU endeavors to support and develop education for international standards in the modern civilization, in order to produce high quality graduates that will develop the society and the country.

Vision. Education is the most valuable resource to develop the personnel in the society and in the country, and must support and guide the society. Thus an educational institute needs to be a knowledge source that teaches and instructs the students to have the knowledge, ability, and the virtues for applying and developing the society and the country.

Organizational structure. The institutional board of trustees is at the highest hierarchy of the university organizational chart, and followed by the administrative board and the president. Northern University has the staff administration committee, the executive committee, and the president advisory board to provide suggestions to the president and the university council. Under the president, there is the vice president for academic affairs, the vice president for planning and international relations, and the vice president for academic support, service, and student affairs. Institutional administrative affairs are supervised directly by the university president with support from the assistant to the president.

The vice president for academic affairs monitors the nine schools, the evening program administration office, the office of registrar, and the academic service center. The vice president of academic support services and student affairs is responsible for the educational technology center, the Thai cultural center, the main library, the student affairs and welfare division, the student discipline division, the counseling and job placement division, and the sports division. The responsibilities in managing finance, budgets, maintenance and repair, and

inventory and procurement are with the assistant president and report to the president. The other vice president supervises human resources, law, central administration, text and material services, and public relations.

Eastern University

Eastern University is a private university located in Bangkok, Thailand. The university was initially founded in 1987 as a college. At that time, the college began its operation on a rather small scale, offering two programs in the undergraduate degrees in the fields of business administration and law. In 1992, the university was accredited by the Ministry of Education at the university stratum. The existing enrollment is approximately 12,000 students in all levels.

Like other private universities, particularly in Thailand, Eastern University aims to provide educational opportunities for students who will contribute to the educational welfare of higher education in Thailand. The institution offers more fields of study in bachelor, associate, master, and doctoral degrees to keep pace with the high demand for higher education. In 2010, Eastern University expanded the undergraduate programs, including the School of Business Administration, School of Law, School of Architecture, School of Engineering, School of Science and Technology, School of Communication Arts, and School of Liberal Arts. At the graduate level, EU offers various programs in Business Administration, Public Administration, Mass Communication, Engineering Management, Interior Design, and Psychology. EU also provides doctoral degrees in Public Administration and Psychology. The institution is fully accredited by the Ministry of Education and is well recognized by public and private agencies.

The objectives of Eastern University are: to provide undergraduate and graduate studies that satisfy the national education policies and objectives and the manpower needs of Thai society; to achieve the university's responsibilities, including producing qualified and

intellectual graduates, conducting research, providing academic service for the community, and preserving national cultural heritage; to instill the students with a sense of responsibility toward their society and nation and prepare them to be administrators with moral principles; to encourage the students to think analytically and to apply current business and social situations to academic courses; to improve the university administrative structure and management to improve the quality of education.

Vision. The leading university for the new generation.

Philosophy. Education builds man, man builds nation.

Mission. The university is dedicated to the creation of graduates with intelligence, professionalism, a sense of ethical responsibility, and excitement for life through an educational system that instills in students the qualities of academic excellence, creativity, technological proficiency, problem-solving ability, and social consciousness.

Organizational structure. EU's university council is at the top of the hierarchy of the organizational chart. The divisions of academic affairs, administrative affairs, planning and development, special affairs, human resources, and student affairs as well as all schools are under the supervision of the president.

Commerce University

Commerce University is located in a southern suburb of Bangkok. This university was founded in the late 1940s. CU is private non-profit institution of higher education in Bangkok, Thailand. This institution was originally known as the College of Commerce. In 1984, it was accredited by the Ministry of University Affairs to offer graduate degrees and changed its status to the university. The university has offered degrees in business administration, accountancy, economics, humanities, science, communication arts, engineering, and law.

One of CU's objectives is serving the nation by providing scientific and humanistic knowledge, particularly in business education and management science, through research and interdisciplinary approaches. The institution also aims to form intellectual graduates who are morally sound, and open to further growth.

There are 19,000 students approximately enrolled and approximately 900 full-time and part-time teaching staff. Some of the students and faculty are from different countries, including, India, China, Burma, Singapore, Australia, England, and the United States.

Institution's philosophy. Commerce University aims to enable people to live their lives successfully with wealth and firm status in society. Students must be educated in business strategies, knowledge of administration, management, and technologies.

Vision. The university aims to be a higher education institution specialized in business fields. The graduates will be characterized with foreign language and technological proficiencies, morals, ethics and a sense of Thailand's culture.

Missions. Practically, the missions of the CU are focused in four areas of the university responsibilities; teaching, conducting research or creative educational works, providing education for public service and communities, and preserving Thai cultural heritage.

Promotion of well-qualified students. CU will provide its students with the highest quality of postsecondary education. Therefore, a fundamental mission of the institution is teaching. The university focuses on the development of human resources and enables students to be well-trained and well-qualified for all types of work. Also, CU has established academic cooperation, under memoranda of understanding, with prestigious overseas institutions to build academic networking and university partnerships.

Promotion of research. Basic and applied research and creative activity represent a major component of Commerce University's mission. The pursuit of new knowledge is an essential part of a university; therefore, the university focuses on research and development, especially applied research for generating economic and social progress. The university has to support research leaders, in the form of partnership, and expand academic networking with renowned domestic and overseas universities for contribution of internationalization.

Promotion of academic service. Commerce University aims to serve society more various academic services. The academic services focus on the institution's funding sources, especially from the target group with its high demand such as business and industrial section.

Promotion of art and culture. CU well realizes the mission of promoting art and culture will be expanded in the future due to the tendency of cultural blending and the country's increased participation in the global economic community.

Organizational structure. Commerce University is supervised by an institutional council. The council provides policy guidance and formulates control procedures. The university council allocates funds and screens proposed budgets as well as curriculum design and revisions of the curriculum. The council also provides approval for the faculty to carry out their academic and research programs and guards the honor and integrity of the university.

In CU's organizational chart, the university council is located at the top, followed by the president, and then the school committee and the administrative committee. The next level is the vice president for administrative affairs, the vice president for academic affairs, the vice president for student affairs, the vice president for financial affairs, the vice president for planning and development, the vice president for research affairs.

Demographic Profile

The research participants in this study represent senior level university administrators who are currently positioned in the vice president, assistant to the president, and assistant to the vice president. They have each served a minimum of three years. All administrators were selected by the institutional board of trustees because the institutions are private and supervised by the company. Seven participants hold doctoral degrees and one holds a master's degrees. The eight participants represented different disciplines in administrative affairs, finance, and planning and development. Three administrators are female and five are male. While I tried to recruit participants representing diversity in race and ethnicity, those who responded and were qualified to participate in my study are all Thai. The following is the participants' information.

Brittany

The first participant was interviewed two times because of her time constraints. The first interview with Brittany was completed on March 12, 2010, on campus. The second interview was conducted on March 19, 2010 at the same place. Brittany was contacted by phone and invited me to conduct the interview at her office, after the end of the second semester. Brittany was gracious and accommodating and appeared to be comfortable with her surroundings and the interview process, creating the relaxed atmosphere.

Brittany is a 55 year old female. I know her from the Dean of the School of Business. She obtained her doctoral degree in economics from the University of Missouri at Columbia. She has been the assistant president for administrative affairs for 10 years. Brittany has enjoyed her educational journey in business administration and economics over the past 20 years. She believes that she received her job because she was highly qualified and has earned her

credentials. She noted “I have a Ph. D. in Economic and have close to 20 years of experience working in academic life, government agency, and part-time faculty.”

Brittany’s office was on the new campus of this university. I was impressed by the modern style of architecture including big windows, and high ceilings. She was surrounded by book stacks and a huge planner board. Her secretary came and went through the course of the interview. She appeared to have enjoyed sharing her experience of being a senior level administrator during the current economic constraint.

Brittany related experiences and perceptions of top-management in administrative views at this institution. I was impressed by her administrative and leadership perceptions, because in the last two years, she served as Interim Assistant Vice President for Quality Assurance. Thus, she experienced the whole picture of quality management, performance excellence, and student excellence in administrative and academic works. As vice president for administrative affairs, Brittany supervises a chief financial officer of the University, and reports directly to the president regarding the matters related to the management and oversight of the business and financial affairs of the university, including implementation of all fiscal policies and regulations.

Bob

The conversation with the second participant was held on March 15, 2010, in the office of the vice president for planning and development. Bob and I discussed quality assurance and institutional performance excellence for two hours. Bob was invited to participate in the study by phone and agreed to be interviewed on campus. He was gracious and accommodating. He was generous with his time, and appeared to enjoy the interview process. Our conversation was relaxed and comfortable as we discussed retention at this university.

Bob is a 59 year old male associate professor. He holds his master's degree in accountancy from Chulalongkorn University, the first institution of higher education in Thailand. He was appointed to the position of the vice president for planning and development in 2002 after serving as Director of Finance for five years. Prior to that, Bob served 15 years as full-time faculty in the School of Business Administration. Bob has an extensive background in academic work, strategic planning, and university marketing analysis. Bob believes he received his position because of his administrative experience and his flexible knowledge in not only education but also diversity and community issues.

In his current position, Bob has the responsibility to prepare, review and evaluate the plans presented to the president and the university board of trustees. He stated:

As a vice president for planning and development, I have to maintain a systemic thinking concept, because I and my team have to prepare the perspectives, plans and every follow-up activity to develop our university in all of its four main responsibilities: teaching, research, community service, and preserving arts and cultures... I can be the next president [laughing] . . . my responsibilities cover every prediction of students, faculty and staff about the physical and financial needs... we have overseen the issue of quality assurance activities to ensure quality in all of the university's main activities.

Karl

The third participant was interviewed on March 21, 2010, in a classroom of graduate study. Karl was invited to be a part-time faculty member to teach business finance for entrepreneurs. The interview started at 6:00 PM. Karl was invited to participate in the study by phone and agreed to be interviewed on campus after finishing class. The classroom atmosphere was slightly busy with students, yet relaxed. He was gracious and accommodating. He was generous with time, and comfortable talking about administrative life and academic life as a professor. I have known him personally for 10 years. He proved to be entertaining and informative as an interviewee. He has both positive and negative aspects of remaining as senior

administrator. Karl stated “I love to work in [Eastern University] because I spend less than 30 minutes driving from my home.” He had remained as a result of location, family, and life after retirement from government and public university. Moreover, his wife is also the chair of the Psychology program at the same institution. He further stated “I feel I have no choice but to remain at [Eastern University].

Karl is a 66 year old male professor. He holds his doctoral degree in educational administration from Illinois State University. He was appointed to the position of the vice president for planning and development in 2002.

Kathy

The fourth participant, Kathy was interviewed on March 29 and April 10, 2010 on campus in the conference room close to the office of the assistant president. She was invited to participate in the study by phone and agreed to be interviewed at her new office in the new building. Kathy was accessible, accommodating, gracious, and generous with her time. She was passionate about the pursuit of the discipline in which she was engaged.

Kathy was a 60 year old female vice president for administrative affairs. She received her Doctorate of Philosophy in Mathematics from Kasetsart University in 1995. She served in this university for 21 years. She came to the university in 1989 as an accountant in charge of the Office of Finance and Accounting, after having worked in that capacity at the public school in her hometown, Phuket. Since coming to this university, Kathy has served as accounting staff, budget analyst, business manager, budget director and vice president for administrative affairs in 2000. She stated in the end of the conversation:

I have served in this position at [Eastern University]. My role as a vice president is to provide leadership and direction to the various divisions that includes all business affairs in the academic institution. I can’t ignore any responsibility to facilitate the delivery of quality services provided by all units in order to meet the needs of the

university because the university itself needs to provide the excellent products and services that meet clients' needs. Excellence will be from the culture of quality, honesty, integrity, mutual respect, accountability, commitment, and open communication to cope with new challenges.

Slone

The fifth participant was interviewed on April 2, 2010, in the office of the vice president for financial and administrative affairs. Slone was invited to participate in the study by phone, and agreed to be interviewed on campus. He was gregarious, enthusiastic, expressive, accommodating, and gracious. He was generous with time, and appeared to enjoy the interview process.

Slone was a 63 year old male associate professor. He received his doctoral degree in higher education administration from Chulalongkorn University in 1990. He was appointed to the position of the vice president for financial and administrative affairs in 2002. Slone has overseen a broad range of university areas including business services, facilities and capital planning, and the human resources and services department. He is also responsible for oversight of the financial and accounting operations, management and insurance and internal audit. Slone elaborated that "I can make sure that our university's administrative and financial structures will provide the most effective and efficient support for students, academics, and the people of my university."

Slone believes in the importance of a quality management paradigm and an internal quality assurance system. He led his organization to pass the quality of the ISO system in 2004. Slone initiated the policies and strategies in order to provide continuous improvement, incorporated solutions through teamwork, and demonstrated high ethics and professional standards. He mentioned that "I have to develop the vision and goals of our university's strategic plan, and manage all institutional resources effectively and efficiently."

Sam

The sixth interview was initially conducted in the lobby of a hotel in Chonburi province, an hour drive from Bangkok. The participant was attending an annual conference after the Songkran national holiday between April 12, to April 18, 2010. Our conversation was held on April 20, 2010. I contacted Sam to participate in the study by phone and he requested to be interviewed at a hotel outside of town. The hotel has excellent views and our conversation was relaxing.

Sam is the youngest participant in this study. He is 47 years old, and an assistant professor. He received his doctoral degree in economics from Southern Illinois University in 1995. He was appointed to the position of the assistant vice president for administrative affairs in August 2008. His responsibilities include administration and oversight of the institution's budget, finances, and resource planning.

Sam came to this university in 1985 before he had the financial support from this university to pursue his master and doctoral degree. He was from a banking institution, where he served as an asset management specialist. His first assignment at this university was in the budget office, where he worked for two years, and he has served in various officer roles for the administrators in the planning and development division. He stated that he gained many of his management skills from his business experience and those skills helped him in his transition from financial institution to higher education. He said "I have a background and experience in management and organization so I had the qualifications that it took to be the vice president and I have an interest in continuous improvement." Sam is a proponent of quality management and is a leading supervisor in the institution's assessment initiative.

