

Guidelines for the Management of Guidance and Public Relations on Further Vocational Education for Apply to the Innovative Vocational Scholarship

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ABSTRACT

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The objectives of this study were to 1) investigate the elements of guidance and public relations management on further vocational education for apply to the innovative vocational scholarship; and 2) formulate guidelines for the guidance and public relations management on further vocational education for apply to the innovative vocational scholarship. The target groups in this research are 17 guidance teachers, one from each of 17 vocational education institutions that applied for innovative vocational scholarship 2020 without previously receiving the scholarship. The research took on a qualitative approach using data collection methods of documentary review, in-depth interview, and focus group discussion with guidance teachers of vocational education institutions.

Results suggest that:

1) Factors affecting the success of guidance and public relations on further vocational education comprise 5 aspects including (1) Human factor; (2) Budget factor; (3) Activity factor; (4) Cooperation factor; and (5) Administrator's support factor.

2) Guidelines for the management of guidance and public relations on further vocational education using the STARBURST Model consist of 6 elements namely: (1) Administrator's participation and support for the project; (2) Coordination with other agencies for their understanding about the scholarship; (3) Outreach guidance and public relations; (4) Use of diverse types of public relations media and channels; (5) Use of connection of education institutions network; and (6) Field visit to community on door-to-door.

Keywords:

Guidance and Public Relations, Vocational Education Institution, Innovative Advanced Vocational Scholarship

INTRODUCTION

At present, education plays a significant role in national development as it equips the population with the potential to compete with other countries. According to the 2007 Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, Section 49; and the National Education Act B.E. 2542 and Amendment (No. 2) B.E. 2545, Chapter 2, Section 10, it was stated that a person shall have equal right "to receive a basic education throughout for not less than twelve years" without cost, and Section 6 states that the provision of education shall be for the development of Thai people so as to be a perfect human being including body, mind, intelligence, knowledge, and virtue

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and to have morality and culture in living life and capable of living with other people happily. National development thus requires involvement of several factors. People are considered one crucial factor in driving the country to progress both academically and technologically so as attain the goals set effectively. Quality development of education at all levels of all types mainly targets at learner-centered focusing on the process of creating and using body of knowledge and offering educational opportunities for the nation which includes at both the vocational and higher education levels. Therefore, the most important thing in the development of manpower is education since it helps promote not only better living but also better spiritual growth.

The Office of Vocational Education Commission is an agency that places importance on providing education, producing and developing manpower in response of the needs for national development. In 2013, the Office had established a good image and subsequent popularity in vocational education for society. The goal is to increase the number of

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learners while at the same time offering social service activities in various projects and special events so that the society becomes aware of the potential of vocational learners. In doing this, the learners can have first-hand experiences in vocational training and develop social service mind as well. The emphasis is placed on cooperative network among all sectors to share greater responsibilities and roles in vocational education management in order to make vocational institutions become more known and create the need among target groups to enter vocational education system.

The Office of Vocational Education Commission attempts to increase morality of learners along with their numbers, and expands its role in providing vocational education to cover those learners who are employed, who are in need of developing their potential, as well as those who are looking for a job. In addition, it emphasizes on the search, development, and dissemination of innovations and technologies to generate and develop careers for commercial benefits, including development of labors with specific vocational expertise to match the demands of the labor market, and the economic, social and cultural conditions (Rewadee Narmthongdee, 2015).

The current situation of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak has result in a large number of students being affected. The COVID-19 crisis is a major education crisis, with more than 1.5 billion students worldwide, or more than 90% of all students in the world fully affected from school closure which disrupts the learning process. Students, parents, teachers, school administrators are facing more and more severe problems. When the epidemic may cause people, who used to be in the system to drop out of the education system. Because when they are away from school inability to access learning resources outside the classroom. When going back in school may not be able to go back closely, so knowledge decline until being out of the system and causing more informal children.

