

A Comparative Study of School Evaluation System of Elementary Schools in Thailand and Japan: Focusing on School Accountability and Improvement

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Introduction

The global trend of employing school self-evaluation for the dual purposes of ensuring school improvement and accountability started in England in the 1970s, and currently, school self-evaluation has become a vital component in education systems worldwide¹⁾. The current framework of the school evaluation system in Thailand is based on the provision regarding the quality assurance system stipulated in Chapter 6 of the 1999 National Education Act (NEA). The NEA introduced its new system of educational quality assurance to ensure the improvement of educational quality and standards at all levels. The quality assurance system consists of both internal and external quality assurance. Internal quality assurance is regarded as part of the institutional administration and is a continuous process. Educational institutions are required to undertake self-evaluation and prepare annual reports to be submitted to parent organizations and relevant agencies and to be made available to the public and provided as the basis for external evaluation. External quality assurance is the responsibility of the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA), a public organization which was established in November 2000. All educational institutions are required to receive external evaluation at least once every five

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years²⁾.

Educational quality improvement in Thailand seems to be progressive according to the targets of the conditions of the NEA. However, previous studies regarding the quality assurance system and the school self-evaluation system clearly suggested that schools encountered a number of similar problems. These included the fact that, school self-evaluation was not implemented as an integral part of the schools' management³⁾, schools put more focus on documents preparation rather than on the quality of education⁴⁾, an increasing of workload is faced by teachers⁵⁾, and that teachers and administrative staff have insufficient knowledge to prepare school self-evaluation reports⁶⁾. In terms of the external evaluation, previous studies also pointed out several problems and recommended that, the period of external evaluation should be revised and it should be varied according to the size of the educational institutions⁷⁾. External evaluation, for example, produced a negative impact on teachers' teaching style and forced them to perform administrative duties rather than teaching⁸⁾, teachers were uncertain about the educational standards and the anxiety of receiving the external evaluation⁹⁾, and the increasing of teacher's workload and the insufficient involvement of stakeholders¹⁰⁾.

As mentioned above, the implementation of the school evaluation system in Thailand still faces several problems and there is still a lack of studies focusing on the implementation and its contribution to school accountability and improvement, especially in terms of the international comparative studies in this area. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate and contrast the practice of implementation with other countries. According to the findings of the survey launched by the Political and Economic Risk Consultancy (PERC) on educational systems in Asia, Japan, Singapore and Korea have the best educational systems in Asia¹¹⁾. School evaluation was introduced more than a half century ago in Japan. But this type of school evaluation has been criticized for the lack of objectivity and the lack of feedback to school management planning. This kind of reflection has been a

background of the proposal for the introduction of school evaluation nowadays.

In Japan, school-self evaluation had been promoted in 1998 according to the report concerning the local educational administration proposed by the Central Council for Education. In 2002, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport, Science and Technology, Japan (MEXT) announced its policies regarding the creations of schools trusted by parents and communities¹²⁾. The “Standard for the Establishment of Elementary Schools” (ministerial ordinance) enforced in April, 2002 stipulated that schools should attempt to implement self-evaluation and disclose the evaluation results and other school information to parents so as to fulfill school accountability. Self-evaluation at elementary, lower and upper secondary schools, etc, has become mandatory. In addition, external evaluation, which refers to the participation of parents and local residents in evaluation, is certainly expected. However, the specifics of school evaluation are left in the hands of schools and local boards of education.

Several studies indicate the progress of the implementation of the school evaluation system. For instance, school evaluation has been implemented in all schools in Fukuoka prefecture since 2002¹³⁾. All elementary and secondary schools in Tochigi prefecture have implemented the school self-evaluation and over 90% of elementary schools have implemented the external evaluation¹⁴⁾. All schools in Nagano prefecture introduced school self-evaluation and most of them introduced external evaluation. However, schools still face some problems regarding, for instance, how to make the external evaluation results available to the public, how to set the evaluation items¹⁵⁾. In the fiscal year of 2006, MEXT organized a survey regarding the progression of the implementation of school evaluation¹⁶⁾. The finding showed that 99.7% of elementary schools had already implemented school self-evaluation, while 50.2% of them introduced the external evaluation. The findings showed the progress of implementation since its enforcement in 2002.