Chris

I had conversations with Chris in his university on April 1 and April 21. The participant was invited to participate in the study by phone and agreed to be interviewed on campus. Chris is a vice president for administration for his university in September 2004. In his position, Chris acts as Institution Secretary and oversees a broad array of additional functions including human resources, risk management, and compliance.

Chris is 54 and has been at this institution since 1998, originally serving as chief operating officer of finance and budgeting. Before coming to Commerce University, Chris spent eight years on the faculty of science and taught statistics and mathematics. He earned his doctoral degree in Applied Statistics from University of New South Wales in Australia in 1992.

Cynthia

The final interview was conducted in the participant's office on her campus on April 25, 2010. She was gracious, informal, and outspoken. Before being interviewed, she exhibited a degree of self-confidence that defied intimidation concerning any aspect of the interview regarding her administrative and leadership perspectives. This was apparent in this interviewee more so than any other participant in the study. This participant was well informed and addressed all questions thoroughly.

Cynthia is 52 years old. She earned her doctoral degree in public administration from Chulalongkorn University. She also studied at the Institute for Educational Management in Harvard's Graduate School of Education. She came to Commerce University as associate manager for finance and resource planning in 1997. She was named assistant president for administrative affairs for the university in February 2008. Her duties include direction of the

university's central finance and budgeting functions, admissions office, human resources management center, research administration, and institutional central reserve management.

All eight selected university administrators realized the responsibility in managing the non-academic side of institutions. Before being asked the interview questions, the administrators emphasized distinguished roles, which are not the same responsibilities as the faculty or academics. However, their responsibility involves the non-academic roles that ensure the university runs smoothly.

Thailand's Senior University Administrators

According to the general administrative structures in the private universities in Thailand, each private university has its own council which is the administrative structure responsible for the general functioning of the institution as well as organizing its internal administrative structure. The superior council provides policy guidance for institutional long-term planning and formulates control procedures. It also allocates funds and screens proposed budgets as well as curriculum design and revisions (Koonchon, 2002).

Senior university administrators are the people who enhance the policy and agreement from the institutional councils. They place a high value on the integrity, effectiveness, and efficiency of the university, particularly as embodied in the stewardship role of university and college department heads, directors, and administrators. All eight invited university administrators have the challenging task of managing resources within a complex environment of university policies and Thailand's governmental regulations and should be held accountable and recognized for quality and performance.

At one time, Thailand's university administrators had responsibilities in supervising faculty and students, and in teaching the senior class and remaining highly visible to the student

body (Vargo, 2000). However, today, university administrators spend more time working collaboratively with boards of trustees, stakeholders, and other senior university administrators. Therefore, the job characteristic in a university is more intensively involved with collaboration, communication, and a strategic thinking perspective.

Prangpatanpon (2006) defines the term administration referring to the president, deans, directors, and business staff, who characteristically think in terms of institutional management or of organizational planning. However, the layers of higher education administration have deepened with increased demands found in areas such as enrollment management, finance, student affairs, quality management, and accreditation. Kathy shared her administrative responsibility that “the most important is, the university administrators need to report directly to the upper positions such as vice presidents, and assistant presidents report directly to the president.” She further shared:

I think university administrators, including the president, are the most important key factors in institutional management. They are responsible for fiscal management, policies, laws, rules, regulations, and they also collaborated with the executive team in order to establish a controlled environment focused on achieving the university’s vision as well as strong management, integrity, and accountability.

Sam provided his perspective of university administrators:

I think university administrators don’t necessarily need to do everything on the campus but they have to demonstrate the capacity to lead a land of scholars that is quite complex and diverse. They could believe in university responsibilities and be able to encourage their faculty and staff to perceive the responsibility in teaching, research, service activities, and cultural conservation.

Chris shared his thoughts that university administrators should understand the institutional circumstances. He stated that “the most important thing is university administrators should understand instructional and information technologies well, understand Thailand’s and

international educational trends and issues, and demonstrate capability in institutional advancement.”

Private University Management

The main goal of this study has been to understand how private university administrators perceive performance excellence. Four selected universities have similar backgrounds of institutional management and the administrators’ responsibilities. The university administrators are the senior executive officers of the institution, overseeing all operations of the university, from academic affairs to administrative affairs. Brittany stated about her responsibility in the university:

Let’s describe the major responsibility as a university administrator; we are dedicated to fulfilling the university’s educational mission and research enterprise. We have to precede a vision for the university’s future, and maintain its tradition of academic excellence. That is the basic responsibility for working here.

Sam asserted that the university system is a unique organization that has numerous scholarly persons as its members.

The university community is not a normal society; yes it is an academic society, and you may see many intellectual persons walking with you. You have to figure out how to connect with those people, how to approach them. It is the normal organization in terms of using techniques to encourage, control, motivate, and inspire which is a different way from general people and you must take yourself as a good example or leading by example in the university society, because those intellectual people will be always able to analyze and synthesize the information and colleagues.

Further, Sahney, Banwet, and Karunes (2008) noted that university administrators in public and private higher education institutions need to consider various institutional stakeholders. They must concentrate the assessment, accreditation, ratings, and rankings in order to gain attention from students as customers. Slone supported that:

You have to understand that a university must be a trustworthy organization to its stakeholders, such as students, academic and administrative staff, faculty, and student

parents. All of them are so valuable to us. They can help us in financial support and use our services.

Kathy explained that her university has different levels in institutional management. Bushman et al. (2004) suggested that the university administrators must understand characteristics in contributing shared governance processes in their institutions. The idea of transparent governance increases extensive faculty participation in institutional decisions allows those charged with policy implementation. The board of trustees has provided oversight and reviewed the president's performance. Kathy discussed her organizational levels:

Actually, we have many governance systems at different levels in the university. We have a board of trustees to create policy, set mission and purpose, maintaining a successful organization. This level is the top level of university. They have to ensure good management and adequate resources. Then, we have the faculty committee. Some universities don't have it. Our faculty committee is supervised by the president. This committee is the symbol of collaboration, governance, and transparency. The next is me, senior administrator. They have to manage all operations of the institution through various administrative units. Then, the next level is the dean and directors to lead schools, programs, divisions, and departments for academic and non academic activities. That is the basic university governance structure.

Higher education institutions are required to improve performance outcomes, and to become more effective and customer-orientated in order to gain a competitive capability. Karl agreed performance management in universities must be complying with the quality at entire organizations.

Universities in this era must seek to account for the quality of institutional policies, academic programs, and performance in all activities. University administrators cannot forget to remain accountable for their financial supervision, management and operating with equity and justice.

Likewise, Cynthia predicted universities that do not consider performance will be terminated in ten years. "I can predict that within 10 years the non-performance universities will be closed for sure or only their building will remain without students. Some universities don't want to close because they might feel ashamed."

Conclusion

From eight administrators' views, they have considered the tensions in higher education regarding efficacy and how to produce institutional performance excellence. They presented that Thailand's higher education struggled to be productive with inadequate resources, while serving students who need improvement and convenient academic and non-academic offerings. Therefore, the eight administrators preliminarily introduced the reasons to maintain performance excellence offering an organized pathway to control some of these tensions.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This chapter illuminates the findings of a qualitative research study. This study was created to explore, analyze, and provide the experiences of senior administrators in creating performance excellence in Thailand's private universities. The sub-research questions of this study are (1) How do senior administrators create a leadership vision for performance excellence? , (2) How do senior administrators conduct strategic planning as a process in achieving performance excellence? , and (3) How do senior administrators link the indicators of ONESQA (the Office of National Educational Standards and Quality Assessment) to their performance excellence strategic planning?

Emergent Themes

Merriam (1998) defines qualitative research as “an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible” (p. 5). Further, the qualitative data analysis process in this study involves reducing and interpreting the data to identify patterns, categories and themes. In order to generate themes, I used a number of verification measures to improve the trustworthiness of interpretations of the data including: prolonged engagement and persistent observation, triangulation using multiple sources, peer review and debriefing, member checking, and rich description (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998). Thus, I utilized the

constant comparative method that involves the continuous comparison of experiences and interviewees' observation, and then creates themes from the data.

The substantive themes were categorized in university administrators perception's of performance excellence; visionary leadership, leadership behavior, continuous quality improvement, process management, conducting self-assessment report, knowledge management, ONESQA indicators, Baldrige criteria, and institutional strategic plans. All eight administrators believed the paradigm of systems thinking, which is feasible for the administration's system. They affirmed that the aspect of holistic in systems thinking can create the culture of continuous performance excellence, leadership visions, and strategic planning process. Moreover, several emergent themes raised by the senior administrators are well connected to the systems thinking.

The emergent themes are discussed and supported by direct quotes from the private university administrators. Pseudonyms also have been used to protect the identities of the participants in the study.

Importance of Performance Excellence in Institutions

The meaning of performance excellence is a concept that is published annually by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). This concept serves as the foundation for determining recipients of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA, 2009). This award program aims to “recognize U.S. organizations for their achievements in quality and performance and to raise awareness about the importance of quality and performance excellence as a competitive edge” (MBNQA, 2009, p. 3). Many institution of higher education have used as a self-assessment of their quality management efforts.

In Thailand higher education institutions, the Baldrige criteria for performance excellence are the influential frameworks for performance measurement in organizations. Moreover, the Commission on Higher Education stressed the need for increased accountability in higher education, and encouraged higher education administrators to consider a performance management strategy (Pitiyanuwat, 2002; Suttiprasit, 2002). Therefore, the increasing awareness of performance excellence in Thailand universities moves beyond conservative financial measures to identify an institution's vision and strategy. University administrators believed that the performance excellence will improve results in the areas of organizational leadership, the workforce, customer relations, work processes, and relations with university stakeholders.

The university administrators suggested their universities started to implement quality management practices for performance excellence from the university's inception because quality is the end result and the basic improvement for their institutions. Moreover, the economic and financial dilemmas are considered to undertake expansion of the private higher education system while preserving satisfactory levels of educational quality (Krongkeaw, 2004; Levidow, 2001; Warwick, 2000). Veesakul (2003) indicated that university senior administrators need to consider the importance of quality assurance in the operation and delivery of its academic programs. The quality assurance will enhance the performance excellence for strengthening institutions to enter the education industry in which both domestic, international students and professions demand quality services to meet their diverse needs (Sudhipitak, 2000). Karl supported this statement and indicated that "we began performance excellence in terms of quality management because of people with institutional connections

including faculty, directors, staff trained, and to improve management practices at the university.”

Further, Chris commented that he believed that performance excellence in the university is in his management perspective. He agreed that performance excellence is a college wide system for establishing methods for focused improvement actions. Chris stated:

We began performance excellence concepts because it was simply an improvement over the management style we were using. I called it a better way of doing everything in our university. Indeed, it is actually part of management, and it was adopted to improve the institution by increasing enrollment, decreasing dropout rates, improving faculty morale and perception of the organization, improving communication, flattening the university organization, and giving the faculty new tools.

Karl discussed the quality assurance framework, which was originally from manufacturing and service industries. He noted:

It is so healthy to have it. Other industries had successfully changed it. It was good for us to follow. Both manufacturing and service organizations tend to implement this quality framework in order to maintain their competitive advantage. We can't ignore that universities have to maintain their competitiveness too.

Sam suggested universities should have the quality principle statement similar to the institutional mission statement. He suggested that universities should separate the quality assurance unit from the administrative affairs department. He indicated:

I think that every university has a mission statement and a quality policy, but the mission statement is documented and the quality policy is not documented. University administrators can indicate that some of their faculty and staff know the mission statement, and the mission statement is an integral part of the quality management which leads the university. Some universities have no documented procedures and work instruction manuals and no separate quality assurance department. I think that is the bottleneck.

Sam further stated that some private universities, operated by a family business, might not have outstanding performance in the framework of performance excellence practices. He reported:

I have experienced a small private university that is owned by a family. This university does not have a mission statement or a quality policy at all. There is no quality

assurance department. Only the administrative affairs along with the school deans drive quality awareness throughout the university.

Sam also provided “the institution has no framework for implementing performance excellence practices. The top-level administrators stated that it is ok not to have, because his intensive concerns would be a factor for adopting quality management concepts.” Bob asserted that because of the quality requirement, his university, therefore, started to implement performance excellence practices 10 years ago in the non-academic divisions. Bob noted his experiences with the mission statement communication:

The institution has a mission statement but I think only less than 20% of our faculty and staff would know it. Previously, our mission statement did not relate to the quality management of the organization. The university has a written quality policy since 1999 but I don’t know why our staff didn’t have a copy of, or access to the policy. I mean in that time, we experienced that problem, but now, we have improved. We have documented procedures, a teaching instruction manual, a work manual, and a quality manual.

In Eastern University, Kathy provided that her institution has emphasized how to create performance excellence on the campus. She stated that “actually, our university officially started implementing performance excellence 11 years ago. The main factors that initiated adopting quality management were organizational values and for reducing inappropriate costs, as a financial tool.” Her university has successfully delivered the university mission statement. Kathy noted:

About 60% of the faculty and staff in our university have known an institutional mission statement. Our mission statement is a link to quality management because it purely focuses on quality. Personally, I think that a university is not too keen on mission statements but rather focuses on its quality policy. Our quality policy is in place which started in 1998 after a major enrollment problem. All of our staff has copies and they can access the quality policy. Moreover, the university itself has documented procedures and work instruction manuals. Right now, we have a quality assurance department that the vice-president is the chair of it. This department has 17 staff.

In Northern University, The senior level administrators started implementing performance excellence practices in 2000 at the start of the institution's ISO certification efforts. Slone indicated that "in 2000, we attempted to launch quality management because we aimed to build a new culture of quality, and we wanted to eliminate the inefficient activities that waste our time and money." Slone also commented about his university mission statement:

Our university has a mission statement and the administrator believes all faculty and staff would know it. We posted the mission statement all over the building. The mission statement can be connected to quality management in the sense that everyone must provide quality of academic and nonacademic products and service consistently. After we were in the ISO certification efforts, we had good performance in managing quality concerns. Everyone has access to the quality policy.