The Equitable Education Fund (EEF) was established on the recommendation of the Independent Committee for Education Reform aiming at helping the needy, reduce educational disparities, and promote and develop the quality and efficiency of teachers. It seeks to ensure equitable education especially for the needy and the underprivileged to receive education or development on the knowledge and competencies to pursue career of their skills and also the potential to be self-dependent in living their life (Prasarn Trairatvorakul, 2019). In recognition of the significance of equitable education opportunity for all with no one left behind, the EEF was founded to help the needy. EEF operates with a flexible and agile approach to work more efficiently to reach the target groups that are still underrepresented or outside of the system. This role of helping these target groups adheres to the principles of knowledge-based approach, social strategy by mobilizing participation of all sectors, and politic change with measures

recommended to effect policy changes. Guidelines for implementation include alleviating difficulties or immediate obstacles in combination with systematic development or strengthening for long-term sustainability (Supakorn Buasai, 2019). A serious issue of educational disparities is that at present, there are approximately 160,000 children and youth from the 20 percent lowest income households in Thailand, among whom having the opportunity to pursue higher education for only 5% on average or about 8,000 per class which is much lower than the average of 32 % of those from general families who has attended higher education. These disadvantaged children and youth are at the bottom of Thai society.

One of the primary missions of the EEF is to help the underprivileged youth to have the opportunity to further study to their full potential. With limited budget, investment methods have been invented to improve the issue at the right point, starting with the problem of what kind of learning that best offers the opportunities for this group of youth while also be responsive to the country's economics.

Guidance and public information on further vocational education for the innovative advanced vocational innovation scholarship application is intended to find scholarship recipients using outreach educational guidance and methods different from usual methods, and explore various communication mechanisms and channels. These include for example field guidance at schools and homes of students, organizing open house activities to present readiness and capability of educational management, organizing road show activities as well as public relations through various types of media in order to recruit learners qualified with the criteria set forth for receiving scholarships. Guidance work needs to relate and connect with individuals of other agencies both inside and outside of schools with the main purpose of preventing, promoting and helping learners especially in today's social conditions. This will be of great benefit to the management of guidance work. (Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University, 2011: 15).

With the reasons and importance mentioned above, the researcher is interested to explore guidelines for the management of guidance and public relations on further vocational education for the innovative advanced vocational scholarship application so as to guide vocational institutions on developing guidance management and managing guidance and public relations for students to further vocational education. This will help students with resource insufficiency to have the opportunity to continue their vocational education with quality and also enhance the quality and efficiency of the guidance and public relations work in educational institutions.

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OBJECTIVES

1. To explore the elements of guidance and public relations management on further vocational education for apply to the innovative vocational scholarship
2. To formulate guidelines for the guidance and public relations management on further vocational education for apply to the innovative vocational scholarship

METHODOLOGY

This research took on a qualitative approach with the data collected by means of in-depth interview with guidance teachers of vocational education institutions.

1. The target group in this research includes 17 guidance teachers, one from each of 17 vocational education institutions that applied for innovative vocational scholarship 2020 without previously receiving the scholarship.

2. Procedures

2.1 Investigate the elements of guidance and public relations management on further vocational education for apply to the innovative vocational scholarship by means of 1) documentary review and 2) interview. Key informants are guidance teachers.

2.2 Explore guidelines for the guidance and public relations management on further vocational education for apply to the innovative vocational scholarship by analyzing the data derived from the interview and the data from the review of relevant documents and research works.

2.3 Conduct a learning exchange meeting with schools by school representatives sharing their experiences about the management of guidance and public relations on further vocational education. The meeting takes place after the draft guidelines was finished.

2.4 Formulate guidelines for the guidance and public relations management on further vocational education for the innovative vocational scholarship by having focus group discussion among 5 key informants as experts in vocational education and experts in industrial education who were purposively selected from their being well-versed and best providing in-depth data or direct involvement in this work.

3. Instrumentation

The data collecting instrument for this qualitative research utilizes structured in-depth interview form with question guidelines for focus group discussion to capture guidelines for the guidance and public relations management on further vocational education for apply to the innovative vocational scholarship. It requires the researcher to prepare the interview form and questions guideline including other necessities such as tape recorder, note books, pens, and camera.

