Chapter I

The Problem and Conceptual Framework

Introduction

Primary education in Thailand was officially initiated when King Chulalongkorn reorganized the educational system through an edict in 1884. According to this, the Department of Education was established for the first time in 1887. At present, in concurrence with the proclamation of the latest Primary Education Act 1980, the Office of the National Primary Education Commission (ONPEC) has been set up under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education. Thus, the present ONPEC is responsible for the administration and management of all government primary schools in Thailand except those under the auspices of the Municipalities, experimental schools under the Department of Teacher Education and Ministry of University Affairs and special schools under the Department of General Education.

Primary education is more important when education is being looked at with a perspective of life-long-education and continuing education. Primary education is needed for both skill in production and self education. The basic skills and knowledge enable the pupils to earn a living commensurate with their age and capabilities and making them law-abiding citizens. Primary education is also very crucial for self education because it

provides ability to understand written material related to skills, life experiences, character development and work experiences. It acts to inciting and effecting growth and development to stimulate the mind to benefit from the knowledge acquired through newspapers, magazines, books, pamphlets, etc. And it will encourage people to carry on studying up to the maximum level through arrangements like the open university courses. Thus, through primary education, the quality of life in the community will be raised. Mark Blaug (1970) strongly confirmed years ago that 'primary education contributes the highest rate of return to the public when compared with the other levels of education'.
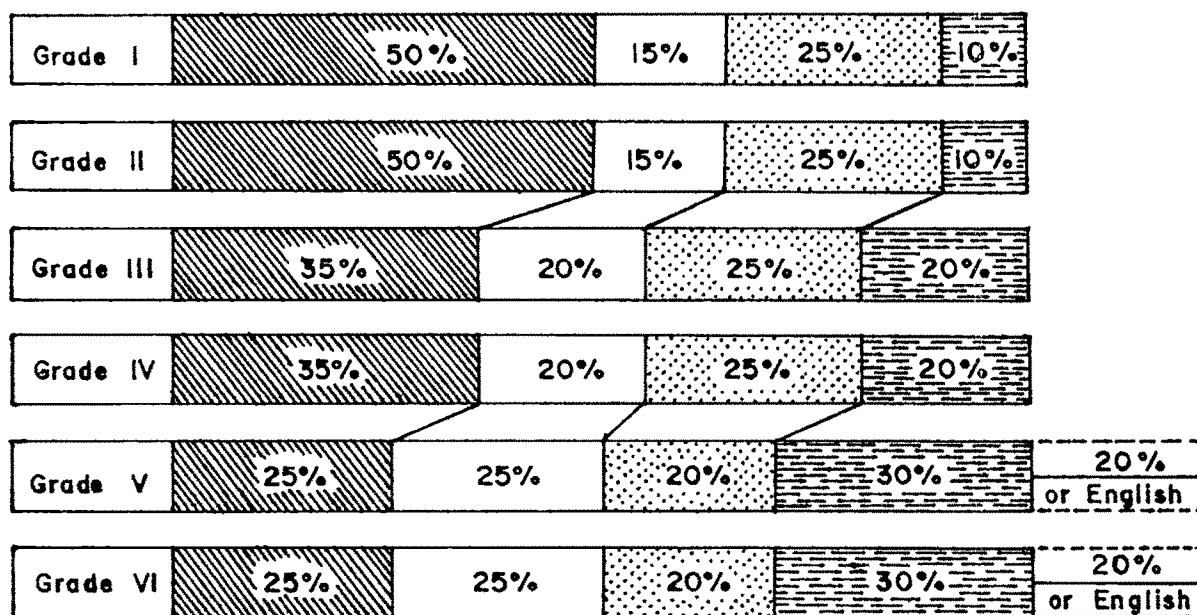
The Thai National Scheme of Education which was formulated in 1977 emphasizes the purposes of primary education on the development of an individual's life and society as a whole. In the scheme, primary education aims to provide and maintain literacy, develop cognitive abilities, numeral manipulation, communication skills and adequate knowledge and abilities of the individual to apply to future occupational roles. It also aims at personal development and the promotion of upright citizenry desirable for life in a democratic government under the monarchy. It was therefore introduced, bringing about a change in the educational structure from the 4-3-3-2 system to the 6-3-3 system. The new system has since been in use and with the adoption of six years of primary schooling in one cycle, primary education in Thailand implies a universal education of six years.

(Thailand National Education Scheme, 1977).