Therefore, the future of Thailand's higher education institutions will maintain high performance, if the institutions are professionally managed by using quality assurance. Sam provided an impressive quote that "good education is from the product of good management."

Visionary Leadership

Quality management for performance excellence is one that suggests top institutional leaders play a critical role in shaping the inner workings of the organization and ultimately its results. The Baldrige Educational Criteria for Performance Excellence also identifies visionary leadership as one of its core values. It indicates the foundation of visionary leadership:

Your organization's senior leaders should set directions and create a student-focused, learning-oriented climate; clear and visible values; and high expectations. The directions, values, and expectations should balance the needs of all your stakeholders. Your leaders should ensure the creation of strategies, systems, and methods for achieving performance excellence, stimulating innovation, building knowledge and capabilities, and ensuring organizational sustainability. The defined values and strategies should help guide all of your organization's activities and decisions. Senior leaders should inspire and encourage your entire workforce to contribute, to develop and learn, to be innovative, and to embrace change. Senior leaders should be responsible to your organization's governance body for their actions and performance. The governance body should be responsible ultimately to all your stakeholders for the ethics, actions, and performance of your organization and its senior leaders. Senior leaders should serve as role models through their ethical behavior and their personal

involvement in planning, communicating, coaching the workforce, developing future leaders, reviewing organizational performance, and recognizing members of your workforce. As role models, they can reinforce ethics, values, and expectations while building leadership, commitment, and initiative throughout your organization. (MBNQA, 2009, p. 51)

Therefore, leadership in institutions should act as a driver of the organization and directly impacts institutional system factors, including measurement, analysis, knowledge management, strategic planning, the workforce, and process management. These system variables, in turn, have a direct impact on institutional outcomes including students, customers or stakeholder relationships and satisfaction, and other organizational results. Further, the Baldrige criteria and the key performance indicators (KPI) of ONESQA also claimed that administrative leadership has an influential impact on the university's outcomes.

University administrators should consider the quality performance framework and excellence in institutions as institutional visions. Dettman (2004) asserted that the performance excellence is driven by vision, mission and outcome, and they are defined by the expectations of all the stakeholders. Karl agreed and provided more perspectives on importance of vision:

Different universities in different organizations need to have and to develop their own vision. It is so unique. However, they might have the same perspective. When they have visions, they will be able to see the larger perspective, think ahead, and need imaginative optimism. They must have the eyeglasses of excellence. We cannot deny that vision is the most important key of leadership and in higher education circumstance. I think that my vision can encourage my faculty, staff, and everyone in the university to engage something together intellectually, academically, and emotionally.

Chris preliminarily provided some weakness points of the leadership in Thailand's institutions, that many current administrators have insufficient leadership skills because they are promoted from the academic area. He stated:

The weakness of leadership in institutions is that most of the university administrators were promoted from academic officers, such as faculty. Therefore, they can only know how to teach but not how to lead. Many of Thailand's university administrators cannot do well in administrative tasks, so I think they need to improve their ability to lead.

Clear, Shared, and Communicate Leadership Vision

This theme will address the behaviors of the administrators necessary in implementing institutional performance excellence. The four most important behaviors or characteristics needed by the leader in implementing performance excellence were identified by the administrators as (1) developing and articulating a clear vision and direction; (2) persistence and courage; and (3) the ability to lead the change effort; and (4) the ability to communicate the change.

Clear vision. Dettman (2004) noted that if the institutions have no clear mission and vision statements, they might lack a clear sense of direction and focus. Karl asserted that vision is important for him. He said:

I think it is important for an administrator in different levels, for me, to have a vision and to articulate that vision, and to get people to buy into that vision or help shape and share it... Sharing the vision is needed in my university actually. It is a tool for distinguishing leader and manager but it is noted that both roles are necessary in higher education.

Karl further said:

I must keep the vision updated and alive all the time including the times of constrained resources to make a collaborative working environment... let's think about it, you have to do the environmental scanning for checking that your resource is on board at the right moment or not... If your faculty or staff doesn't know your vision, your vision will be in danger. Therefore, we need to share our vision in the same way like we are on the same direction.

Shared vision. Some university administrators believed in the importance of shared vision with their stakeholders. Some institutions launched the seminar program for developing shared vision on campus. Chris explained:

Shared vision is our priority. We have launched the seminar for development of shared vision every academic semester. We set it in the last week of every semester. It is mostly held outside Bangkok. That is our break time also. We did it last October. It was a big activity. I think it is so important for working collaboratively. I expect that after joining this seminar, our academic and non academic staff will get to know each

other. They know each other and they also know their administrators. They can understand the university's vision and apply that vision to their own vision. It is good in terms of knowledge sharing too.

Shared vision in university society should be considered as culture of institutions in order to develop performance excellence. Chris noted that

Shared vision, beliefs, and values are our university culture. I think in an outstanding university, it is good to have everyone on the same page. It is good for the university and for faculty that they come together and become the driving force behind what everyone does. We believe together that we emphasize continuous improvement of processes, and that makes our students and university customers' satisfied.

The paradigm of shared visions is linked to Senge's system thinking theory. This theory demonstrated that shared vision is simple and can identify what the university aims to do. Bob said that "I believed the shared vision is the best way to show intrinsic faculty, staff, and student's aspirations." Sam is entrenched in the visionary leadership concept. He believes each administrator could be effective in drawing institutional vision. Sam noted:

As I understand leadership, I think leaders can be effective in different circumstances, and it depends on how they identify the effectiveness in their vision. I think I am good at designing things, creating things, seeing what the future looks like. That is the visionary thinking. I could visualize whole pictures in my mind. I think that visionary leaders should have thinking skills in strategy, ideation, and be futuristic to writing the visioning process.

Sam connected visionary leadership and leadership vision:

In Thai language, I think the visionary and vision have the same concepts in how to make it clear. If you have no visionary or vision, you cannot show people where to go, you cannot show them where they are and where they've been... so you have to communicate this to staff. You can create vision in the company in this way.

Slone discussed that it is important to make transparent institutional vision and to connect to the mission, and he noted about how to emphasize the ideas and visions and consultations with his staff about university missions. He stated:

I think that good administrators of a university should be transparent and accountable. Sometimes, we cannot do the best things in linking of vision and mission to leadership

within the institution. We can help our university staff to do their teaching or service job by creating a work environment that has clear objectives with a focus on functionality. The clear objectives will make clear visions and missions. The clear visions and missions will make clear and appropriate key performance indicators.

Open door with informal communication. Administrators have successfully found the effective communication method in their institutions. Bob stated:

Our administrators and our faculty have a big meeting every month and we also have a big lunch every month too. That is quite informal communication. We share everything we have or we want to have on the table. I can say that our administrators operate an open door policy which allows for two way communication, and I think our faculty and staff enjoy it.

Furthermore, he stated the method of communication in sharing information:

Our university administrators can also share information about the university through the president's communication in the internal newsletter every two weeks. On the other hand, we can know our faculty and staff's thinking through the faculty meeting every Friday afternoon. There is always a two way flow of communication.

Cynthia discussed one of her institutional visions regarding supporting her faculty to have doctoral degrees. She encouraged everyone in her university to understand a vision as a culture. She explained:

We want to define our university core value as a university culture. I prefer using the word culture. I feel more sincere. The university culture can ground everything. One of our visions is to focus on human capital development. I mean we have to support the faculty's continuing education by providing scholarships for further education, and by supporting specialized training and development programs. Supporting faculty training and educational degrees are ways to improve learning throughout the institution. The administrators use all channels of communication to let the staff know what is most important.

Karl also believed in the open door policy in making successful informal communication. He also believed that the university is not a normal bureaucratic society. He agreed:

The university society is not a normal bureaucratic society; it is an academic society that has millions of scholarly persons. It is good way to operate an open door policy, because it has techniques to encourage, control, motivate, and inspire the different way

from our colleagues. However, you have to focus on the faculty's concerns by listening to them and trusting them, and university administrators cannot avoid the institution's code of conduct and business ethics.

Furthermore, Karl suggested an open door policy can help to create a work environment. It can "help the staff do their jobs by providing feedback and an action plan. And, I can know what the staff is thinking because they are approachable and available for informal conversation in comfortable levels."

The open door policy can improve institutional communication. However, Brittany showed that sharing some feedback and speaking openly is not the culture of Thailand's faculty. She stated:

Although the university administrators used regular meetings to impart the organization's values and to communicate with the faculty, some faculty felt uncomfortable when they had a chance to share their comments. We understand and solve this problem by providing a campus mailbox for them to leave what they prefer to share. I think we can improve the atmosphere of sharing information and we as administrators can listen to the staff's problems.

Brittany also stated that university society consists of scholarly people and needs to use communication in various types to encourage brainstorming. She discussed:

It is normal that the university environments include the intellectual people. We have to consider different types of communication styles in order to connect with the knowledgeable scholars. University administrators have to use communication to improve the brain power of their staff. Effective communication can energize the know-how and creativity of their faculty. I think if we can do that; we will create the social architecture.

Brittany stated that the open door policy can create the network of information that improves her decision making skills.

Academic leadership in this era in my perspective is how they can decentralize and create the network of information. I am not talking about technology. But technology is one of that. Administrators should get away from the Thai styles of making decision that are based on the information you have. I think a network of information can help you to make a rapid decision with minimal information. However, you as an

administrator should be the one who can provide the guidance to your staff when they have to make a decision. Everyone helps each other, which is my vision.

Kathy spoke of her collaborative style in the context of her position.

You have to build incrementally on what's happened within the institution. If you say that I am a successful leader, administrator, supervisor, or controller whatever, I might say it is from my supporting good ideas and finding ways to expand those ideas more wisely, and using them and getting them in place.

Bob discussed that shared leadership can create the collaborative working conditions.

He found that shared leadership vision is needed as the foundation of a collaborative working environment. He described the importance of shared leadership vision:

I think shared leadership vision in our university is needed and it's a leadership prerequisite. If university administrators in different levels can't do that, they aren't going to be able to take people in the university to places they've never been before.

Kathy further noted that "sometimes, I might define myself that I am not such the most collaborative leader, but I have good relationship with my staff and enjoy working with them instead." Further, Slone described himself:

When asked about what my leadership style is, I would say it is collaborative. I also try to lead by example. I also rely on and try to bring the best out of people in university, and get away from coerciveness and manipulation. Before working, you have to know how to work with people and when you don't have good people skills, you need to learn those people skills. It's very important that I find the people that are really interested and good hard workers and I will work with them. My staff would feel ok when I try and represent all of the positive reasons why it would be good for us to enhance the healthy collaboration. It is so good when you feel that all the stakeholders are involved and have some voice in sharing for our progress.

Therefore, the university administrators must also have the leadership ability to direct the change effort by understanding where the university must improve to become more productive and achieve a higher level of institutional success. Understanding leadership may facilitate the administrators' capabilities in directing the institutional changes needed to improve performance.

Continuous Quality Improvement

Continuous quality improvement is a method to connect university administrators with the quality effort. University administrators have to understand the foundation of continuous quality improvement, and to be the leader in implementing quality effort in all administrative tasks. Administrators mentioned that building quality environments in institutions will improve the working environment to develop the academic and non-academics services.

In the era of financial crisis in Thailand's private higher education, private university administrators recognize this dilemma, and start to search for new management techniques to release the dramatic increase in operational costs, increased competition among private universities, and raise student and stakeholder's satisfaction. Karl mentioned that he worried about institutions that ignored continuous improvement. He said that "I am afraid of losing my job because the university will go out of business and if we didn't do anything better, we might move back [to consider the continuous improvement] immediately." Brittany noted about the importance of the quality management system:

Understanding quality management or creating performance excellence in our university is our priority. Quality management or assurance is one of our goals and it will be the method that we will choose. Our university believes that quality management was not a special project. It really was the way we were to work in university. It is part of life.

Sam also discussed the components of quality assurance. He stated that "the framework of quality assurance is for academic excellence, organizational excellence; and good student welfare practices."

Further, Cynthia mentioned how quality management connects to the different tasks in the institution. She stated:

Quality Assurance Policy in our university proceeded with the initial review from our team, then we have corroborative commitments and policy, then we make an

institutional plan or strategic plan, then we implement and operate what we have from a plan, after that, we check and correct our action, and the last step is the management review.

Northern University is an example of institutions that consider continuous improvement. This institution was recognized as one of the higher education institution leaders in maintaining continuous improvement through its strong leadership support, team training and teamwork, and business partnerships. This institution started working on continuous quality improvement referring to the ISO9001:2000 standards. The university has been moving forward more strongly than other private universities. Institution administrators also believe in the concept of quality management and performance excellence, and the concept should extend to higher educational institutions as well. Karl stated:

Our university had passed requirement ISO9001 version 2000. We trust our educational quality program. Quality is not just a control system, but it is a management function that we have to follow. ISO9001 actually encourages us to maintain quality in our students and stakeholders or customers. We have cleared in any definition of our customer. We must know, who is our real customer?, and we have to know their needs with appropriate quality measurement.

Karl further discussed that “in our dictionary, continuous is about never ending activity. We did review of service requirements and achievements to identify opportunities for service quality improvement.”

Northern University aimed to utilize a quality management paradigm to support the university's culture of excellence and continual improvement. Dettman (2004) also noted that university administrators are responsible for systematically bringing the university's culture into harmony through top-down leadership. Karl also created the institution's culture by introducing continuous improvement process. He stated:

I think that I will not implement quality management or all kinds of this to win only an award or because I am forced to by stakeholders. I will use quality management to improve the performance of my institution. I will use it every day of working. We

can't wait until our university gets into trouble to begin using quality management because beginning continuous improvement will maintain our current success and ensure success in the future.