4. Data collection

4.1 Collecting data by performing interviews, the researcher took field visits to each vocational institution with the informant scheduling date, time, and place

to provide the interview. Information from the interview was collected and the interview was recorded by note taking, photographing, and tape recording.

4.2 Organizing a one-day learning exchange meeting with educational institutions, with their representatives sharing experiences about the management of guidance and public relations on further vocational education.

4.3 Conducting focus group discussion by scheduling discussion date and time and preparing discussion papers including questions form and research related documents.

5. Data analysis

5.1 Document analysis using content analysis

5.2 Interview analysis using content analysis

5.3 Focus group discussion analysis using content analysis

RESULTS

1. Result on the elements of guidance and public relations management on further vocational education for apply to the innovative vocational scholarship

The investigation of elements of guidance and public relations management on further vocational education for apply to the innovative vocational scholarship was undertaken by performing interviews at the field visits to 17 institutions. The researcher prepared a summary result of interview at each field visit on the institution's success factors in the management of guidance and public relations and its resulting innovations. The information was then used to determine guidelines for the guidance and public relations management on further vocational education for apply to the innovative vocational scholarship.

1) Factors affecting the success of school's guidance and public relations

1.1 Human factor

All of the guidance teachers and counseling teachers have information about students and their academic performance, family situation, behavior, lifestyle, and career goals.

1.2 Budget factor

For successful operation, budget is one of the key factors that supports and promotes smooth operation. The budget received from the EEF effectively support in implementing coordination, guidance and relations.

1.3 Activity factor

Guidance and public relations activities are clearly planned and implemented internally and externally by the institutions starting from the inside and disseminating to the outside of institutions. Internal activities were aimed at building the knowledge and understanding among personnel within the institution on the details about project objectives, student qualification and selection criteria, including the

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number of scholarships provided to the institution. This activity includes a meeting for all section administrators, a meeting for teachers, personnel and staff, and a meeting for community relations personnel for their common understanding and awareness of the role and duty of each individual in offering the guidance and public relations to students, schools, communities, and families of students.

1.4 Cooperation factor

It is important to place an emphasis on local cooperation mechanisms. The institutions have established cooperation with networks in communities, localities, and organizations such as the Primary Education Service Area Office (PESAO), the Secondary Education Service Area Office (SES AO), the Local Administrative Organizations (SAO), and Alumni Network, etc. This allows for smoother and more effective implementation of the guidance and public relations activities for the targeted and qualified students, and long-term cooperation as well.

1.5 Administrator's support factor

The institute administrator's vision to exalt education to gain recognition and to build faith in the career chosen after graduation is partly contribute to the current students' confidence and readiness to continue their studies in the same field. The institute administrators opened for their staff's opinions and also look into the information from community resources, parents, and students to be used in planning activities with the working group, and as a result, the implementation of guidance and public relations activities can achieve the goals set.

2) Innovations acquired from the guidance and public relations

2.1 Fostering informed-perception of guidance teachers and communities for their further conveying information to students and their families.

2.2 Proceeding outreach guidance through guidance teachers, communities, parents, associations, and government agencies in order to activate public relations for grades 7 – 9 students and affect subsequent referring students to further vocational education.

2.3 Organizing open house, road show, and one trip activities.

2.4 Publicizing within the institution through such as teachers meeting, morning flagpole activities, and alumni representatives.

2.5 Publicizing through various types of media such as websites, social media (LINE, Facebook), local radio and television, and brochures outlining information about fields of study.

2.6 Arranging platforms for learning exchange with communities, guidance teachers, associations, and government agencies.

2.7 Organizing activities to facilitate accessibility, understanding, and educating within and outside of the institution.

2.8 Publicizing through the project on academic services to community.

2.9 Publicizing to ensure that the project is known to students of all class levels for their informed choice decision prior to graduation.