As mentioned above, the school evaluation systems in Thailand and Japan seem to start from the central level as top-down approach. However, in practice,

the specifics of school evaluation processes may be different between the two countries. In order to gain such information or lessons learned from the two countries, I decide to conduct a comparative study regarding the implementation of the school evaluation system of elementary schools in Thailand and Japan. The surveys were conducted nationwide from February to April, 2008, in Japan and Thailand. This article reports the results of the surveys and points out the features and problems of the implementation of the school evaluation system of elementary schools in Thailand and Japan. The article ends with conclusions concerning the features of the implementation and the approaches of school accountability and improvement in elementary education in both countries.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the ongoing implementation of the school evaluation system of elementary schools in Thailand and Japan. Specifically, the research questions are: 1) What are the features of the implementation of the school evaluation system of elementary schools in Thailand and Japan? 2) What are the perceptions of school principals regarding the implementation of the school evaluation system of elementary schools in Thailand and Japan? 3) What are the features of school accountability and improvement of elementary education levels in Thailand and Japan?

Methodology of the Study

This is a descriptive study intended to investigate the implementation of the school evaluation system of elementary schools in Thailand and Japan. The framework of this study can be described as follows: To answer the first question, the scope of the investigation includes: 1) school self-evaluations: the establishment of school self-evaluation committees, the structure of the committees, the school self-evaluation schedules, the disclosure of the results of school self-evaluations, the burden of school self-evaluations and problems

regarding school self-evaluations, 2) external evaluations: the establishment of the external evaluation committees, the structure of the committees, the methods of external evaluations, the disclosure of the results of external evaluations, the burden of external evaluations, and problems regarding external evaluations. In dealing with the second question posed above, the framework focuses on the processes of school evaluation implementation including the preparation, operation and reporting stage. Specifically, the scope of the investigation in the operation stage is based on the Plan-Do-Check-Action (PDCA) cycle as shown in Figure 1. For the third question, the features of school accountability and improvement in elementary education in Thailand and Japan are summarized based on the results of the study.

Population and Sample

The target populations of this study were elementary school principals under the jurisdiction of the Office of Basic Education Commission (OBEC), the Ministry of Education, Thailand and public elementary school principals under the jurisdiction of MEXT, Japan. The samples of this study consisted of 458 school principals in Thailand and 425 school principals in Japan.

Research Instruments

For data collecting, questionnaires were used, comprising of 3 parts including 1) demographic items for the respondents, 2) checklist and open-ended items regarding the current status of the implementation of the school evaluation system of elementary schools, 3) five point rating scale items regarding the implementation of the school evaluation system for elementary schools. The five point scales are of the form: 1: Strongly disagree; 2: Disagree; 3: Uncertain; 4: Agree; and 5: Strongly agree.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

Survey instruments were mailed to the 1,000 school principals both in Thailand and Japan. A total of 458 instruments (45.8%) and 425 instruments (42.5%) were returned in Thailand and Japan respectively. The Data were coded

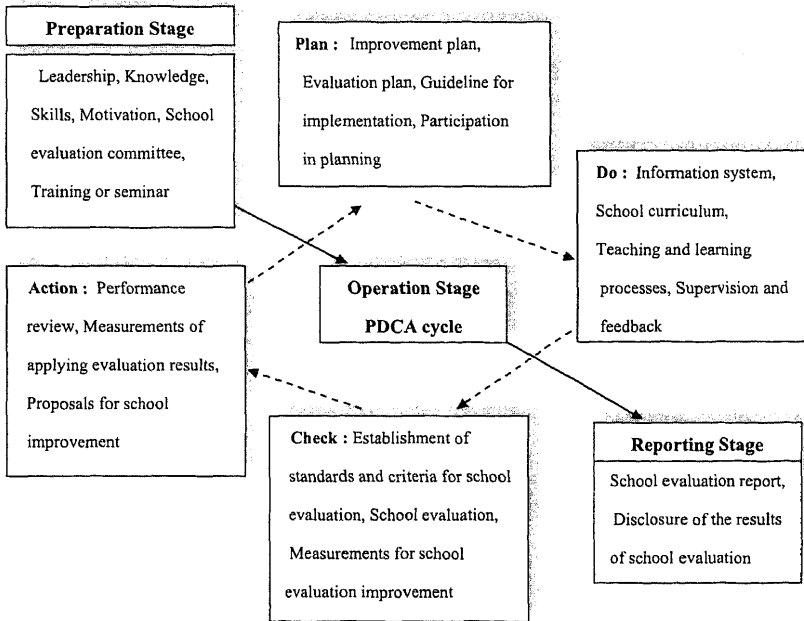


FIGURE 1 Framework of the Study

and analyzed using SPSS for Windows version 11.5. Descriptive statistics and content analysis were used to organize, analyze and interpret the data. The following scale ranges were determined to interpret the data: 4.50-5.00 Strongly agree; 3.50-4.49 Agree; 2.50-3.49 Uncertain; 1.50-2.49 Disagree; 1.00-1.49 Strongly disagree.