Northern University has applied a top-down administrative approach to advance the university wide quality improvement efforts. The university performance in quality management performed at a higher level because the top-level administrator has involved and monitored all processes. Karl further stated:

We are lucky, because our vice president for administrative affairs, planning and development, and quality assurance worked collaboratively. So, the problem from leadership involvement was gone. Our senior administrators have been personally involved in a continuous quality improvement process. They keep feeding information seminars to faculty, deans, and department heads, so we had much support from every level, especially from middle management. Five years ago, our university had launched the "University Quality Team." The 12-member quality team had a meeting every week, discussing the core processes, quality issues, student and stakeholder satisfaction, monitoring quality improvement recommendation. Our vice president for planning and development served as a head of that meeting.

Brittany believed that the concepts of continuous improvement in the university were utilized in all processes of working activities as the decision making process. She stated:

I think continuous improvement is basically in our daily life, for example, when I need to go somewhere; I have to make decision regarding the route to go to work. Sometimes, we spend much more time in using this route, thus we have to change or improve the way of selecting route. That is my definition of continuous improvement.

Kathy agreed that continuous improvement can be "adopted before the university faced the financial, organizational, or leadership crisis. Introducing a continuous improvement process in our university helped me to focus on the university's core value about academic and administrative standards and how to be a learning organization."

Cynthia explained that continuous improvement in quality is a comprehensive approach that is designed to help university administrators understand the system and improve processes. Deming's cycle (PDCA) is a process or system that works toward future excellence.

This cycle provides a creative technique to improve processes and manage effective institutional outcomes. Cynthia said:

When I heard about continuous improvement, I suddenly considered the Japanese word called KAIZEN. KAI means continuous, and Zen means improvement. So, when combining two words, continuous improvement means the PDCA (plan, do, check, and act).

Cynthia believed that quality with non-stop improvement can be continually improved by using reliable techniques to study and refine processes in measuring and managing outcomes. She indicated “PDCA can improve our non-academic service in our university. It can move our institution forward and in a continuous way.”

Difficulties in implementing continuous quality improvement. Bob who held a doctoral degree in industrial engineering mentioned the fundamental and original concept of continuous improvement, which is grounded in a business paradigm. He said:

I think it is good to have TQM, Malcolm Baldrige, Balanced Scorecard, or a continuous improvement concept. But, sometimes, I think some administrators or faculty do not feel comfortable applying business quality models directly to the higher education world. They still believe that students are not 100% customers, and continuous improvement does not work in the academic world because both teaching and research involves individual creative work.

A university will not have a continuous improvement environment when the senior level administrator fails to support the quality effort. The lack of top level support happened in the institution and department level. Bob claimed:

I think sometimes our university president ignored “walk the talk”. Yes, we have a plan, a mission about continuous improvement. It looks good, but we still have problems in the practices. Our president did not have much time to monitor that, and he keeps decentralizing this responsibility to the vice president. That is not bad, but the top of institution should be concerned about this topic much more than this... in my university, this problem affected the department level directly. The dean of some school also ignored the importance of continuous quality improvement. They might make the excuse that there is no clear vision of continuous improvement from the top, so he better concentrate on teaching and research. For me, it is a little bit dangerous.

Further, the problem regarding continuous improvement in the university is the resistance from faculty and staff. Slone stated:

Faculty is the important factor in the moving circle of continuous quality improvement. Our faculty members love the meeting process that they can share their own current problem and find solutions from their peers. It demonstrates how effectively the team works. However, faculty felt that it was time consuming for them to implement the full scale of the continuous improvement process, because of their workload in teaching, research, and service as well as conserving art and culture... Sometimes, faculty worried that the continuous improvement process will force them to work harder. They think it involved only top management concerns to reduce costs, not for them. Thus they resisted it. The most important thing is university administrators have to understand how we control quality or how we maintain effective performance... Training for a skill of continuous improvement will help administrators to deal with it. Training is the basic solution to build “a quality culture” into every process of working.

Slone further stated:

A quality culture is good, but it is difficult for people to accept a new culture, right? You may see the change and resistance to change. However, continuous improvement helps me to understand how to be a good administrator as well as how to deal with individuals and the organization. So, you must implement continuous improvement over and over, and your faculty and staff will feel more familiar with this new culture.

Sam provided that the process of continuous quality improvement culture in a university can improve constantly and holistic systems of academic and non-academic service develop quality and productivity, and thus constantly decrease costs. Sam said that “I keep searching for problems in order to improve every activity in my university, to improve quality and productivity and thus to constantly decrease costs... that is my responsibility to work continually on the system.” However, in Sam’s university, some of his staff still questions how to modify the continuous improvement process in the university. He stated

Some of my staff felt that it was time consuming for them to implement the full process of continuous improvement because of their increased workload. I agreed with them on some points. I believed that if they think it creates more workload, they will not participate in it. So, we have to solve this problem by modifying the process of continuous improvement and providing more correspondence to the context of the institution.

Cynthia mentioned her positive changes in understanding continuous improvement. She stated:

I think that the continuous improvement activities encouraged me to know the needs of students, staff, institutional stakeholders, strengths and weaknesses, and the foundations of the problems. I think its concepts helped me understand the solutions of these problems effectively. I understand my colleagues and students better as I know what needs to be completed. I think I know how to work in order to meet their needs.

Bob provided another way to perform continuous improvement concepts. He encouraged his faculty members to share their professional knowledge such as reading other faculty's journals or scholarly work. Faculty can share their professional knowledge from internal newsletters or external publication.

Our university encourages not only students using the library database or finding articles to read, but also faculty and staff reaching the library database as well...I am happy to see my faculty read and write a professional journal or newsletter; although, it is just an internal journal...we have research week, one week in each semester, for faculty and students joining the discussion about a research topic, article, or whatever. I feel that continuous improvement in quality in our university will be started from faculty involvement. I can say that 70% of my faculty members are happy to learn about continuous quality improvement from other faculty members, from professional development seminars or a simple sharing of written information between and among faculty members.

The performance excellence principle is focused on continuous improvement and improved excellence. University administrators articulate the performance excellence model as a self-assessment of their institution effectiveness (Pitiyanuwat, 2002; Suttiprasit, 1998). In addition, Kaewdang (2001) and Pitiyanuwat contended that the quality assurance principle was extended to serve as a methodology for continuous improvement in all aspects of institutional academic and administrative activities.

The continuous improvement activity is a necessary part of performance excellence to properly run its universities. This activity can reduce costs, and increase institutional productivity. It could provide sustainable quality to its students and stakeholders, who are becoming more demanding and are seeking higher quality, better value, and lower costs.

Implementing continuous improvement in managing activities is relevant to all those who participate in and contribute to managing the institutional process and higher education administrators need to generate and collaborate on the environment of learning culture for continuous improvement in quality (Becket and Brookes, 2006).

Process Management

Chris provided that “process management can connect an institutional vision and its actual operation conditions.” Similarly, Kathy asserted that process management is “a bridge to make a connection between information regarding management and the way to make improvement.” In the Malcolm Baldrige criteria,

Process management is the focal point within the criteria for your key work systems and work processes. It stresses the importance of your core competencies and how you protect and capitalize on them for success and organizational sustainability. It calls specific attention to the need to prepare for potential emergencies and to ensure continuity of operations. Efficient and effective work systems require effective design; a focus on student learning; a prevention orientation; linkage to students, stakeholders, suppliers, partners, and collaborators, and a focus on value creation for all key stakeholders; operational performance; cycle time; emergency readiness; and evaluation, continuous improvement, innovation, and organizational learning. (MBNQA, 2009, p. 45)

In the 7th KPI of the Commission on higher education and the 7th standards of the ONESQA, process management is also discussed in terms of management and administration. Management and administration are important for a higher education institution. The institution’s process management can control working activity with effective and efficient performances. Process management encourages the institutional governance’s environment, including human resources, information systems, risk management, change management, and resource management systems.

Chris explained that process management is needed for maintaining institutional performance excellence. He stated:

Our staff knows that process management is kind of repetitive work. Faculty and staff will understand their work condition and description. They collect information about how to make quality in their work on a daily basis. I think that the university is the specific organization that has good processes for doing its work because the processes are simplified so it is easy to understand what the end product looks like.

Chris further explained that his staff can create the quality of their work from the feedback and communication. He said:

Our staff collects information about the quality of their work through the feedback and two-way communication. I as an administrator just make sure that our staff has everything they need to do for their jobs. And also, you have to make sure that the university must have good processes for doing work for improvement.

Kathy discussed that university administrators and staff have collaborative responsibility in creating process management. She explained:

Not only the university administrators, but faculty and staff also have to monitor their personal work processes. In terms of system, there are quality assurance audits and quality control. We have daily checks, and spot checks in administrative departments such as finance, registrar, and accounting. I think this process helps everyone to collect information about the quality of their work.

Kathy also mentioned that the size of the university is an involved entity that makes and manages working process smoothly. She explained that “the small institutional size helps to facilitate faculty and staff having control over their personal work processes because you can see, adapt, and improve good processes for doing its work. Chris concluded that in order to develop an effective process management for university performance excellence, university administrators must convey the values, and create a group involvement and brainstorming.

Working on Self-Assessment Report

The selected universities were involved formally in quality initiatives, and their faculty and staff were trained to understand how to understand performance excellence in their institutions. Each university did engage in several practices that were quality strategies. The Self Assessment Report (SAR) is the method to determine the effectiveness in meeting the

requirements of the institutional performance excellence and specific policies, procedures, standards, contracts, and legal requirements relevant to academic and administrative quality.

All higher education institutions in Thailand have developed the SAR for quality assurance since 1999, when the Commission on Higher Education announced the policy and guidelines for Thailand's quality assurance in higher education institutions (Pitiyanuwat, 2002). In order to follow the quality assurance movement, Thailand's universities must conduct the internal and external quality assurance, and SAR must be written. The internal quality assurance must be completed annually by the inspectors from their own institutions in order to establish a system and ensure the continuing operation of such a system. Likewise, the external quality assurance must be done by the Office of the National Education Standards and Quality Assessment every five academic years.

The Self Assessment Report is the annual documents that both public and private universities in Thailand have to prepare in accord with their development plans. The report is submitted to the Commission on Higher Education and distributed to the general public. The statements in the SAR must be reported with the facts, data, and references to verify responses against the Key Performance Indicators. The SAR is an institutional official document that connects the quality assurance and annual planning activities of a university and examines the quality, value, and importance of university outcomes (Kaewdang, 2001; Pitiyanuwat, 2002; Suttiprasit, 2002). Sam made meaning of Self Assessment activity:

Self-assessment is so important not just for your own purposes but also for external assessment from ONESQA... it will help you to respond to yourself and your team about how your performance was recently. Certainly, it is ok if you fail in some criteria, but at least, you can educate yourself about where you have to improve.

Cynthia said about her institutional SAR report:

My university has set up an internal inspection committee since 2002 for conducting a quality management system, and issuing an institution QA manual as our bible. Our

university report was compiled according to the QA manual in the form of Self Study Report (SSR) and Self Assessment Report (SAR) on Key Performance Indicators (KPI) of each department. Finally, the report was audited by both internal and external committees, which resulted in feedback of useful recommendations for our further development.

She further stated that the SAR should be based on the different KPI. Each university has diverse environments, and the KPI should be developed with their own contexts. She mentioned:

I think the basic concept of writing SAR is so various. The KPI in SAR should be different because of diverse system, environment, uniqueness, implementation process, audit procedures, and review cycles. It is not actually an easy assignment for any institution to do a self-reflection.

Bob encouraged his university to develop the SAR for maintaining performance excellence because:

It is the step by step for performance excellence. I think SAR can produce the quality culture in my university. Everyone needs to be alert, not just paperwork but SAR goes to their routine working life. I might say that faculty members and staff must follow the institutional QA manual for submitting SAR reports to their schools or departments, and they will contribute KPI departmental assessment reports for the whole institution reports.

Bob further suggested that the SAR report is the cycle of checking a process:

I can conclude that writing the SAR report is the appropriate way to think, to rethink, to check, and to recheck our performance. The SAR report reminded me to check my quality assurance process, which has to be established, documented, implemented, maintained, and continuously improved.

The review cycle occurs every year for internal assessment, and every five years for external assessment (Kaewdang, 2001). Karl explained the benefit of developing SAR for quality assessment with his previous experience as the institutional auditor of ONESQA. He provided that “SAR reports are the first task of a performance excellence organization. Although there is no accreditation system, SAR reports can ensure that our university is

developed to the international standards.” Karl further stated the university advantage in writing a SAR report:

It helps us to review and check the existing system of the institution. I can determine the effectiveness of quality assurance processes. We will see closely each process and every main function while keeping in mind our academic excellence, uniqueness, values, principles, missions and goals... and most importantly we can maintain the integrity of transparency and accountability. I can apply the adoption and transfer of good practice.

Slone described that many universities including his institution have considered quality assurance for administrative and academic affairs. He mentioned:

In my university, we separated the person who is in charge of the quality assurance purpose. The vice president for academic affairs supervised the performance excellence in academic matters. The vice president for administrative affairs supervised the quality assurance policy for all administrative matters.

Slone further explained his responsibility of supervising how to make performance excellence in his administrative and financial affairs:

If you want to make your department or university achieve more quality performance, you have to monitor all relevant information relating to any actions, documents, and people. You have to do and encourage people to understand and implement the self assessment from SAR, and identify any specific concerns to be addressed during the self assessment.

Kathy described that she applied the SAR report for identifying risk and recommending preventive action. “I can make sure from SAR which one is corrective action and I can review processes effectively.”

Universities were studied themselves within their own SAR report. They used the criteria of the Commission on Higher Education for internal assessment and the standards of ONESQA for external assessment (Pitiyanuwat, 2002). University administrators also applied the sub categories of criteria and standards in order to review themselves and then complete a descriptive 100 to 150 page report to the government officials. Thus, the developed SAR for

performance excellence was designed to assist the higher education institutions in presenting a reflective view. SAR report can provide attitude for improvement, identify opportunities for improving an organization, recognize institutional strengths and weaknesses, and university administrators can prioritize organizational activities.