2. Result on the development of guidelines for guidance and public relations management on further vocational education for apply to the innovative vocational scholarship (STARBURST Model)

The result was based on the researcher's analysis of information derived from the field visits and learning exchange at 17 vocational institutions with 3 representatives from each institution participating in sharing experiences on the guidance and public relations on further vocational education. As summarized by the researcher, it was found that the guidelines for guidance and public relations management on further vocational education for apply to the innovative vocational scholarship comprises 6 elements of STARBURST Model as described below.

Element 1 Administrator's participation and support for the project

For those institutions provided with this innovative vocational scholarship, their administrators should considerably focus on the project since the project responsible persons and coordinators as well as involved teachers and staff all dedicated tremendously on the work for the idea and design of public relations that can reach the target groups and also taking field visits to reach out those impoverished students especially in the remote area where perceived information might not be possible. Hence, administrators are required to actively participate and fully support the project as a way to provide encouragement and moral support to these people.

Element 2 Coordination with agencies for understanding of the scholarship

To conduct the guidance and public relations on innovative advanced vocational scholarship, all of the institutions granted with the scholarship need to coordinate with various concerned agencies to create their common understanding about the scholarship as it was intended to help students in true poverty. Coordination for common understanding among agencies is thus important for it allows the institutions to reach the right target group at the right point since information about the poor in respective area is available at each of these agencies. They include for example the Education Service Area Office, the Non-formal Education Organization, the Local Administrative Organization, sub-district headman, village headman, local community, the Provincial Office for Social Development and Human Security, Home for the Poor, Home for the Disadvantaged Children, health volunteers in the province, religious facilities, such as temple, mosque, religious school (Pondok), including foundations and associations such as foundations

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for public charity and consumer help, foundations for preservation of religion or ancient remains, foundations for women help, foundations for wildlife and natural preservation, hospital foundations, foundations for education, foundations for patients or people with disabilities, foundations for senior citizens, foundations for children, Yuvabadhana Foundation, SOS Children's Foundation of Thailand, World Vision Foundation of Thailand, Chaipattana Foundation, Children's Hospital Foundation, Foundation for Child and Family Rehabilitation, Foundation for Children with Disabilities, Rajapranukroh Foundation, Foundation for Better Life of Children, Sataban Saengsawang Foundation under the Royal Patronage, Raks Thai Foundation, Smarter Thais Foundation, Duang Prateep Foundation, Santisuk Foundation, Human Development Foundation, Gum Lung Jai Foundation, Saijaithai Foundation under the Royal Patronage, etc.

Element 3 Outreach Guidance at Schools and Community

Guidance at schools is the key to reach out secondary school students. For those vocational education institutions provided with the scholarship, permission needed to be granted by the institution's administrator or guidance teachers to foster inform-perception among guidance teachers about the scholarship and benefits gained by a recipient, and particularly the differences between innovative advanced vocational scholarship and other general scholarships. Guidance teachers are expected to convey the information to students and their families. It is the outreach guidance performed directly through guidance teachers, communities, and parents. It can be carried out by arranging learning exchange platforms for community and guidance teacher. Activities such as open house, road show, one day trip, and mobile team also help secondary school students to understand and access vocational field of education, providing information for their choice decision to further vocational education. In addition, it helps publicize the project for the awareness of students at all class levels and also provides secondary school students with information to make decisions before graduation. Guidance and public relations should be initiated at the beginning of the second semester of the academic year to allow students to think through and recognize the importance and benefits received when furthering vocational education.

Element 4 Use of diverse types of public relations media and channels

Use of public relations media as the main channel for communication allows for the accessibility of students, parents, communities, and local people. The group or individuals who play significant part in making the decision

for student's further education are student's father, mother, and guardians. Allowing individuals in local community or individuals being respected by local people to learn about the scholarship will effectively push forward the decision of parents and guardians. These include individuals in temple community, mosque community, and associations in locality. In general, educational institutions have utilized many different types of public relations media including online such as Facebook, LINE, website; offline such as printed materials like leaflets and posters; local media such as radio and television; and newspapers of the province or local community.