Results

The Features of the Implementation of the School Evaluation System *School Self-Evaluation*

The findings showed that all of the respondents in Thailand have already implemented school self-evaluation. 98.0% (449 schools) established committees responsible for implementation. Out of those 449 schools, 37.1% established committees comprising of principals and teacher representatives, 29.2% comprising

of principals, teacher representatives, student representatives, parents and community representatives, 25.6% comprising of principals, teacher representatives, parents and community representatives, the rest comprising of principals, teacher representatives and student representatives. In Japan, 100% of the respondents have already implemented school self-evaluation. However, only 37.9% (161 schools) established committees responsible for implementation. Among those 161 schools, 89.4% established committees comprising of principals and teacher representatives, while the remaining comprised of principals, teacher representatives, parents and community representatives.

As for school self-evaluation schedules, respondents in Thailand pointed out that school self-evaluation was conducted at the end of the academic year and at the end of each semester, (54.8% and 23.8%, respectively) while 20.5% was conducted during the middle of each semester and at the end of each semester. On the other hand, in Japan, it was conducted at the end of each semester and the end of the academic year (44.5% and 32.7%, respectively); while 18.4% was conducted during the middle and at the end of each semester.

Regarding the disclosure of the results of school self-evaluation, 61.4% of the respondents in Thailand fully publicized the results and 27.1% disclosed some parts of the results, while the remaining did not make them available to the public and were still in the examining stage. The results were presented at school board meetings and at annual parents' meetings (83.2% and 61.6%, respectively), and 50.7% were publicized through school newsletters. In Japan, 44.9% of the respondents fully publicized the results and 30.1% disclosed some parts of the results, while the remaining did not make them available to the public and were still in the examining stage. The results were publicized through school newsletters, presented at annual parents' meetings, presented to the boards of education, and published via school homepages with ratings of 76.8%, 46.3%, 45.5%, and 23.5% respectively.

In terms of the burden of implementation, 53.9% of the respondents in

Thailand suggested that it increased unavoidable workload on teachers, while 6.1% indicated that it placed a large burden on teachers, and the remaining respondents asserted that it was not a big burden. In Japan, 42.8% of the respondents said that it increased unavoidable workload on teachers and 4.9% thought that it placed a large burden on teachers while 51.8% indicated that it was not a big burden for teachers.

Concerning the problems of implementation, a significant number of respondents suggested several problems. The followings were some of the respondents' opinions.

In Thailand: 1) "The school faces a teacher shortage. Teachers have more hours of teaching and are responsible for other duties such as clerical work. Therefore, they can not work effectively." 2) "There is a lack of money for supporting school self-evaluation implementation." 3) "Some of the school staff lack understanding and knowledge of the school evaluation implementation and this may affect the standards and results of the evaluation." 4) "There is insufficient involvement of the local residents and parents in the implementation; they don't have enough time and believe that school evaluation is the responsibility of the school only." 5) "The school staff are lacking the understanding of how to set up the information system available for the implantation of the school evaluation." 6) "We have insufficient supervision and support from the educational service area to implement the school evaluation system." 7) "There are a lot of educational standards and criteria and it is very difficult for us to apply all of those standards and criteria in practice."

In Japan: 1) "It is difficult to undertake the school self-evaluation because the evaluation criteria are unclear." 2) "The school has problems concerning the amount and validity of the content of the evaluation items." 3) "There is a lack of common understanding regarding school improvement among the teachers." 4) "If schools undertake self-evaluation by siding with themselves without standards of evaluation, this may affect the validity of the results." 5) "It takes a lot of time to

carry out school self-evaluation and this may distort on-going educational activities.” 6) “The school faces a lack of information systems for arranging the implementation of the school evaluation.”