All the above considerations eventually converged and sparked off the movement in 1977 in which primary school teachers submitted a seven-point petition to the government. In one of the submitted seven points, they appealed to the government to set up one single unified, independent office for the administration of primary education for the whole country. Consequently, in 1979, a Committee was set up by the government to study the problems in the administration of primary education. As a result of the study, on November 20, 1979, a resolution was passed by the Cabinet to set up an entirely new department in the Ministry of Education, the Office of the National Primary Education Com mission (ONPEC), to take care of the management and administration of primary education by transferring the administration of primary schools under the Local Administration Department (Ministry of Interior) and those under the Department of General Education (Ministry of Education) to the new department to be under one single government unit in the Ministry of Education.

The drastic change brought about by the curriculum reform in 1978 lies in the introduction of the new organizational structure of curricular content whereby the old method of teaching each subject separately or in isolation was replaced by the teaching of subjects under four subject groupings:

a) skill (mathematics, Thai language)

b) life experience (e.g., health education, social
   studies, science)

c) character development (e.g., art, music, physical and
   moral education)

d) work experience (e.g., home economics, carpentry,
   agriculture and handicrafts)

Grade I — skill 50% | life experience 15% | character development 25% | work experience 10%

Grade II — skill 50% | life experience 15% | character development 25% | work experience 10%

Grade III — skill 35% | life experience 20% | character development 25% | work experience 20%

Grade IV — skill 35% | life experience 20% | character development 25% | work experience 20%

Grade V — skill 25% | life experience 25% | character development 20% | work experience 30% | 20% or English

Grade VI — skill 25% | life experience 25% | character development 20% | work experience 30% | 20% or English

- Minimum instructional — 1,000 hours per academic year
  time requirement (G. I-G. IV)
  1,200 hours per adacemic year
  (G. V-G. VI)
- Each instructional period is equal to 20 minutes.
- Each instructional session may comprise more than one
  instructional period, depending on the nature of educational
  acitivities and the learners' capability for absorption at
  different ages.
- The composition and the schedule of the school time-table
  vary from school to school, depending on the school's own
  judgement as to what would be the best education for its
  pupils, given the available educational resources, local
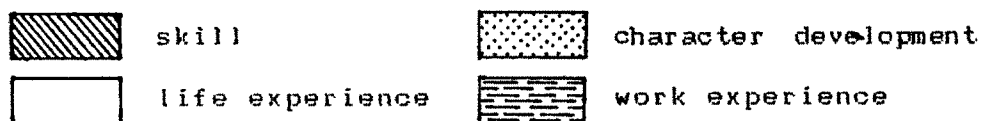 needs and conditions.

skill   character development

life experience   work experience

Figure 1 : Instructional Time by Grade (unit %)

Source : The New Organisational Structure of curricular
content, Ministry of Education, 1978.

As depicted in Figure 1, in 1981, however, the Ministry of Education deemed it appropriate to increase the teaching-learning periods for Grades V and VI by 200 hours per academic year, offering an option in either work experience or the English language in addition to the standard course of four subject-areas. The added optional subject-area is identified as `special' subject-area. The choice of the `special' subject-area depends entirely on the schools' educational resources and local conditions.

Other new elements of the new curriculum are the integrated approach in the teaching of social studies and science and an emphasis on work experience and character development. The integrated approach in the teaching of social studies and science, in particular, aims at the child's conceptual understanding of the physical and human environment instead of rote memorization of facts and knowledge. In conducting teaching-learning activities, it is in fact, desired that the teacher should try to the best of his/her abilities to integrate all the four subject areas and provide activities which incorporate a well-balanced mixture of both the theoretical and practical aspects of learning.

With this new approach, pupils are encouraged to acquire knowledge through self-study and self-involvement rather than through the old method of spoon-feeding. They are also encouraged to conduct experimentation on an individual or group basis. In

this regard, teaching-learning activities have become more pupil-focused than teacher-focused. And the teacher's role concentrated more on providing guidance and advice to the pupils than on the conventional method of giving lessons and instructions.

Another important aspect of the new curriculum lies in the flexibility of the curricular content which is made possible by the design of the core curriculum with a broad base, allowing to a certain extent regional modifications of core curriculum in order to better suit the needs and conditions of the various regions in the country.

According to ONPEC's regulation, the school is expected to carry out its activities within the scope of six main frames: academic affairs, management and finance, facilities, personnel, pupil activities and school community relations. (Academic Division, ONPEC 1983). All these considerations related to perceptions about the need of primary education, and the curricular shifts have put newer demands on teachers and administrators of primary schools to organise teaching-learning process effectively.