Knowledge Management, Measurement, and Analysis

University administrators mentioned the concept of knowledge management in order to improve their institutional performance excellence. In the Baldrige criteria,

The measurement, analysis, and knowledge management Category is the main point within the Criteria for all key information about effectively measuring, analyzing, and improving performance and managing organizational knowledge to drive improvement in student and operational performance. In the simplest terms, Category 4 is the “brain center” for the alignment of your organization’s programs and offerings with its strategic objectives. Central to such use of data and information are their quality and availability. Furthermore, since information, analysis, and knowledge management might themselves be core competencies that provide an advantage in your market or service environment, this category also includes such strategic considerations. (MBNQA, 2009, p. 41)

Thailand’s university administrators believed that knowledge management can provide a framework for addressing organizational and quality assurance challenges. Administrators must address knowledge management in order to achieve their potential in becoming the leading institution in the new knowledge circumstance. Karl emphasized that “we have to focus knowledge management on the knowledge and competencies that faculty and staff need for doing their work.” Cynthia shared her institutional experience regarding knowledge management “I think the knowledge management needs are part of our performance excellence discussions. Administrators support and encourage their institutions providing honest and constructive feedback on their performance and taking performance actions where appropriate.”

Administrators continuously shared that there were many benefits to the whole institution from knowledge-building and the sharing of accumulated knowledge. Knowledge in a university involved several activities. Sam stated:

When asked about what the knowledge is? Knowledge relates to the roles of administrative leadership. It may relate to institutional strategic direction and policy environment, teaching, learning, staff and resource management, quality assurance and accountability, and communication and connection.

University administrators played the central role in creating a knowledge sharing culture, and motivated their faculty and staff to realize its importance. Karl provided:

It is our responsibility definitely. My president said in the last administrative meeting how our university can create a knowledge sharing culture. He [the president] encouraged us to demonstrate willingness and motivation to share knowledge and to make it [knowledge] explicit and available to others.

Karl further pointed that knowledge management and sharing can be created in a form of research. The research outcomes can make the knowledge useful, and knowledge sharing culture can also develop knowledge explicit and available to others stating, “It might be beneficial to the university if we can do research on knowledge management, research and learning, and their convergence.”

Slone commented that knowledge management is the bridge to make connections between university responsibilities and KPIs for quality assurance. His university also emphasized knowledge management as an institutional vision. He stated:

As you know, the university responsibilities are research, service, teaching, and cultural preservation. The understanding of knowledge management is like when we build the bridge to connect the university responsibilities and the KPIs. You can use this bridge as a network to connect the knowledge in your working place as well.

Slone further explained that his university’s vision also includes the knowledge management vision as one of the institutional core processes. He said:

Our university has included the knowledge management concept in our vision and mission since 2005. We just want to remind our faculty and staff to consider

knowledge management as essential to the core process of the university. We plan to see that in the future knowledge sharing is commonplace, expanded, and enriched. So, it is the institutional leaders' experience of knowledge-based initiatives in order to create a knowledge-based society. If you want to be a high performance university, senior administrators are responsible to create new institutional knowledge by synthesizing existing knowledge and informing the design and development of tools for knowledge sharing.

Moreover, administrators can develop institutional performance excellence by utilizing knowledge sharing, and formal and informal connections. Karl further discussed that “university administrators must consider the way to operate formal or informal networks, collaboration, and interaction rather than just encouraging faculty and staff to pursue knowledge management.”

At Karl's university, knowledge management is critically prioritized. There is a unit in the quality assurance department that is responsible for this activity, because his institution faced inefficient knowledge sharing a long time ago. He discussed:

We currently have the knowledge management department under the department of quality assurance. This function included advisement on organizational learning, intellectual preservation, knowledge development, and adaptive change.

Karl further noted that his university formerly had problems in knowledge sharing:

Five years ago, I think, we had problems in knowledge sharing. Everything in the university couldn't work smoothly and it relied on some people and some groups. I think you can see the bottlenecks. Our information and knowledge sharing was not something that was done or supported. Sometimes, the knowledge sharing was very successful within departments, but less successful among departments. They didn't know how to share it. But now it is better.

However, Slone did provide various challenges relating to poor performance in some knowledge management idea. He stated that “the inadequate financial resources might affect the knowledge management implementation.” Slone further discussed that technological infrastructures can empower knowledge sharing. In terms of technology for university

performance excellence, Karl suggested that higher education institutions should utilize enterprise resource planning like a business company. He said:

If we can develop the ERP [enterprise risk practice] like the company system, I can track all information and measure the quality of our work. Our faculty and staff can constantly review their processes. I think it is to imagine it in terms of a higher education system. They can get the important information to do their jobs through a variety of avenues as needed, such as meetings, academic sharing, journal, and reading discussion.

Therefore, everyone within the university should participate and devote their physical and mental strengths in creating a knowledge sharing environment. The knowledge management process created collaborative learning communities within the institutions that can provide the driving force for performance excellence. Slone concluded that “university administrators should be capable of determining goals, creating a healthy working condition which supports the sharing and exchange of valuable knowledge.”

ONESQA Indicators for Performance Excellence

The importance of Thailand’s quality assurance system in higher education is widely discussed regarding a method for improving a university. Thailand’s private universities are partially controlled by the Commission on Higher Education’s quality assurance policy because CHE focuses on the expansion of higher education and its quality in order to ensure high standards of human resource preparation and the development of internationalization. Therefore, the Office of National Educational Standard and Quality Assessment of Thailand (ONESQA) is the government organization responsible for assessing Thai schools, professional colleges, and higher education institutions in order to target international educational standards.

Both private and public higher education institutions are required to maintain quality assurance policies and procedures. The Commission on Higher Education is responsible for assessing internal quality assurance every year, and ONESQA comes to evaluate the external

quality assurance every five years. Moreover, in terms of transparency, the Ministry of Education requires the publication of these quality assurance assessment reports for all Thai institutions. Brittany provided the beneficial side of quality assurance:

Apparently, our government has made an attempt to improve educational standards by creating performance indicators for both private and public universities. I think that it helps us in terms of seeing institutional direction clearer, improving private university standards, qualities, and social expectation. I think that was a good start by the government regarding the higher education administration.

Karl also agreed that quality assurance with specific KPIs and indicators “makes my job easier, meaning that I can easily control the quality of our service if we can meet the standards. I don’t have to worry, but rather I’m happy. It helps our administration.”

ONESQA’s key performance indicators (KPI) have 9 indicators. They are the main 9 sets of KPI as specified by the CHE and required by law in Thailand. The internal and external assessment standards and indicators are relatively comparable so that universities can develop their own quality assurance systems in order to meet both the CHE’s and ONESQA’s standards. The scoring calculation of the standards is similar to the Baldrige performance excellence, and the scoring guidelines indicate the quality performance that integrates framework and principles for institutional quality performance assessment.

Slone mentioned that “it’s very hard to pass with good scores on all nine categories of ONESQA’s criteria for performance excellence. However, we need to start. If we do it seriously, I believe we’ll develop our university quickly.” He further said the benefit of ONESQA indicators that “we need everything with the international standards. Our education quality in private universities has to be higher than it is now, if we as a private university want to be the high school students’ destination.” Bob supported the high standards of ONESQA that “I think it is a benefit for universities that ONESQA sets very high criteria as it aspires to meet

the international standards. ONESQA evaluates us every five years by using similar standards and indicators.”

Bridge from Baldrige Criteria to ONESQA indicators

Slone made a connection between ONESQA’s indicators and the Baldrige’s criteria for performance excellence:

Actually, ONESQA’s indicators have the same foundation as the Baldrige performance excellence. The standards of graduates of ONESQA are same as the results of Baldrige. The standards of research and innovative activity are same as the strategic planning. The standards of academic and community service are same as the social responsibility. The standards of art and cultural preservation are the same as the leadership and the social responsibility. The standards of management and administration are same as the leadership. And, the standards of system and mechanism of quality assurance are also same as the leadership in Baldrige. So, almost all quality improvement indicators come from the design process and procedures.

Slone advocated that some other administrators feel that ONESQA’s indicators are just local criteria. He argued that “some public university administrators consider that ONESQA makes only local quality assessments, but the Baldrige quality framework is accepted internationally. I think that is partly true, but I think we use Baldrige as a good benchmark.” Chris also mentioned the basic foundation of ONESQA’s quality indicators. He provided:

ONESQA’s indicators are influenced by Baldrige’s criteria in considering the in-depth self-assessment that focuses on the way of working rather than what are indicators. In my opinion, I think Baldrige and ONESQA are both quality concepts that move much farther away from working on just a check-list approach. It forces me to seek better and faster of performance excellence, and for sure, it will make me busier when implementing any quality framework.

Chris further recommended that each university should produce their extension of the ONESQA framework as their own quality assessment’s criteria. He stated:

I think we as university administrators should be a driving force in producing a similar extension to the Baldrige and ONESQA framework. We are the best people to know deeply in our institution. Some might say that ONESQA doesn’t fit for all, but I think ONESQA can be applied for all Thailand’s universities. If our faculty and staff can generalize their understandings of ONESQA’s indicators, CHE’s indicators and

Baldrige's criteria, they might see the connection and apply it to their routine life to be a quality culture.

Slone finalized the connection between the criteria of Baldrige and ONESQA in collaboratively developing performance excellence in higher education institutions:

I think actually we had already worked on a performance excellence framework in the Baldrige criteria. I think our university can set up and apply the performance excellence indicators and also transfer its importance to the ONESQA quality assurance indicators. I think the Baldrige framework can prepare us for the best ONESQA indicators, and I can say that I cannot do the ONESQA indicators quite well if we lack understanding of the basic framework of the system.

Bob noted the importance of applying the indicators, "I think that our involvement in applying Baldrige as our main model for improving performance excellence, ONESQA indicators were also a natural fit and make a progression for our university." Karl stated the fitness of ONESQA indicators in terms of encouraging institutional continuous improvement:

Actually, we try to encourage our university to improve all the time, so when ONESQA came along it was a very good fit and it improved to think of it as the cycle that helped us modify, adjust, and move forward, and certainly, the ONESQA indicators are not only the regulation but also the process that can initiate quality and continuous improvement. We are able to see our holistic systems and processes.

Strategic Plans in Private University

In order to be performance excellence institutions, university administrators need to understand the strategic planning process. The importance of strategic planning is also included in the Malcolm Baldrige criteria that examine how the universities set their strategic directions and how they develop key action plans to support the directions, as well as scrutinize how the plans are deployed and how performance is tracked. Rowley and Sherman (2002) indicated strategic planning as a formal assistance designed to help a university identify and maintain an optimal alignment with the most important elements within the university current circumstance.

Higher education institutions use strategic planning to make effective decisions and implement advantageous strategic changes.

The four selected institutions have successfully executed their strategic planning process. Participants described that each institution has its own formal written plans. However, most university administrators cited the importance of leadership in strategic execution, the awareness of implementing strategy, the self-assessment activities, strategic communication to university stakeholders, and the evidence of institution vision, mission, and objective.

Institutional governance structure also appeared to have some influence on an institution's approach to strategic planning for performance excellence. Bob noted that "strategic planning isn't a top down activity that you do at the highest level to try and determine what your decisions will be on the front lines....more directive." Karl agreed:

The university management has to make a corporation with the board of trustees. They both are the central part of designing governance structure to produce a systematic process for strategic planning. They also need shared governance in making decisions or indicating university strategic direction.

Karl further explained the important elements to design the institutional strategic plans. He said:

In my mind, I think there are just two elements to do the strategic plan or supervise the university in general. One is to consider and identify the vision and mission of the university, to analyze guidelines which have several goals, to set up goal priorities, and to use competent leadership which inspires staff to participate. Another is to consider the foundational elements such as human resources, financial matters, and capital resources.

University administrators utilized institutional strategic planning for implementation of activities as a formal process for delivering high outcomes. This includes maintaining an alignment with the most important elements of the environment, such as, the mission, vision, values, goals, objectives, roles and responsibilities, and timelines. Bob stated:

Our faculty and staff are involved with the institutional mission, vision, values, goals, and objectives. University administrators need to merge them to conduct strategic planning. University strategic planning is not a project but it is an ongoing process. Any institutional activities from teaching to managing are included in the strategic planning process. Therefore, brainstorming is needed.

Bob further discussed combining collaborative ideas for strategic planning. He stated:

I want to do the bottom up communication. I try to invite our faculty and staff to contribute their ideas. I know that it is too tough of a job. Our faculty and staff were asked about how the university can do better, different, and more for less. They know specifically the parts of the organization's plans that affect them and their work because they are directly affected. Then, we will combine their thoughts with the university plan.

Slone agreed with Bob on focus group discussion:

We have to try to get them [faculty and staff] to understand what strategic planning is and why we need to do it. We have to do our best to show what a good result would be for us in terms of developing strategic planning.

Bob also stated that faculty and staff participation is needed for developing strategic planning and designing KPI. Bob explained how he made collaboration between his faculty and staff:

I try to call for my colleagues' engagement in general work such as strategic planning, administrative meeting, or any activities that need our faculty's voice. It is so challenging to perceive our staff participation, but I always keep in mind that their participation is the key ingredient for quality management. You can see how it is important to your university when you are together with everyone and designing KPI. You will see how excellence is. That is the way from communication to collaboration.

Moreover, the institutional strategic planning needed participation in the decision making process as well. It should be implemented every year at the department level. Slone provided the number of reviews the institutional strategic plan. He said:

In my university, the big or institutional level strategic plan will be reviewed every three academic years. We included reviews of cross functional departments. New curriculum, new academic programs, and new institutional direction, as well as self-assessment of every administrative division are parts of the review process. Typically, the strategic plan is rolled out once a year in small divisions so that we can say that our staff will know the parts of the plan that affects them. They can know what they have to do next, by then.