External Evaluation

All educational institutions in Thailand are required by the NEA to receive an external evaluation at least once every five years. In order to prepare for such an evaluation the school might establish a committee to take charge of receiving the evaluation from the NEA. The findings showed that 73.8% of respondents in Thailand appointed committees responsible for receiving external evaluation, while 25.3% did not establish any committee. The committee structures mainly comprised of principal and teacher representatives. On the other hand, in Japan, the result showed that 59.5% (253 schools) of respondents in Japan have already introduced an external evaluation (evaluation conducted by persons related to the school), while 30.1% were still in the examining stage and 10.4% did not introduce an external evaluation. Out of those 253 schools, 53.0% established committees responsible for external evaluation. School councilors, parent representatives, local resident representatives, and persons with educational experience were appointed as members of the committee with ratings of 79.1%, 76.1%, 42.5%, and 26.8% respectively. Regarding third party evaluation, the finding showed that only 5.2% of respondents implemented the third-party evaluation.

In terms of the methods of external evaluation, the findings showed that more than half of the respondents in Thailand encouraged parents and local residents to participate in school evaluation. However, 26.2% of them indicated that there was insufficient participation in practice. In contrast, in Japan, there has been a variety of methods that external evaluators have applied in conducting external evaluations such as classroom observation (46.3%), interview with school principals (24.9%), off-school site activities observation, and interview with school staff (4.5%).

As for the disclosure of the results of external evaluation, 60.7% of

respondents in Thailand fully publicized the results and 21.4% disclosed some parts of the results, while the remaining were still in the examining stage and did not make them available to the public. The results were presented at school board meetings and at annual parents' meetings (77.9% and 62.2%, respectively), and 42.4% were publicized through school newsletters. On the other hand, 48.9% of the respondents in Japan fully publicized the results and 10.5% disclosed some parts of the results while the rest still did not make them available to the public and were still in the examining stage. The results were publicized through school newsletters, presented at annual parents' meetings, presented to the boards of education, and published via school homepages at levels of 80.0%, 46.1%, 37.5%, and 22.0% respectively.

With respect to the burden of implementation, 57.4% of respondents in Thailand indicated that implementation increased unavoidable workload on teachers while 10.3% suggested that it placed a large burden on teachers. 28.4% asserted that it was not a big burden. In Japan 36.0% of the respondents said that it increased unavoidable workload on teachers and 8.2% believed that it placed a large burden on teachers while 44.5% indicated that it was not a big burden for teachers.

Concerning the problems of the implementation, a significant number of the respondents mentioned problems involved with implementation including the following:

In Thailand: 1) "The school suffers from a teacher shortage and has various tasks to routinely perform, and therefore has insufficient information and prepared documents for the external evaluation." 2) "We face the problem of insufficient understanding regarding the framework and details of the external evaluation, especially information and documents required by the external evaluators." 3) "We lack money to support preparations for the receiving of an external evaluation." 4) "The differences in methods of external evaluations vary among evaluators. Moreover, there are relationship problems between the evaluators and school staff

and with the atmosphere of the evaluation.” 5) “The school lacks information system to provide the basis for the external evaluation.” 6) “There is insufficient supervision from the educational service area regarding the preparation for receiving the external evaluation.” 7) “Teachers feel stressed about the external evaluation results and over whether the school can pass the minimum standard specified by the ONESQA.” 8) “There are a lot of educational standards and criteria and it seems difficult for the school to achieve the minimum requirements for them all.”

In Japan: 1) “Insufficient understanding of the actual conditions of school activities among the evaluators can lead to a mistaken evaluation.” 2) “It is difficult to carry out evaluations when there are a lot of evaluation items.” 3) “It’s difficult to guarantee the objectivity of the evaluation standards with regard to the various questions applied by each evaluator.” 4) “It takes a lot of time for the school to carry out the evaluation as well as analyze the data.” 5) “There are insufficient persons with experience in education who can be appointed as members of the external evaluation committee” 6) “The school faces the problem of how to disclose information.”

The Perceptions of School Principals Regarding the Implementation of the School Evaluation System

As a whole, school principals in Thailand ($M=3.92$) and Japan ($M=3.70$) seemed to support the implementation of the school evaluation system. The overall perceptions score was relatively high in both countries indicating the positive perceptions of the respondents, as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 2 shows the findings of the preparation stage of the implementation; overall, school principals in Thailand ($M=3.75$) and Japan ($M=3.67$) seemed to agree positively with the preparation stage of the implementation. Item 1: “The principal shows a clear policy concerning the implementation of the school evaluation system.” was rated higher than other items in both countries. However,

TABLE 1 Perceptions of School Principals Regarding the Implementation of the School Evaluation System