However, in the operational process under the administration of ONPEC several problems and obstacles in the system are experienced. They are, for example: (1) the school principals fall short of motivation, (2) the teachers do not teach

every subject according to the curriculum (Office of Provincial Primary Education of Nakornsawan: 1983), (3) low quality of teaching: teacher's inadequate knowledge of teaching subjects, (4) inefficient supervision: lack of basic materials and equipment to carry out supervision activities, (5) the majority of rural children fall short of readiness to learn in the primary school, (6) the quality of primary education is not standardized. (ONPEC : 1984).

The above mentioned problems have in turn resulted in a deterioration of education at the primary stage. It may be pointed out at this stage that along with a quantitative increase in the educational facilities, its quality must be maintained. This necessitates that efforts should be made to solve the problems and remove the obstacles from the educational system, so that the quality of education could be improved. This requires multiple measures to improve education in primary schools. One important measure is to ensure the right type of leadership in these schools by providing competent administrators.

Conceptual Framework for the Study

For the last five years, there has been a resurgence of attention to the importance of administrators for effective schools by all concerned with education, viz., academicians, scholars, popular press and the community at large. The Wall

Street Journal (Schorr 1983) featured a front page story on Baltimore principals. Newsweek responded to the report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) with a cover story stressing the principal's role in raising the expectation level of teachers and students ("Can Schools be saved?", 1983). In 1981 the Harvard Graduate School of Education established a Principal's Center. The 1983-meeting of the American Educational Research Association devoted 25 sessions on principals, up from three in 1978 (AERA 1978, 1983).

States are moving toward competency-based certification requirements for principals and statewide administrator training academics. The Florida legislature has established and funded a Council on Educational Management, with a mandate that includes identifying `those competencies which characterize high performing principals, validating those competencies through research, and developing training, certification, selection and compensation procedures that recognize and support those competencies (Florida H.B. 1104). Local districts are looking at assessment centers and behavioral approaches to principal selection or to locally designed training and internship programs (Manasse A. Lorri, 1985). Thus the growing significance of the principal's role has been increasing more and more for the educational world.

Main reason for giving greater significance to the school administrator's role is for improving the quality of the school

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education. It is generally believed that a competent school administrator will improve the functioning of the school and make it effective. It is this competency of the school administrator which become a subject of investigation for researchers in the area of educational administration. A number of research models have been developed which try to measure the competency of the school administrator in terms of administrative abilities, administrative behaviours and personal attributes and other relevant variables.

Thus, the frame of reference for the present study is centred around administrative competencies which is expressed in terms of administrative abilities and administrative behaviours of school administrators. It attempts to conceptualise the relationships that exist among administrative abilities, administrative behaviours and personal attributes and other relevant variables. It rests on the assumption that causal relations, however complex, exist among administrative abilities, administrative behaviours and personal attributes and other variables. This causal is used in a broader 'interactive' sense. The schematic representation of this framework is given in the subsequent section.

The Schematic Representation of the Framework

A schematic representation of basic components of the theoretical framework and 'interactive' causal relations system is