In developing institutional strategic plans, university administrators have to maintain and balance their leadership styles of directive and collaborative techniques. Karl stated:

Sometimes, it is hard for me to do something this way or that way. Strategic planning is one of my crucial activities. I have to perform good work, stress the importance of institutional advancement, and strengthen the self-esteem of my subordinates. That is so directive. Another thing is how I can be a supportive leader. I have to make interpersonal relationships with my staff. I have to create the trust, respect for staff's comments as well as their ideas, as well as consider their thoughts, feelings, and overall well-being. Thus, building communication, establishing a relationship, and maintaining group participation is my priority.

The strategic planning process in Thailand's higher education institutions comprised the vision of the institution, the translation of the vision into actual proposals, defining the mission for the business, formulation of functional strategy, and consolidation of business and functional strategies (Praprangpatanpon, 2006). Thus, in terms of management, university administrators must consider the combination of leadership and management skills is needed to successfully lead a strategic planning process at their universities. The necessary skills for administrators are to be an inspiring leader and an organized manager at the same time. Administrators needed to perform a managerial role in developing strategic plans by facts, and they also understand the need to build trust and relationships in terms of providing the balance to effectively lead strategic planning at their institutions

Institution's environmental scanning. Strategic planning is a key element of management in the higher education institutions. Strategic planning will generate the institutional policies, and the senior administrators determined the institutional strategic planning. Thus, the institution's environmental scanning is needed for preliminarily checking the university's health (Sampson, 1998). SWOT analysis was shortcut elements to identify factors that may affect the desired future outcomes of the universities. The SWOT analysis is

based on identifying the universities' internal strengths and weaknesses, and the opportunities and threats of the external environment.

Kathy explained that her university administrative teams also discussed the SWOT analysis prior to the strategic planning development. She shared:

We frequently used the SWOT analysis, but we called it environmental checklists. Our SWOT outcomes were identified by members of an institution strategic plans committee. We did a final brainstorming session in September 2009. Before that, we encouraged everyone in this university, including students and temporary workers, to review the analysis and provide their comments. I am pretty sure that the basic information on the university's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats can be useful in considering strategic issues.

Likewise, Chris also believed that university needed to estimate their SWOT analysis as an organizational summary and to undertake the self study in order to reflect on them before beginning to study the quality categories. Chris further stated that "the SWOT analysis is the required ingredient for developing strategic plans. It can create the networks and revise administrative procedures sometimes." Bob also described utilizing SWOT analysis for his institutional strategic planning:

I think SWOT analysis can help me answer questions about my university. Certainly, SWOT analysis is needed for strategic planning in determining the objective of the project, and defining the internal and external factors that are positive and negative to achieving that objective... I think it is good when we asked questions to ourselves about what we do well. Where can we improve? How does environment help us and prevent us from achieving our goal?

Strategic planning has become the practical approach in most universities in this era (Praprangpatanpon, 2006). The concept of SWOT analysis is a strategic tool to facilitate universities to adapt to changes (Sampson, 1998). It is a crucial element of the strategic planning process to help universities to understand their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. University administrators have to think and plan strategically, and the SWOT may

usefully offer institutional or divisional level perspectives in developing new initiatives that further the university's vision, mission and goals.

Institutional vision and mission. The strategic planning process at selected institutions is reflected by the university's values and mission as well as the vision statements for each university (Kachakoch, 2008). The strategic plans in short and long term are a combination of the values, mission and vision with strategies, goals, objectives and assessment.

According to the institutional vision and mission, strategic planning develops key significant outcomes in general. Further, action plans are developed that connect to the main strategic plan. University administrators need a collaborative brainstorming from their faculty members, administrators in different levels, students and the essential stakeholders. They should be involved in the strategy development and deployment process to ensure that their requirements are reflected in the strategic initiatives and action plans.

Kathy commented on the importance of a university's mission and how to connect its mission to people in institutions. She stated:

I think that the university focuses on a mission to connect people in institutions. Those people will understand and share in that mission, and we are committed to it, and are passionate about it. All of our faculty and staff aim to contribute to the student's experience once they come to study and be a part of the university here, and also we need to work on the community of quality as well. I think that faculty and staff commitment also contribute to the whole picture of quality of the academic and non-academic program as well. I can say that our faculty and staff are not coming here just as a job, just to put in their 8 hours and get paid. Our faculty trust in what is happening at the university and put their hearts into it and the students benefit from that.

Cynthia explained the linkage of strategic plans that

All of our processes or activities are important. I have to check and check and recheck that all plans are on the same page with the institutional master plan or not... I keep asking my team during working in the process to ensure that everyone as an important stakeholder understands university expectations and performance orientation. I want to make sure that the alignment of our faculty, students, staff, and stakeholders is going to the same strategic direction.

Cynthia also commented that private universities must focus their mission and strong commitment. Administrators also emphasized them for university advancement and student success. She said:

We have relatively close working relationships between students and faculty. I think that our university is not quite a big size, so we can easily focus on a mission. I think the value of our university is we are very focused on particular things and we try to do them quite well because it's small and flexible... So, I don't care about the image or university reputation, but the most important thing is the students come to our university with a lot of focus on what they want to get done. It might be a degree or learning experience. So, it is done and that is my job absolutely.

Strategic planning communications. Senior administrators should review various methods used to deploy the institutions performance and capability accomplishments and progress against the institutional strategic plans and goals. Findings were discovered that senior administrators must improve communication of strategic plans and accomplishments among faculty members, staff, and stakeholders. Effective communication of strategic planning includes personally demonstrating stated university values, institutional directions and expectations. The administrators provide direction for the university and provide an infrastructure for effective communication to execute the direction and information needed for strategic planning, as well as integrate strategic plans into action plans.

Bob is an example of realizing communication in his institution. He stated that “when I was in the faculty meeting at different times, I would love to include several references to the university strategic plan.” Karl presented his university strategic plan website linked to the university’s main website, and the president’s website. He stated that “I am trying to communicate our vision, mission, and strategic plan to the different kinds of media we have. For example, we publicized our plans in the newsletters and in-house newspapers to periodically report the progress of our plan.” Kathy discussed strategic communication:

I think one of the main reasons our strategic planning has been manageable is the various and effective communication efforts that were made. I think that it might be from our president who can communicate very well both in his own leadership vision and the university vision. I don't think there is a person on campus that doesn't know that we have been undergoing a strategic planning effort over these years, and I think that has been our luck.

Kathy further discussed that the strategic plan must be communicated effectively. She responded:

In order to be a high performance university, you have to connect and be capable to connect to all levels. Like drawing a strategic plan, you have to get people thinking. Institutional strategic planning doesn't mean everybody does what you say or order. You get them pointed in the same direction.

Kathy also elaborated that “actually effective communication skill is part of strategic planning. It helps articulate to our people what the key components are and what we are trying to target.”

Further, Kathy concluded that

I am sure that when we are able to communicate our strategy to everyone, we will actually increase the amount of resources the institution has, even in these terrible times... if you ask me if the [strategic planning] activity give us any more performance or money, I am absolutely certain it did.

Therefore, it is the responsibility of senior administrators to foster communication with and among all members of the institutions. Administrators are required to respect the priorities and further the initiatives of the staff; and also engage the university board in the formulation and implementation of strategic and budget plans to advance the university's mission and goals.

Summary of the Research Findings

This study focused on answering the following questions: “How do senior administrators create a leadership vision for performance excellence?” “How do senior administrators conduct strategic planning as a process in achieving performance excellence?” and “How do senior administrators link the indicators of ONESQA (the Office of National

Educational Standards and Quality Assessment) to their performance excellence strategic planning?

This study was a qualitative inquiry that discovered the senior university experiences of quality management for performance excellence frameworks in the private universities in Bangkok, Thailand. Interviewing key university senior level administrators of four private universities allowed for the data collection process. The analysis of these universities explained the course of events that led each of these institutions to apply the quality management frameworks, such as the Baldrige and the ONESQA and then implement the criteria for developing strategic plans within the structure of their institutions.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was a qualitative research, grounded with a constructivist epistemology, utilizing the case study methodology. The study encompassed the private universities in Bangkok, Thailand to gather information about their experiences in creating performance excellence in institutions. Eight private senior university administrators provided relevant information about their leadership visions, quality management agenda, and strategic planning process in great detail during in-person semi-structured interviews. This final chapter of the study answers the research questions, discusses the implications for private higher education institutions, as well as offers recommendations for future research.

Chapter one included a general outline of the purpose of the study, the driving questions that arose from the purpose, an overview of the study design as well as the rationale of this study to the field of private universities in Thailand's context. The recent economic downturn places private universities in dire need of institutional performance excellence, and leadership in developing strategic planning in order to help sustain the health and viability of these institutions. Therefore, utilizing effective quality management and applying those criteria for performance excellence can be of great application to Thailand private universities in addressing these challenges.

Chapter two charted the historical development of private universities in Thailand. Since this research used Bangkok as its case study, the history of private universities in

Bangkok, the institutional general management, the funding and subsidizing system from the government provided context for the study. The Thailand higher education institutions' responsibilities were explored. The administrative affairs aspects in Thailand's private higher education were explained.

The development and importance of institutional strategic planning were reviewed, along with common definitions of strategic planning. The quality management frameworks, such as Balanced Scorecard, and Malcolm Baldrige Quality Framework, as well as the related previous studies in quality management in higher education were discussed. This was followed by a summary overview of the general definitions and characteristics of quality assurance principles in Thailand's higher education including the ONESQA indicators for performance excellence.

Chapter three described the research design, epistemology, methodology, participant selection criteria and procedures, ethical considerations, and trustworthiness. This constructivist study was grounded in a qualitative epistemological paradigm and made use of a case study methodology for data collection. A case study methodology was employed for the study because of its ability to examine a phenomenon of which little is known and explained in real-life, containing complex relationships and interrelationships. The research participants were selected with purposeful sampling, and used to select all eight university administrators in four institutions in Bangkok, Thailand. Credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, as well as triangulation, the measures taken to ensure the rigor and trustworthiness of the study, were also explained in this chapter. Also found in this chapter was the background and role of the researcher in the study.

Chapter four addressed the data collection procedures and strategies for data analysis. A case study methodological design was integrated into the data collection process of this study. Individual interviews and focus groups were utilized to make meaning of administrators' performance excellence. Chapter five outlined that the strategies for analyzing data rest upon the methods used for data collection employed to analyze the interview transcripts, and the emergent themes were the strategies used to analyze the interviews. Furthermore, Chapter six presented data displays and a discussion of the data obtained.

Research Methodology

This study looked at perceived successful implementation of performance excellence in Thailand's private higher education institutions. Perceived implementation success is not to imply there has been actual successful performance excellence implementation. Further, due to its constructivist nature, the study was affected by the researcher's own subjectivity, pre-conceived opinions, and personal observation and insight regarding administrative experiences on developing performance excellence in private universities. I as the researcher served as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis in this qualitative study, and therefore sensitivity and integrity of the investigator posed a certain limitation on this qualitative case study (Merriam, 1998). In addition, the fact that the investigator was the recipient of a senior administrator's view posed the possibility of additional researcher bias.

I considered that case study methodology can benefit and contribute to the public and private universities in Thailand by providing a better understanding of their perception of performance excellence and quality assurance of the senior university administrators. The eight administrators as research participants were alerted to the researcher's intention to share and distribute the results of the study. By sharing this knowledge, these university administrators

can make meaning of how and what can be done within their own institution to promote performance excellence. Therefore, the university administrators can extend their own understanding of performance excellences' perceptions regarding their influence on creating quality assurance and strategic planning process when attempting to further promote their agenda in the future.

Discussion

This qualitative research with case study methodology revealed the perspectives of senior university administrators in private institutions in Thailand, regarding their perception of performance excellence practices. Eight administrators illustrated the pictures of leadership vision, strategic planning, and ONESQA indicators for establishing institutional performance excellence issues.

Importance of Leadership Vision for Performance Excellence

Data analysis was from interviews of the individuals in private higher education institutions in Bangkok, Thailand. In addition to their important role within the organization, senior university administrators have other avenues to strengthen education throughout the institution. University administrators agreed that reinforcing the learning environment in the university might require building community support and aligning community and business organization leaders and community services with this aim.

Supervising higher education institutions is the interrelated process of making decisions, integrating activities, planning programs, coordinating people, and evaluating performance within the institution's objectives (Bennis, 2006; Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2001). Administrators recommended that visionary leadership is the essential requirement for developing institutional performance excellence. University administrators must serve as role

models through their ethical behavior and in the application of their competencies and skills.

As role models, university administrators can strengthen ethics, their personal and institutional values, and expectations in order to create leadership, commitment, and initiative through their institutions.

Karl summarized his leadership foundation for managing a university. He stated how the leadership and teamwork are needed in his institution:

I think that leadership and teamwork are important elements for university administration. These elements enhance participation for working successfully. Especially, if I employ a commanding and a “one man show” style in the university, I do believe that it makes me and my university unsuccessful.”

In performance excellence institutions, administrators need collaboration with their staff because they know that they could not complete every task alone. Cynthia reinforced the significance of having her staff on board because her staff played an essential role in shaping the direction of the university. She and her staff were joining an administrative team involved in all responsibilities. “It is so important for administrators to ask, what do you think? Should we ok this, should we not ok that? “So, we can get wonderful creative suggestions and solutions that everyone was happy to accept.”

Commerce University is a good example of creating a culture that encouraged performance excellence through the meaning of teamwork. Staff education and training programs were emphasized. The programs represented its administrators’ belief in the effectiveness of collaborative teamwork. Teamwork has been a main force for developing institutional performance excellence, and staffs have been informed and connected throughout the activities.

Importance of Strategic Planning for Performance Excellence

Similar to the previous studies (Baldri et al., 2006; Khampirat, 2009; Wilson & Collier, 2000), eight administrators emphasized strong organizational leadership and the administrative leadership influenced institutions to develop and execute their strategic planning. Leadership philosophy of university administrators can help faculty and staff to visualize institutional strategic team plans for the future together. Administrators, faculty, and staff connect together to produce and process ideas. The senior administrators believe that this helps to create a harmonized working environment and establish a quality culture. In terms of communication, people in institutions know if they are making progress on their work group's part of the plan through feedback.