Stages of the Implementation	Thailand		Japan	
	M (n=458)	SD	M (n=425)	SD
1. Preparation Stage	3.75	0.40	3.67	0.57
2. Operation Stage				
Plan	4.15	0.50	3.85	0.53
Do	3.89	0.44	3.87	0.47
Check	3.95	0.47	3.66	0.55
Action	3.99	0.40	3.65	0.54
3. Reporting Stage	3.81	0.47	3.53	0.71
Total	3.92	0.37	3.70	0.46
(M: Mean, SD: Standard Deviation)				

concerning item 2: “The principal and the teachers have knowledge regarding the school evaluation system.”, school principals in Thailand (M=3.21) were less certain. Interestingly, both school principals in Thailand (M=3.12) and Japan (M=3.17) were uncertain that the school organized the training sessions regarding implementation for all staff (item 5). Overall, the findings seem to be positive regarding attitudes to the preparation stage both in Thailand and Japan, especially with regard to the leadership of school principals. However, there still exist some aspects which can be improved. It is seen as necessary, for example, to provide more training sessions or workshops regarding implementation for school staff.

As can be seen in Table 3, overall, school principals in Thailand and Japan seemed to have similar opinions in terms of the operation stage. The overall perceptions score of each dimension (Plan, Do, Check and Action) was relatively high indicating the positive perceptions of the respondents. However, some aspects were yet to be realized in both countries. For instance on item 10 of Plan dimension, school principals in Japan (M=3.35) were unsure that the school management plan and school evaluation plan were sufficiently explained to the parents. Even though it is required by the standards for the establishment of elementary schools enforced in April, 2002¹⁷⁾ and the ministerial ordinance related

TABLE 2 Perceptions of School Principals Regarding the Preparation Stage

Preparation Stage	Thailand		Japan	
	M (n=458)	SD	M (n=425)	SD
1. The principal shows a clear policy concerning the implementation of the school evaluation system.	4.24	0.66	4.27	0.70
2. The principal and teachers possess sufficient knowledge regarding the implementation of the school evaluation system.	3.21	0.69	3.82	0.70
3. Teachers are encouraged to develop a sense of commitment and willingness to carry out the school evaluation.	4.15	0.53	3.50	0.71
4. The school has established a committee responsible for the implementation of the school evaluation system	4.24	0.68	3.58	0.89
5. The school organizes training sessions regarding the implementation of the school evaluation system for all staff.	3.12	0.59	3.17	0.88
Total	3.75	0.40	3.67	0.57

(M: Mean, SD: Standard Deviation)

to school evaluation of the School Education Law enforced in 2007¹⁸⁾ that the school should willingly present information on conditions of school management as well as school evaluation results to parents and others, the methods of the provision of information are left to the choice of schools and boards of education. Thus, in practice, schools may be insufficiently supervised by their parent organizations even though MEXT made an attempt to support the implementation by establishing school evaluation guidelines on how to make the results of evaluations public. The respondents also claimed, in the previous part regarding the problems of external evaluation, that schools faced the problems of how to disclose information. On the contrary, in Thailand, the ministerial regulation of the Ministry of Education has stipulated that schools are mandated to disclose the results of school self-evaluations and external evaluations¹⁹⁾. Thus this may influence the perceptions of school principals in Thailand, making them more positive, than those in Japan. On item 11 of the Do dimension, the school principals (M=3.31) in Thailand were less certain that the information and official documents concerning educational activities were systemically arranged. This associated with the finding of the previous part concerning the problems of both school self and external evaluation indicates an insufficient information system. In

addition, on item 22 of the Check dimension, the school principals ($M=3.40$) in Thailand, were uncertain that the school reflected the opinions of the parents and students as part of the school evaluation measurements, while school principals in Japan ($M=3.88$) were more likely to agree. This implied that elementary schools in Thailand still lack consideration of the opinions of parents and students when undertaking school evaluations. This is also related to the findings mentioned in the previous part, which showed that even though the school attempted to challenge the parents and local residents to participate in school evaluations, around 26% of the respondents in Thailand claimed that there is a lack of involvement, especially in school self-evaluation, and also claimed that the parents did not have enough time and believed that it was the responsibility of the school only. Moreover, on item 29 of the Action dimension, school principals ($M=3.34$) in Thailand and Japan ($M=3.21$) were less certain that the school set up the information system regarding the implementation of the school evaluation system. This can be interpreted as meaning that elementary schools both in Thailand and Japan lacked an adequate information system providing a basis for the implementation of the school evaluation system. In the case of Thailand this was also related to the finding of the previous part regarding problems of school self-evaluation, showing that school staff lacked understanding of how to set up the information system. While the respondents in Japan also suggested that schools faced a lack of information systems for arranging the implementation of the school evaluation.