Element 5 Connection of educational institution networks

Use of networks by educational institutions is essential to reaching out needy students. To search for potential students, it requires a wide variety of networks both internal and external to drive and to spread over the area to exactly reach poor students. Using internal network such as teachers and staff meeting allows for their involvement in the project and searching for potential students. Using morning flagpole activities allow current students to understand the project and act as network to convey information to their juniors who which to continue their studies. Alumni representatives can also broadly disseminate the information. External network works by the school network center located outside through the project on academic service to community by the school in each locality. Guidance and public relations on innovative advanced vocational scholarship are managed at the network schools (dual education) and the network of secondary school guidance teachers in each province.

Element 6 Field visit to community on door-to-door

Field visit to community is to reach out needy students and build trust among parents in this scholarship. It allows shared learning of institutions with parents and students for their understanding on furthering vocational field and recognizing the importance of vocational education for national development. The institutions assigned working groups to field visit to provide guidance and public relations about the innovative advanced vocational scholarship project. The visits were arranged as an outreach to the planned areas and by targeted provinces to communities and localities on door-to-door. During this field visit to search for needy students, the working team is required to screen basic information of students to ensure that the students who are truly poor and qualified can be selected rather than focusing on the expected number of students but without screening.

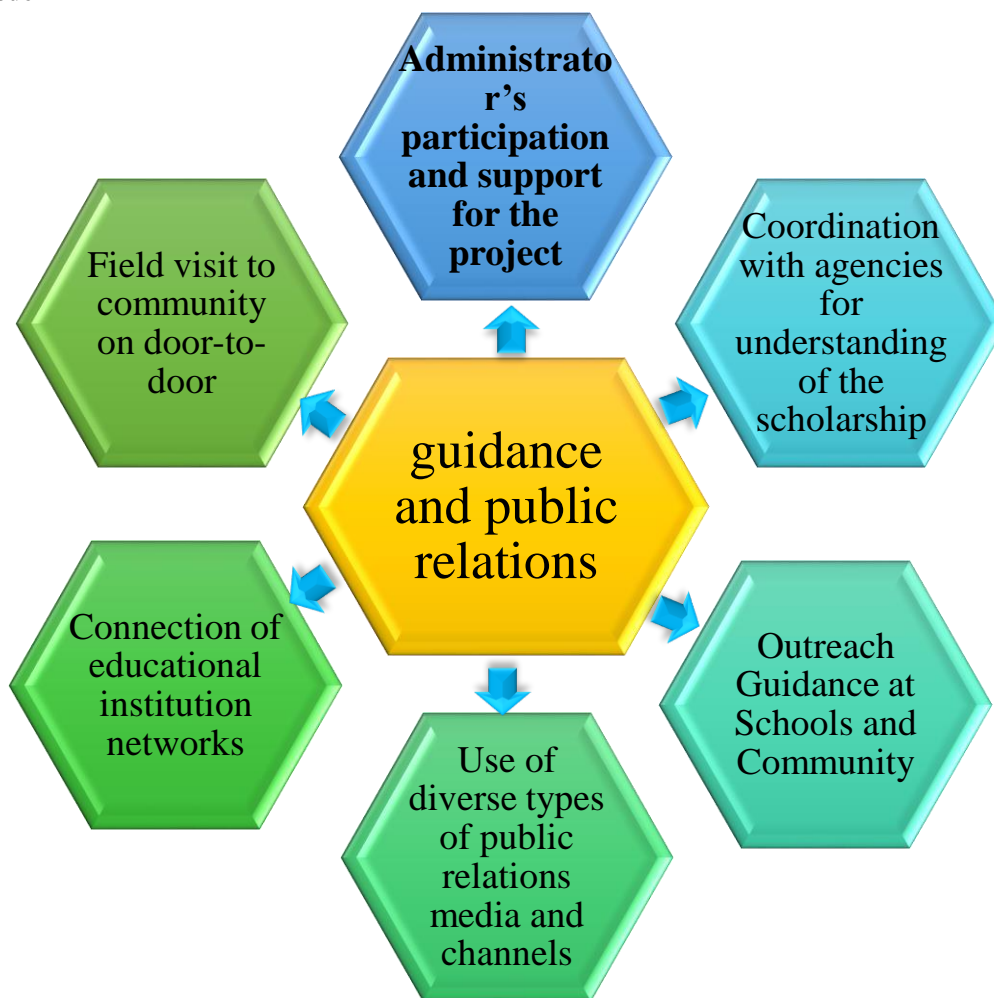


Figure 1. the STARBURST Model

Evaluation result on guidelines for the management of guidance and public relations on innovative advanced vocational scholarship according to the focus group discussion found that the 4 areas of evaluation i.e. utility, propriety, accuracy, and feasibility for utilization were at a highest level in overall.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

1. Investigation of factors affecting the success of guidance and public relations on further vocational education for apply to the innovative vocational scholarship reveals 5 success factors including human, budget, activities, cooperation, and administrator's support. This is because educational institutions participating in the innovative vocational scholarship project aimed to promote, support, and help those impoverished youths to have the opportunities to continue advanced vocational education. In addition, these institutions also focus on developing the institutions that offer high vocational education by raising the quality of instruction and institutional management in corresponding to competency enhancement, and thus resulted in the

development of all 5 elements. It is consistent with the 5 elements of resources management or 5M's (Suraphan Chantadansuwan, 2007) identifying the 5 factors as 1) Man, 2) Money, 3) Materials, 4) Machine, and 5) Management or Method. The guidance and public relations for students to continue vocational education emphasizes on improving the quality of life of students and elevate the development of the country in line with the directions of socioeconomic development and the 20-Year National Strategic Framework (2017 – 2036).