The senior level administrators interviewed in Thailand's private universities recognized that in order to successfully deliver an accurate and useful strategic plan, the collaborative working of all institutional stakeholders is critical. Effective strategic planning requires active participation and buy-in from all stakeholders, including the president, institutional boards, administrators, faculty and staff, and students. Everyone in the university should participate in the strategic planning, because it is not only the creation of an institution's feasibility and action plan, but it is the activities that all members must support its implementation. Responsibilities inherent in the strategic planning process included spearheading the strategic planning committee, facilitating meetings, organizing and assigning tasks, and keeping all institutional stakeholders on strategic track. University administrators have to organize the general meeting with stakeholders, explain the importance of strategic planning, and be accountable to executive administration.

The research found that institutional strategic planning is an inclusive process. All eight administrators indicated that their institutions had formal strategic planning committees, with collaboration from all stakeholders in the university. University administrators have a clear understanding of how an institutional strategic planning process should work within their institution. The first step of developing strategic plans is to seek a positioning process of corporations. They also emphasized that strategic planning is a tool for institutions to achieve their competitive advantage and create a niche for themselves within the higher education circumstance.

Moreover, administrators examined the trends of strategic planning. They recommended developing long-term plan, rather than short-term strategy. The setting of the strategies, visions, and objectives of the institutions can be dependent on the limited resources and the effectiveness of the visionary skills of the administrators. Therefore there is no set formula for an institutional strategic planning process, however, Rowley and Sherman (2002) recommended following these steps or processes: a future-focused mission or vision, internal and external environmental assessments, measurable goals and objectives, implementation, and an accountability system for creating results. Likewise, the administrators also asserted that leadership can be connected to the strategic plans, and their leadership to develop the strategic plan included effective communication, listening, coaching, building relationships, and developing trust.

Developing ONESQA for Strategic Planning

The university administrators can utilize the indicators of ONESQA in order to develop institutional strategic planning by using the results of the self-assessment process in the Self Assessment Report (SAR). This process will request input from the university stakeholders for

understanding the needs and expectations of the stakeholders, for estimating the institutional academic and administrative service in terms of stakeholder requirements, for using the evaluations for the university improvement process, and for reviewing the SAR results to ensure that the institution is meeting its goals and strategic objectives for developing performance excellence.

The institutional SAR report allows the institution to identify strengths and to target opportunities for improvement on processes and results affecting all the university society. The results of the SAR report conducted in the institutional and departmental levels should be distributed to important stakeholders, such as the senior level administrators, university board members, and departmental heads in order to review and develop an institutional action plan.

Further, a SAR report can launch quality initiatives to assist university staff in developing, evaluating, and implementing the institution's quality initiatives in accomplishing the institution's mission. A university strategic planning team can develop and implement the institution quality initiatives strategy and plan, and provide feedback and assistance through the reviews.

The quality management frameworks such as the Baldrige, the Balanced Scorecard, and ONESQA's indicators are efficient methods for the communication and implementation of the strategic plan. The approach ensures that the strategic plan is described by strategic objectives and measures and balanced in a generic form into different perspectives. The approach from the quality frameworks is also a guarantee that the performance of the institution and its units are directly linked to the strategic plan.

Therefore, the universities have to combine the quality principles and the institutional strategic frameworks together in order to develop the basic concepts of quality assurance and

strategic management. The quality and strategic frameworks in this study provided a general conceptual framework to evaluate institutional quality and performance excellence. Each university can redefine its own framework following the basic principles of quality assurance, the Baldrige, and ONESQA approach.

The SAR report can be used in the quality audits to provide a broad overview of the quality assurance system and then develop strategic plans. It helps the management, personnel, and stakeholders of the institution to get the big picture of the quality assurance system, and the institutional future. The institutional strategic plans are balanced between the external objectives of Baldrige's criteria and ONESQA's frameworks with the activities in the budgeting process, the objectives of internal processes, and the learning objectives that drive future performance. The essence of the strategic planning activities of an institution has to be well connected to the perspectives of a university's performance excellence frameworks.

Implementations for Practice

University administrators that desire to promote performance excellence institutions should consider the following recommendations, which are based on results of the current study.

Clear and Communicated Vision

University administrators that apply the quality frameworks should develop a clear vision or goal and communicate this vision or goal to all institutional stakeholders. The university mission, vision, or goal may be shared during the meeting regarding the quality assurance initiatives. Administrators have to follow up that each section in universities be concerned about the vision as their priority. If the vision or goal of every institutional

department is unclear, team members will have difficulty going through the process and arriving at solutions.

For example, the study found that most of the university administrators have their own vision that relates around the institution mission and its flourishing future. In light of the university mission, the administrator outlines a clear vision for the university and leads the university community to follow that vision consistently and faithfully. Cynthia shared her vision as follows:

As a private university, we want to be of service to our community and to teach our students strong values of lifelong learning, that we believed learning curriculum creates a great opportunity for our students to have real life experiences in service in the concept of Thailand's sufficiency economy philosophy from The King Rama 9.

Sam also considered that key administrators at private universities have expressed a strong passion, and a faithful dedication to the university vision, mission, and advancement. He mentioned that these clear vision and leadership communication can be viewed as the most winning leadership strategies that strongly encourage and motivate people to follow the administrators and to achieve for the institutional development.

What is my leadership vision? It is so easy to answer. I just try to be myself and I am sure that I can demonstrate my dedication to the institution. We as an administrators have to encourage our staff to trust in our beliefs. The administrator is the one who does that. It's kind of the unique part of the job. I've tried to do that well. So, we will be a good manager that can insure the ongoing strengths of the university.

Stakeholders' Involvement

Administrators in performance institutions need to keep all stakeholders informed and involved in the process, thereby creating a sense of institutional ownership and shared responsibility. Not only it is important to get all stakeholders involved at the outset, but it is also imperative they continue to be involved throughout the entire process. For example, when an institution of higher education passes internal and external assessments from ONESQA, all

university stakeholders should be encouraged to clearly communicate, and stakeholder input could increase feelings of collaboration toward the group of individuals that have been selected to communicate the outcomes of the experience.

In terms of implementing strategic plan, collaborative leadership is an effective leadership strategy that key leaders have used in their institutions and stakeholders. The most important factor is promoting collaboration within the institution community. The strategic plan cannot be accomplished without effective collaboration, and stakeholders' involvement. In order to create performance excellence, private universities should construct and strengthen academic partnerships with other higher education institutions and business organizations for supporting academic resources, academic programs between institutions.

Further, university administrators should know how to engage the participation from faculty and staff throughout the process as much as possible. They might apply the Thai values about harmonization to influence faculty and staff in a positive way. The administrators then need to invite others to be a part of the discussion, action meeting, informal committee, or advisory board during the change process.

Continuous Improvement Activities

Implementation of the continuous improvement approach will encourage positive cultural changes within the institutions. University administrators should move forward to understand the philosophy of continuous improvement, and how the Baldrige and ONESQA quality frameworks can help awareness of implementing the continuous improvement concept. Administrators should have to understand the roles that could be undertaken or exchanged to help bring about the successful continuous improvement of institutions.

Moreover, each university has to develop own system of performance assessment. Assessment is a tool for continuous improvement process that can measure university quality and serve as key in promoting performance quality. The following assessment areas are suggested: 1) Faculty productivity assessment which can be measured by faculty self-evaluation, the administrator's evaluation; 2) institution performance assessment which can be measured by the ONESQA's conditions that is submitted to describe how the college meets standards and requirements. Therefore, to enhance performance excellence, it is recommended that institutions constantly do performance assessment.

Leadership in Institutional Quality Improvement

Quality leadership for institutional improvement refers to university administrators who can walk the talk, lead by example, and remove barriers in their staff's work. University administrators in performance institutions can be open to change, and clearly articulate the university vision and support that vision with resources. Thus, one of the most major findings of this study is the clarification of the importance of the role of leadership in the improvement of university quality and how the administrators consider the quality-oriented outcomes.

Performance Management Checking

University administrators should frequently organize regular meetings and activities to review and recheck their performance data and communicate problems, successes, and effective approaches. The collaborative meeting and activity will improve operational performance, when the planning and goal-setting process encourages a variety of workforce at all levels throughout the university. The meeting outcome will help senior level administrators to improve the decision-making process and to determine improvement priorities.

Moreover, administrators from this research recommended that the institutional performance will be accomplished when administrators develop a comprehensive strategic plan which includes: 1) The institution's mission, vision, core values, and goals; 2) the situational analysis of higher education trends and environments, the direct competitors, the institution's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; 3) The institutional strategic initiatives and key strategies for improvement and advancement; and 4) The effective and accountability performance evaluation in action plans, and strategies of allocating resources. In order to be able to structure an effective performance excellence, the university administrators should build a strong strategic planning committee with realistic action plans and process management, in order that they can supervise the institutional community to follow and to accomplish these challenging tasks.

Strong Understanding of the Quality Initiatives

Senior university administrators are the most important key factors to have a strong understanding of the quality management initiatives and also the use of the process. Administrators in every level must believe in the process and foster positive feelings toward a concept for developing institutional performance excellence. If administrators lack strong leadership, university members may become distrustful of the process and become non-participative or unwilling to be as open and communicative as they need to be for performance excellence frameworks. Moreover, university administrators can develop all kinds of quality information, and also share through the continuance of initiatives such as the quality management and performance excellence in university symposium. University administrators should have outside business alliances to continue the collaboration in improved solutions to maintain high quality.

Further, creating performance excellence might have an additional cost for the university. University administrators must allocate sufficient resources to the quality initiatives, so they can increase the institution's quality awareness and then develop this awareness to the new culture of performance excellence. Therefore, the institutional advancement depends on the "walk the talk" of its administrators, because many university administrators in Thailand just realize the importance of performance excellence without substantive actions. Administrators can provide top down assistance to develop organizations of quality. They may organize a training program in performance excellence, and may also hire quality consultants from outside business alliances to help start the effort and provide the performance excellence training throughout the universities.

Moreover, administrators such as Slone mentioned that private universities have made great contributions to the overall quality of higher education by offering creativity, learning opportunities and experiences, and high quality administration.

I think the private universities often tend to be experimental. It's a place where lots of innovation takes place. It is so good because we have more flexible and innovative than public institutions. I do think we play a very important role in creating a quality organization. So, when we classified ourselves as a performance institution, we will have a community trust, and become a very strong and high quality university.

Slone further stated that the finance is the basic barrier of the institution quality initiatives. Thus, the administrators should balance all of the competing needs and limited resources.

I agree that finance is always the biggest challenge. We concern quality, but we don't have the resources that we wish we had. You can see that the cost of education is very high and a quality faculty is very expensive. The quality of education is about having small classes, which means we have to have lots of faculty. So, that causes the high tuition fee. So, the greatest challenge would be the financial challenge.



Figure 1. House of Performance Excellence University

Recommendations for Further Research

The current of economic condition in Thailand demands that higher education institutions continue to be creative in maximizing the needs of their students while living within diminishing budgets. Thailand's universities needed to be experienced with the demanding culture of assessment, and culture of continuous quality improvement.

The purpose of this study was to examine the university administrators' experiences toward performance excellence. The scope was narrowed for linking the quality management principles with the institutional strategic plan development. This study should be replicated to further examine the relationship between the university strategic plan and the quality management frameworks, such as the Baldrige's criteria for performance excellence, and ONESQA's criteria. Although this study utilized a qualitative inquiry, the replicated research might utilize a quantitative research design. The descriptive design can be practical in determining the perceptions of administrators, faculty members, and staff members regarding how the institutional strategic plan has evolved by incorporating data collection and analysis tools such as interviews, surveys and a multivariate analysis of variance approach. Moreover, the descriptive design can answer some broad ideas in the assessment of quality of a private university in Thailand, using the complete Baldrige's framework. Further study can discover the important criteria of Baldrige's frameworks that relate to institutional performance excellence and effectiveness.

The study can be further explored in the different demographic profiles and grade level configurations, for example, the small size private universities or the new private universities can be studied further. Therefore, following their progress over time would generate

meaningful information and an improved understanding of the effectiveness of the criteria as a means to a university's strategic planning improvement.

Moreover, the theme throughout the analysis of data presented in this research emphasized the importance of the role of the senior administrators as key to successful implementation of the quality frameworks for performance excellence. Issues of communication, visionary leadership, and knowledge sharing were brought out as characteristics of successful leaders that aim to develop performance excellence. More research of these administrators would establish deeper understanding of the precise characteristics mostly required for successful implementation of ONESQA's and Baldrige's criteria.

Additionally, more research should be conducted to discover a unique characteristic to leadership visions. Thailand's leadership visions and U.S.'s leadership visions differently illustrates its perspective. Leadership vision from the Eastern philosophy demonstrates, in terms of the traditional authority, harmonious relations, and loyalty to family. This future study is encouraged to discover opportunities for qualitative or mixed methods research. Thus, conducting research on differences of leadership is essential if Thailand university administrators can perceive how to mix both combinations of Western and Eastern leadership philosophies together in order to apply effective applications of various organizational characteristics for institutional performance excellence.

Another recommendation for further research would be to focus the financial benefits of utilizing the performance excellence frameworks. University administrators did not validate the use of the performance excellence frameworks in their remarks about the return on investment. Further research can be conducted in how the quality frameworks provide a cost savings, or increase profitability for Thailand's private universities.

Conclusion

This case study research has provided the administrative experiences for developing institutional performance excellence. Eight private universities in Thailand are an intriguing example of how one institution has addressed and moved on improving excellence in administrative performance. Utilizing Baldrige and ONESQA for their performance excellence development provided a detailed snapshot of the institutional system. Thailand's universities using the quality frameworks to transform their business start with an assessment. Universities need a new understanding of the nature of their quality initiatives system, and a measurement of their improvement.