In terms of the reporting stage, overall, school principals in Thailand ($M=3.81$) and Japan ($M=3.53$) agreed with the reporting stage as shown in Table 4. Item 30, "School provides an easy understanding of the school evaluation report." was rated higher than other items both in Thailand ($M=4.06$) and Japan ($M=3.703$). However, on item 33 both school principals in Thailand ($M=3.35$) and Japan ($M=3.48$) seemed less uncertain that they reflected the opinions of school staff, students and parents when preparing the school self-evaluation report. In

TABLE 3 Perceptions of School Principals Regarding the Operation Stage

Operation Stage	Thailand		Japan	
	M (n=458)	SD	M (n=425)	SD
Plan				
6. Previous-year improvement strategies are reflected in setting the goals of the next fiscal year.	4.31	0.65	4.24	0.66
7. Goals of school management have been set concretely.	4.14	0.59	4.41	0.60
8. Measurements, activities, and budgeting are set in accordance with the goals of school management.	4.15	0.63	3.66	0.78
9. School evaluation plan is concretely set at the same time as the setting of the management plan.	4.23	0.62	3.58	0.86
10. School management plan and school evaluation plan are sufficiently explained to the parents.	3.93	0.74	3.35	0.80
(Total: Items 6-10)	4.15	0.50	3.85	0.53
Do				
11. Information concerning educational activities is systemically arranged.	3.31	0.55	3.80	0.67
12. School curriculum is congruent with its context and students capacity.	4.00	0.77	3.99	0.64
13. The school appropriately provides students educational activities with regard to their learning capabilities.	3.97	0.65	4.07	0.53
14. The school organizes a mid-year monitoring in order to improve the quality of education.	3.98	0.71	3.64	0.84
15. The school holds meetings in order to set a clear understanding regarding targets and current problems.	4.21	0.58	3.86	0.64
(Total: Items 11-15)	3.89	0.44	3.87	0.47
Check				
16. The school clearly sets objectively verifiable indicators.	4.19	0.69	3.61	0.74
17. The school sets evaluation criteria appropriately.	4.12	0.69	3.55	0.74
18. The school sets period and evaluation schedule appropriately.	3.95	0.68	3.73	0.78
19. The school makes an attempt to understand the progress of management during the implementation of school evaluation.	4.12	0.59	3.52	0.69
20. The school has sufficient quantitative and qualitative data.	3.93	0.63	3.73	0.81
21. School evaluation is carried out continuously as part of the school management.	4.01	0.69	4.01	0.70
22. The school reflects the opinions of parents and students as part of the measurements of school evaluation	3.40	0.59	3.88	0.75
23. The school sets a concrete measurement to improve the implementation of the school evaluation system.	3.92	0.65	3.53	0.76
(Total: Items 16-23)	3.95	0.47	3.66	0.55
Action				
24. The school carries out a mid-year evaluation in order to revise the management plan.	4.18	0.56	3.87	0.76
25. The school sets the procedures to examine the evaluation results in order to identify key priorities for improvement.	4.01	0.58	3.62	0.72
26. The school sets a clear measurement for applying the evaluation results.	4.12	0.57	3.70	0.70
27. The school applies the results of the school evaluation to improve the quality of education for the next year.	4.21	0.60	4.04	0.61
28. The school sets a guideline for the future improvement of school management.	4.09	0.61	3.51	0.73
29. The school sets up an appropriate information system regarding the implementation of the school evaluation system	3.34	0.53	3.21	0.81
(Total: Items 24-29)	3.99	0.40	3.65	0.54
(M: Mean, SD: Standard Deviation)				

TABLE 4 Perceptions of School Principals Regarding the Reporting Stage

Reporting Stage	Thailand		Japan	
	M (n=458)	SD	M (n=425)	SD
30. The school provides an easy understanding of the school evaluation report.	4.06	0.64	3.70	0.79
31. The report fully describes the results of school evaluation.	4.02	0.58	3.68	0.77
32. The school makes enough effort to publicize the results of the school evaluation. (both self and external evaluation)	3.87	0.72	3.52	0.88
33. School reflects the opinions of school staff, students and parents when preparing the school self-evaluation report.	3.35	0.54	3.48	0.89
34. School applies various methods to publicize the school evaluation report to the parents and the community.	3.76	0.75	3.29	1.01
Total	3.81	0.47	3.53	0.71
(M: Mean, SD: Standard Deviation)				

addition, on item 34, school principals in Japan (M=3.29) were uncertain that they applied various methods to publicize the evaluation reports to the parents and the community. In sum, the finding of the reporting stage also implied that as a whole the implementation had been viewed positively both in Thailand and Japan. However, some aspects should be focused on regarding both countries. For instance, schools should make more effort to challenge teachers, students, parents and local residents involved in the process of preparing the school evaluation report.