The Administrati-
ve Abilities

The Administrative
Behaviours

Effective   Specific
Actions

The   Personal   Attributes
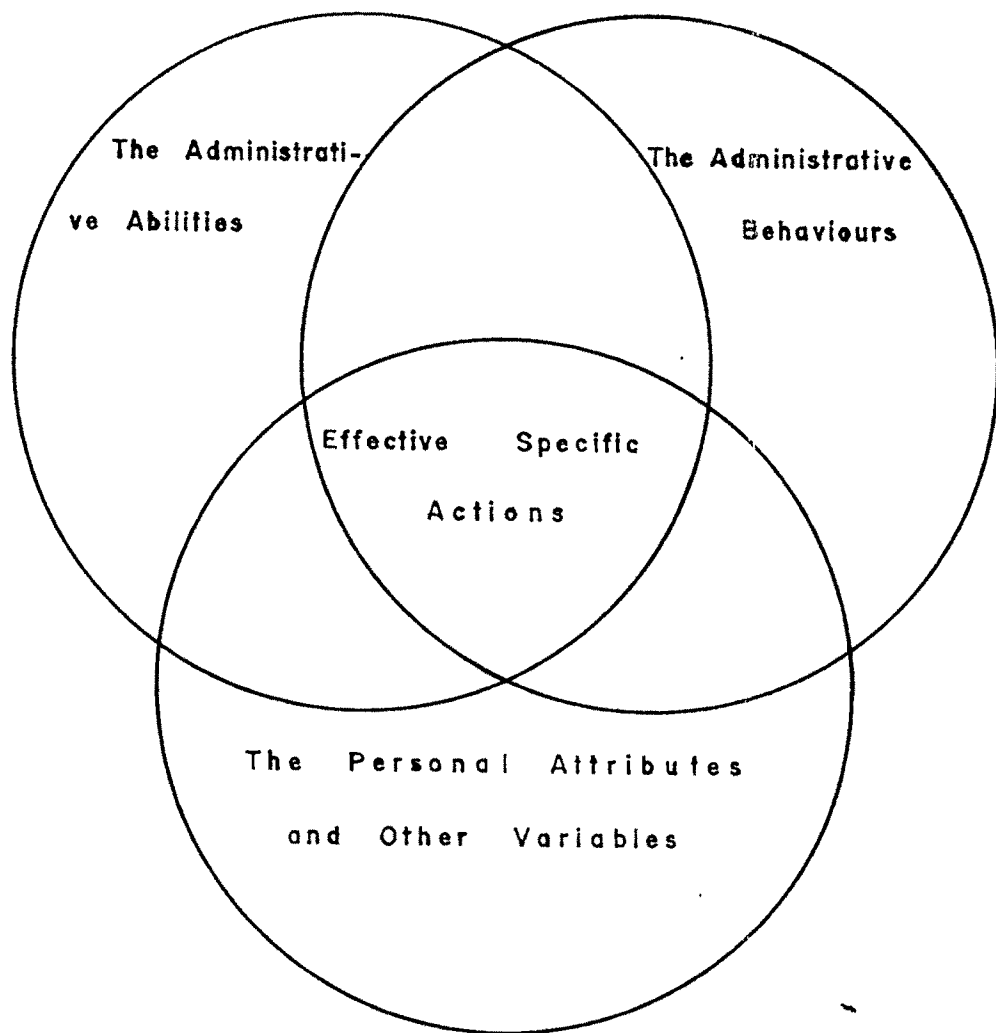and   Other   Variables

Figure 2 : Interactive Model of Effective Specific Actions.

presented in Fig.2 (Applied from Boyatzis's Theory, 1985).

From the Figure-2, it can be seen that the effective specific
actions are the result of a combined force of three distinct
dimensions of the model, namely; administrative abilities needed
for effective actions, administrative behaviours which represent
the tasks which an administrator is expected to do, and personal
attributes and other relevant variables. All the three dimensions
are interrelated and effective specific actions would result from
their interaction. These three dimensions of the above model are
discussed in subsequent paragraphs.

The administrative abilities are those aspects of the
administrative competencies which enable an administrator to
function effectively. Klemp (1980) defines a job competency as
'an under lying characteristic of a person which results in
effective and/or superior performance in a job'. As an underlying
characteristic, the competency may be thought of as a motive, a
trait, a skill, an aspect of one's social role, or a body of
knowledge. Considering the job of primary school administrators,
the administrative abilities constitute of different aspects like
planning, organizing, controlling, finance, leadership, budgeting,
etc.

The second dimension of the present theoretical model is
administrative behaviours. The administrative behaviours refer to

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the specific activities which a primary school administrator performs within his role as an administrator. It contains activities like, academic affairs, personnel, pupil activities, management and finance, facilities, school-community relations, school plant, transportation, instruction, finance, etc.

The third dimension of the theoretical model is not directly a component of the administrative competencies but there are certain personal attributes of the administrators which may influence their administrative abilities and administrative behaviours. It also includes certain other relevant variables which influence the administrative competencies. These personal attributes and other variables are: sex, age, teaching experience, experience before achieving position, educational qualification, administrative training, special recognition achieved, honour conferred, school size, etc.

Thus, effective functioning of an administrator is resultant of the productive interaction amongst administrative abilities, administrative behaviours and personal attributes and other relevant variables.

Rationale of the Study

Informal evaluation of administrative performance has long been practised in academic institutions. Infact, this kind of

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evaluation is probably as old as the institutions themselves. Much of it is the result of casual observation. Faculty members pick up impressions of an administrator's competencies and exchange these impression with professional peers. Students form opinions about administrative effectiveness after encountering administrative staff. Even administrators gain fragmentary impression about fellow administrators and give voice to their impression. In short, a campus has many individuals who harbour casual opinions of the quality of the work of others and share these opinions with friends or colleagues.