Eight of Thailand's private universities recognized and understood the benefits of the quality frameworks assessment. As a result of the implementation of the SAR reports, universities can produce a roadmap for continuous improvement, and also validate key performance areas, and set a process for improvement.

Merriam (1998) described the case study process as a journey, and possibly a struggle. She said for this reason that it is crucial to study a phenomenon that you are really curious about, that you care about, that you are passionate about" (p. 423). These criteria applied to the researcher and the phenomenon selected for this case study, Thailand's private universities, at the beginning of this quest. After I had discussions with all eight university administrators, I believed and continue to believe that the unique story of eight private universities in Bangkok, Thailand should be documented and shared with others. I as a researcher hope that the descriptions and analysis have given the story the justice that it so appropriately deserves.

I considered the areas for improvement in private universities in Thailand. The concepts of performance excellence from an international model, Baldrige, or a local model,

ONESQA, can be used to improve higher education continuously. If universities used them constantly, it can provide improvement very efficiently and effectively. Universities can understand the needs of both internal and external customers, and improve in the era of shrinking budgets. Moreover, administrators should also identify themselves as visionary leaderships in their institutions who can plan and implement performance excellence using the philosophies of Baldrige and ONESQA, and introduce that advanced knowledge to everyone in their institutions.

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APPENDIX A
INFORMED CONSENT



Informed Consent for Participation in Research
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Project Title: The experiences of senior administrators in creating performance in Thailand's private universities
Researcher: Sarun Saifah, Ph. D. Candidate, Higher Education and Student Affairs Leadership (HESAL)
Phone: 970-405-9069
E-mail: sarunsaifah@hotmail.com, saif9644@bears.unco.edu
Research Advisor Katrina Rodriguez, Ph. D.
College of Education and Behavioral Sciences
Phone Number 970-351-2495
Email: Katrina.rodriguez@unco.edu

The primary purpose of this study is to understand how senior administrative affairs officers create and implement performance excellence in private universities in Bangkok, Thailand. The researcher is interested in effective and efficient administration of quality management and performance excellence strategies as vital functions of higher education management. The first interview will not exceed 90 minutes, and the second interview will not exceed 60 minutes. You may be asked to attend the focus group conversation lasting 90 minutes. Participants will be asked questions about their involvement in, and understanding of the institutional administrative affairs and performance excellence practices.

You will be assured the confidentiality of your identities through use of pseudonyms. I will transcribe my audio device immediately after my scheduled individual interviews and focus group interviews. The audio records will be stored in a locked file cabinet for one year or until completion of my dissertation. The audio records will then be destroyed after completion of my dissertation.

Your choice of whether or not to participate in this study is strictly voluntary. Please be assured that I will keep the contents of these interviews private and confidential. The names of participants will not appear in any professional report of this research but will be substituted with pseudonyms for the purpose of my research. In addition, copies of the consent form will be stored in a locked file cabinet in my advisor's office at the University of Northern Colorado, to comply with federal guidelines for Institutional Review Boards. Please feel free to phone or email me if you have any questions or concerns about this research and please retain one copy of this letter for your records.

Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study and if you begin participation you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like to participate in this research. A copy of this form will be given to you to retain for future reference. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact the Office of Sponsored Programs, Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-2161.

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

APPENDIX B
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions

University of Northern Colorado

Sarun Saifah

1. Could you describe your role and the areas for which you have responsibility?
2. Could you please share the values you espouse as a leader of your university?
3. Which values do you wish your institution to implement and achieve? Why are these values important?
4. When considering performance excellence, how do you frame and define performance excellence?
5. What are your leadership values with regard to performance excellence?
6. How do your present actions as a leader reflect commitment to performance excellence?
7. How do you create an organizational environment committed to performance excellence?
8. How do you sustain an organizational environment of performance excellence?
9. What do you believe to be your organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats?
10. Could you please describe how you implement the process of strategic planning?
11. What are your current institutional ONESQA indicators?
12. What is your process in linking the ONESQA indicators in your strategic planning?
13. In thinking about the implementation of the ONESQA indicators within your strategic plan and the future of your institution, what do you expect the outcomes to be? To what achievement will you point?
14. What advice would you give to other senior administrative affairs officers engaged in performance excellent strategic planning?

APPENDIX C
ONESQA INDICATORS

Internal Quality Assurance Indicators

The internal quality assurance indicators for academic and performance excellence are based on background and nature of development of Thai universities. The framework consists of 9 aspects of quality factors:

1. Philosophy, Commitments, Objectives, and Implementation Plan
 - a. There is philosophy or commitment, process of strategic development, implementation plan, and setting of key performance indicators for measuring all target achievements.
 - b. Percentage of target achievement of key performance indicators
2. Teaching and Learning
 - a. There are systems & mechanisms of developing and administering curriculum.
 - b. There is student-centered learning process.
 - c. There are projects/activities to encourage curriculum and teaching-learning development from participation with external persons, organizations, and community.
 - d. Number of full-time equivalent students in proportion to the total number of full-time lecturers
 - e. Proportion of full-time lecturers holding Bachelor degrees, Master degrees, and Doctoral degrees or equivalent in proportion to the total number of full-time lecturers
 - f. Proportion of full-time lecturers holding academic titles; lecturer, assistant professor, associate professor, and professor.
 - g. There is the process of promotion in compliance with professional ethics for lecturers.
 - h. There are system and mechanisms to encourage full-time lecturers to conduct researches for teaching-learning development.
 - i. Percentage of Bachelor graduates who can secure jobs and who can be self employed within one year.
 - j. Percentage of graduates who got their starting salaries as per the standard.
 - k. Levels of satisfaction of employers/business operators, and graduate users.
 - l. Percentage of students or alumni who got awards or recognition in academic/ profession/ ethics/ sport/ health/ art & culture/ and environment at the national or international level within the past 5 years.
 - m. Percentage of full-time lecturers at the graduate level who are qualified advisors serving as thesis advisors. (Specify institutes of research and graduate production)
3. Student Development Activity
 - a. There are services for students and alumni.
 - b. There is promotion in complete activities for students corresponding with attribution of preferred characteristics of graduates.
4. Research
 - a. There is development of systems and mechanisms for encouraging the staffs to conduct researches and innovations.
 - b. There is knowledge management system in research and innovation.

- c. Amount of external and internal research and innovation funds in proportion to the total number of full –time lecturers
 - d. Percentage of research and innovations published, registering the patent and intellectual property or utilization at the national and international levels in proportion to the total number of full-time lecturers
 - e. Percentage of research articles that are for citation in referred journal or National or International Database in proportion to the total number of full-time lecturers. (Specify institutes of research and graduate production)
5. Academic Services
- a. There are system and mechanisms of academic services as institute’s goal.
 - b. Percentage of full-time lecturers participating in academic services, thesis advisors, thesis committee members in other institutions, and serving as academic and professional committee members at the national or international level in proportion to the total number of fulltime lecturers
 - c. Percentage of academic and professional service activities/projects responding to the need of and developing strengthening the society, community, country and the international community in proportion to the total number of full-time lecturers.
 - d. Percentage of students/stakeholders’ satisfaction level
 - e. Number of resources for academic and professional services accepted at the national or international level (Specify institutes of social development and graduate production)
6. Art & Culture Preservation
- a. There are system and mechanisms for art & culture preservation.
 - b. There are productions or performances for developing and establishing knowledge & standards of art and culture. (Specify institutes of art and culture development and graduate production)
 - c. There is efficacy for conservation, development and promotion in art and cultural identity. (Specify institutes of art and culture development and graduate production)
7. Management and Administration
- a. Institute’s council has good governance for management & administration, and force the institute’s benchmarking as the global standard.
 - b. Leadership of all levels of institute’s administrators.
 - c. Developing the institute to become a learning organization.
 - d. There are system and mechanisms of human resources management to develop and maintain qualified and efficient staff.
 - e. Capability of database system for management, teaching and learning, and research
 - f. The accomplished level of giving opportunities for external persons for participating to develop institute of higher education
 - g. Percentage of full-time lecturers to get academic or professional awards at national or international levels
 - h. There is risk management system for educational administration.
 - i. Level of success of relaying indicators and goals of institute’s level to personnel level

8. Finance and Budgeting
 - a. Effective system and mechanisms for allocating, expenditure analysis, finance and budget
 - b. Sharing of both internal and external resources
9. Quality assurance system and mechanism
 - a. Internal quality assurance system and mechanism are portions of educational management process.
 - b. There are system and mechanism to provide knowledge and skills in quality assurance for students.
 - c. The successful level of internal quality assurance

Source: Adapted from Commission on Higher Education's 9 KPI aspects

External Quality Assurance Indicators

The office of the national education standards and quality assessment (ONESQA) requires each university to present results against 28 indicators and to review the institutional performance in 8 categories as follows:

1. Standards of Graduates
 - a. Quality graduates can think and do and are capable of learning and improving themselves including competence in their work and employment and are able to live with others harmoniously.
 - b. Percentage of graduates who can secure jobs within one year including self-employment and the percentage of graduates who continue their studies at post-graduate level.
 - c. Degree of satisfaction of employers/ business operator.
 - d. The ratio of number of papers based on the theses of the Ph. D. graduates published in the journals that have independent referees as against the total number of the Ph. D. theses.
 - e. The ratio of number of papers based on the theses of the Master graduates published in the journals that have independent referees as against the total number of the Master theses.
2. Standards of Teaching and Learning
 - a. The mechanism of teaching and learning should be focused on the student, teaching and learning focused on the interest of the student, development of the student based on their capability and their competence in their learning from real life experience for supporting the student to be able to develop naturally and to develop the capability of the student.
 - b. Evidence of educational reform with emphasis on student-centered teaching and \ learning and the promotion of the development of real experience.
 - c. Evidence of students' view of lecturers' effectiveness on teaching of academic staff.
 - d. The number of activities / projects in students' affairs per the total number of students.
 - e. Evidence of research for the development of the learning process.
3. Standards of Teaching and Learning Support

- a. Acquisition and allocation of human, financial and infrastructure resources and support services from internal and external institutes of higher education in the support of the highest level of academic excellence.
 - b. The number of full-time lecturers at all levels per total Full Time Equivalent Student.
 - c. Actual operational budget per total Full Time Equivalent Student.
 - d. Percentage of full-time academic staff with Ph. D. Degrees or equivalent.
 - e. The number of computers used in teaching and learning per total Full Time Equivalent Student.
 - f. The total expense used in the system of Libraries and Information Centers per total Full Time Equivalent Student.
4. Standards of Research and Innovative Activities
 - a. Researches that can be widely used and applied and quality innovative activities that can be disseminated for the development of diverse and updated knowledge that can be used to develop the nation.
 - b. The number of published paper per total number of full time academic staff.
 - c. The percentage of research work that has been used for other researches or in teaching and learning or in business or in industry or in developing the nation per total full time academic staff.
 - d. The amount of research funds from external sources relative to full time academic staff at all levels.
 - e. The amount of research funds from internal sources in relation to the total number of full time academic staff at all level.
5. Standards of Academic Services
 - a. The providing of academic services that is of use to the development of the community, society so that the Thai society can be a life-long learning knowledge based society.
 - b. The number of activities / projects providing academic services to the society and community.
 - c. The number of academic staff participating in being external members of academic/professional/theses committees to the total number of full time academic staff.
6. Standards of Preservation of Art and Culture
 - a. The providing of activities that support the Preservation of Arts and Culture of the Thai heritage and further development and evolution of the Thai heritage.
 - b. The number of activities in the Preservation of Art and Culture.
 - c. Evidence of development and creation of standards in Art and Culture.
7. Standards of Management and Administration
 - a. The mechanism of the management and administration that is efficient and effective that is low cost, competent and transparent and can be audited and assesses to create a value system that is responsible to society.
 - b. Percentage of salary of all personnel in proportion to overall operational budget (but not including the salary of administrators and managers in dormitories and hospitals).

- c. Percentage of salary of personnel in administration and management in proportion to the overall operational budget or the number of total personnel in administration and management per total Full Time Equivalent Students (FTES) (not including the salary of personnel in dormitories and hospitals).
 - d. Percentage of the expenditure of the central administration and management proportional to the overall operational budget (not including the expenditure in the administration and management of dormitories and hospitals).
 - e. Depreciation per total Full Time Equivalent Student.
 - f. Percentage of the total of operation budget left unused.
- 8. Standards of System and Mechanism of Quality Assurance
 - a. The Internal Quality Assurance system is a part of the mechanism to manage the education process for the development of the quality and standards of education that can meet the standards and benchmarks of the external audit and assessment.
 - b. Evidence of a continuous system and mechanism for Internal Quality Assurance.
 - c. Effectiveness of the Internal Quality Assurance.

Source: Adapted from the ONESQA's 8 standards

APPENDIX D
IRB APPROVAL



January 30, 2010

TO: Gary Heise
School of Sport and Exercise Science

FROM: The Office of Sponsored Programs

RE: Exempt Review of *The Exploration of Performance Excellence Strategies for Senior Administrative Affairs Officers in Thailand Private Universities*, submitted by Sarun Saifah (Research Advisor: Katrina Rodriguez)

The above proposal is being submitted to you for exemption review. When approved, return the proposal to Sherry May in the Office of Sponsored Programs.

I recommend approval.

 16 Feb 2010
Signature of Co-Chair Date

The above referenced prospectus has been reviewed for compliance with HHS guidelines for ethical principles in human subjects research. The decision of the Institutional Review Board is that the project is exempt from further review.

IT IS THE ADVISOR'S RESPONSIBILITY TO NOTIFY THE STUDENT OF THIS STATUS.

Comments: *Transcript Review? R&B in course. R&B - emailed 12 Feb 2010* > *emailed 9 Feb 2010*

25 Kepner Hall ~ Campus Box #143
Greeley, Colorado 80639
Ph: 970.351.1907 ~ Fax: 970.351.1934