Conclusion

The Features and Problems of the Implementation of the School Evaluation System

The findings show some different features of implementation between the two countries. For example, the committee structures of both the school self-evaluation and the external evaluation vary among the two countries. In Thailand a variety of committee structures responded for school self-evaluation, while in Japan the principals and vice principals seem to play a more important role as committee members. Regarding external evaluation, in Thailand the external evaluation was

the responsibility of ONESQA. However, most elementary schools established the committees responsible for receiving external evaluation. The committee structures mainly comprised of principal and teacher representatives. In Japan, on the other hand, external evaluation has been conducted by the persons related to the school focusing on the participation of parents, guardians and local residents. School councilors, parent and local resident representatives seem to play a more important role as external evaluation committee members. Concerning the schedule of school self evaluations, around half of the respondent schools in Japan conducted a school self-evaluation twice a year, while about half of the respondent schools in Thailand conducted it at the end of the academic year. In terms of the methods of the results of the school evaluation disclosure, most of the respondent schools in Thailand publicized the results at school board meetings, while most of the respondent schools in Japan disclosed the results through school newsletter. Regarding the burden of the implementation, a higher percentage of the respondents in Thailand seemed to believe that it increased unavoidable workload on teachers especially the preparing for receiving external evaluation. Regarding problems of implementation, it was found that there exist several problems both in Thailand and Japan. The problems concerning school self-evaluation that tended to be mentioned by school principals in Thailand were teacher shortages, budget shortfalls, insufficient involvement of stakeholders such as parents and local residents, and insufficient supervision from the parent organizations. In Japan, on the other hand, the problems tended to relate to the processes of implementation such as the establishment of evaluation criteria, evaluation items and the methods of evaluation. The problems of external evaluation most frequently mentioned by school principals in Thailand were teacher shortages, insufficient understanding, budget shortfalls, and insufficient supervision from parent organizations. In Japan, the most frequently mentioned issues concerned a lack of understanding of the school context among the evaluators, the number of evaluation items, the standards of the methods of evaluation, and the disclosure of school information.

This suggests that elementary schools in Thailand seem to suffer from insufficient management resources, such as teacher shortage, etc., and insufficient supervision and support from parent organizations. While the elementary schools in Japan seem to face the problems related to the processes of implementation.

The Perceptions of School Principals Regarding the Implementation of the School Evaluation System

Overall, the data suggest that school principals in Thailand and Japan seem to agree with the implementation of the school evaluation system. The findings also reveal that school principals in both countries positively agreed with all stages of implementation (the preparation stage, the operation stage, and the reporting stage). However, some aspects of the implementation process are in need of improvement. For instance, in the preparation stage, a training session or workshop regarding the school evaluation system for school staff should be provided especially in the Thai survey suggests that principals and teachers seem to lack knowledge regarding the implementation of the school evaluation system. In the operation stage, the data shows that elementary schools in Thailand seem to lack reflects the opinions of parents and students as part of the measurements of school evaluation. In addition, the elementary schools in both countries should establish the information system regarding the implementation of school evaluation system. In the reporting stage, schools should make more effort to challenge teachers, students, parents and local residents involved in the process of preparing the school evaluation report. Particularly in Japan, school should apply various methods to publicize the school evaluation report to the parents and community.

The Features of School Accountability and Improvement in Elementary Education Level

From the perspectives of the governments, school accountability and improvement are, and have to be, absolutely compatible. However, in practice,

school accountability and improvement are not as compatible as government officials have expected. Leithwood et al.²⁰⁾ clarify the concept of current accountability policies into four basic approaches, which are: the market competition approaches, the decentralization of decision making approaches (including public accountability), the professional approaches, and the management approaches (bureaucratic or contractual accountability). The results reveal that there exist some contrasts between the two countries. The background of the implementation policy should be seen as a significant factor influencing the ongoing implementation.