2. Guidelines for the management of guidance and public relations on further vocational education for apply to the innovative vocational scholarship using the STARBURST Model consist of the followings.

2.1 Administrators participate and support the project by taking the lead in planning for field visits at the targeted areas to conduct public relations about the scholarship and to build trust among parents. Guidance on the scholarship was initiated since the enrollment of students at network schools. Public relations should inform network schools that free scholarships are available so that they can

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find potential recipients from when students first attend school.

2.2 Coordination with concerned agencies is to establish common understanding about the scholarship include for example public and private agencies, foundations, etc.

2.3 Outreach guidance and public relations started by coordinating with the guidance teachers' network, alumni network, current students' network, OBEC administrators' network, and field visit to meet and inform parents.

2.4 Use of diverse types of media and channels for public relations focuses on those reaching out the target groups easily and at a highest number for their opportunities to best access the scholarship.

2.5 The connection of institutions network uses the cooperative network of participating secondary schools in dual education system, with public relations through various types of media, external networks, community leaders, localities, sub-district headman and village headman.

2.6 Field visit to communities on door-to-door and spreading over the targeted areas enables reaching out the homes of students and building trust among parents.

According to the focus group discussion, it was found that the evaluation result on the 4 areas including utility, propriety, accuracy, and feasibility were at a highest level in overall. This is because 90% of participating vocational education institutions are able to implement the project as planned, and are able to search and select students for further vocational education at the certificate and diploma levels as for the target set. It agrees to Tarini Taesupwili (2019) reporting about organizing for public relations with the meeting to assign supervisor or responsible person along with operating officers and scope of work such as duration, budget and expected outcome. There is a policy for staffing and assigning tasks for public relations through online media and websites including institution website. Administrators motivated their subordinates to work to full capability for the organization to achieve its objectives and also allow them to share opinions in preparing public relations plan. Moreover, they shifted their role as administrator to supervisor to reduce gap at work and to set an example of good work in every step in order to provide encouragement and moral support to subordinates.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) Regarding the budget for guidance and public relations, educational institutions should focus more on allocating budget for public relations since the guidance and public relations work needs to shift to outreach and involve all of the teachers and staff.

2) Operating guidance and public relations activities both within and outside of the institution requires

administrators who have attention and visions, and importantly cooperation of the faculty of instructors to pool efforts in carrying out the set activities.

3) For field visits, staff should be arranged in groups for outreach public relations to the planned areas that might be assigned by targeted provinces.

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