In Thailand, school evaluation was employed for the purposes of school improvement and accountability. However, the government seems to put focus on management accountability approach. As stipulated in the NEA and ministerial regulation, all elementary schools are mandated to establish the quality assurance system. Elementary schools are required to undertake school self-evaluations or internal evaluations and prepare annual reports that will be submitted to parent organizations and the agencies concerned and be made available to the public to provide the basis for external evaluations. School-self evaluations are integrated into the management processes. The PDCA cycle is adopted in implementing school evaluation system. Elementary schools are also mandated to receive external evaluations at least once every five years conducted by ONESQA. School-self evaluation and external evaluation are the significant measurements for the educational quality assurance system which put focus on educational standards. The implementation seems to be enforced as a top-down approach rather than a bottom-up one. In addition, more emphasis is put on the accreditation system than on school accountability. In other words, the process tends to achieve bureaucratic or contractual rather than public accountability²¹⁾. School evaluation may therefore be used as a preliminary inspection process instead of a project for self-improvement. In Japan, by contrast, the framework of school accountability and improvement are based on the ministerial ordinance under the School Education

Law (the standard for establishment of elementary schools) and the guidelines for school evaluation. All elementary schools are required to conduct school self-evaluations and to disclose the evaluation results and other school information to parents and local residents. School-self evaluations are integrated into school management processes. The PDCA cycle is also adopted in implementing school evaluation system. The external evaluation which refers to the evaluation conducted by persons related to the school and the third-party evaluation are not mandated but still in the promotion stage. However, the specifics of the implementation of school evaluation system are left in the hands of schools and local boards of education. This suggests the participation in decision-making from stake holders focusing on the public accountability approach. The different approaches of school accountability and improvement reflect the different features of the implementation between the two countries. For example, the structures of school-self evaluation and external evaluation committees, the burden of implementation and problems regarding implementation.

In conclusion, the results reveal that school evaluation system has been implemented nationwide in Thailand and Japan. All respondent elementary schools in both countries have already implemented school-self evaluation. School self-evaluation and external evaluation are mandatory in Thailand. In Japan, school self-evaluation has become mandatory while external evaluation is still in the promotion stage. Therefore, in practice, the methods and processes of the implementation still varied between the two countries. In addition, there remain a number of problems in implementation. The problems may impact the on-going outcomes of the implementation. Thus, there is an urgent need for policy makers in both countries to place emphasis on the implementation. This would be a significant step in terms of improving and developing the system. In the conclusion of findings, I deemed it important not to make value judgments about which system is better or worse. Most importantly, the purpose of comparison is lessons learned and its implications for improving the implementation.

In order to further understand how to improve and develop implementation of the school evaluation system, I plan to conduct case studies focusing on the process of implementation and its application to school improvement. A number of public elementary schools in Thailand and Japan will be selected purposively. School principals' interviews and schools' official documents analysis will be conducted as key methods for the case studies.

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タイと日本の小学校の学校評価制度の比較研究： —学校改善と説明責任を中心に—

スウィット・カンヘー

本稿は、タイと日本の小学校の校長を対象とした認識調査から得られたデータを基に、学校評価制度の実施状況と問題を明らかにする。本研究のサンプルは、タイの公立小学校の校長が458人と日本の公立小学校の学校長が425人から成る。調査は2008年の2月から4月までに全国的に実施した。本稿は、調査の結果を報告し、学校評価制度の取り組みと問題を考察し、明らかにする。

タイでは、学校評価制度が説明責任に関してより多くの強調を学校認定制度に置くように思われる。言い換えれば、それは公共的説明責任よりむしろ官僚的説明責任にもっと多くの強調を置く傾向が見られるとすることができる。従って学校評価が自己改善の代わりに予備の監査として使用されるかもしれない。一方、日本では、学校教育法において学校評価に関連する施行規則および義務教育諸学校における学校評価ガイドラインで規定されているように、学校評価が学校改善と説明責任の目的として導入された。学校評価の具体的な方法は、学校や教育委員会の判断に委ねられている。これは公共的説明責任を達成するための開かれた学校づくりに焦点を合わせて意志決定の分散を含めてボトムアップのアプローチをとっていることを意味する。よって、両国の実施の特徴と問題はそれらが埋め込まれている方針の影響を反映する。

結論として、学校評価制度は全国的に実施され、タイと日本の学校評価実施が両方を肯定的な傾向に示されている。しかしながら、両国での注目されるべき問題の必要性が残っている。それで、両国の政策立案者が実施を強調する緊急が必要である。これは学校評価制度を改善させ、発展していくという意義がある。