What is new, however, is the attempt to root out hearsay and gossip — the hoary communicative channels of organizations in favour of more open, factual and systematic evaluation of administrative performance.

As stated earlier, in order to improve the quality of education it is essential to solve the problems faced in the education system. At the school level, the administrator holds the key position and is responsible for managing all the academic and administrative activities. In fact, to a very great extent the quality of school education may depend on the abilities of the administrator to obtain and utilize the human and physical re sources to the maximum. This necessitates the identification and selection of competent people for the school administrator's position. In addition to this, it would also be necessary to

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provide appropriate training to the school administrators who are already in service so that the competencies required for discharging their duties efficiently could be developed in them also. For these two functions it is essential to identify the competencies required for a school administrator's job. In the absence of such funds of knowledge and other needed arrangements neither competent administrators can be selected nor training inputs can be developed. This suggests that the research scholars should take up scientific studies to identify the competencies required for a school administrator's job, if the quality of education is to be maintained in Thailand. The importance of this area of research has been already recognized by educational researchers. Some research efforts in this direction have been initiated. (John E. Corbally et., 1961, Culbertson Jack A. et, al., 1974 and Sukhothai-Thummathirath University, 1980). Application of performance criteria may be used in at least three different ways depending upon how a school system answers the question posed earlier as to whose values are to be applied in assessing performance. A school system may define its own values and attempt to measure the degree to which an administrator implements them; it may adopt criteria generated and attempt to measure the degree to which administrators behave in this manner; it may attempt to determine what administrators see as their goals and whether they are effective by their own standards. If the school system wishes the assessment process to be a fruitful endeavour for the school administrator involved as well

as for the system, it may be highly desirable to begin with the third approach. Once a system knows what its administrators are trying to do and what they are doing, it can then begin to answer the question of what they 'ought' to do. Thirty-two administrative competencies are determined for the effective school administrators such as;

Competency No. 1 : The school administrator relates needs of students to school system goals and legal requirements.

Competency No. 4 : The school administrator articulates goals and objectives for subunits within the school.

Competency No. 7 : The school administrator assigns or reassigns instructional staff to optimise conditions for learning.

Competency No.10 : The school administrator allocates time and space to various instructional purposes.

Competency No.12 : The school administrator inventories the changing needs for materials, equipment and facilities to accomplish instructional goals.

Competency No.15 : The school administrator coordinates the redesigning of instructional facilities to accomplish instructional goals.

Competency No.18 :   The school administrator organises and
coordinates the non-instructional services to
optimize the accomplishment of instructional
goals.

Competency No.21 :   The school administrator provides an adequate
system for reporting students' performances
to parents, prospective employees, higher
educational institutions and others.

Competency No.24 :   The school administrator guides individual
teachers toward selective participation in
in-service training activities.

Competency No.28 :   The school administrator assesses the effec-
tiveness of in-service training activities
and programs.

Competency No.32 :   The school administrator collects, organizes,
analyzes, and interprets data concerning
former students.

Note: The number of these competencies are as shown in the
source material, namely, Culbertson Jack A. et, al.,
1974.

It may be pointed out here that, the competencies have not
been identified by the researchers in a scientific manner.
Moreover, the competencies stated by different researchers are not
common, they have lot of variations. In addition to this, if one
examines the competencies identified, it appears that some of them

are just the activities which administrators perform but not the real competencies. This necessitates that scientific investigations must be conducted to identify the competencies. The identified competencies could be classified into administrative abilities and administrative behaviours. Such fund of knowledge generated through research will help in improving the competency level of administrators. Further, the review of literature in this area reveals that no efforts have been made to develop scientific instruments to measure these competencies. It was due to these reasons that the researcher thought of taking up the work of identification and measurement of competencies through scientific research.

It may also be noted that usually academic achievement, educational qualification, teaching experience, administrative experience, age, sex, etc. are taken into consideration for selection of a school administrator. However, the question arises as to what extent these personal attributes and relevant variables are related to a school administrator's job and make him a competent administrator. This has not been studied in Thailand for primary school administrators. Considering the important role a school administrator plays, it is an aspect of atmost importance for studying the relationships between the school administrators' competence and academic achievement, educational qualification, teaching experience, administrative experience, age, sex, etc. Under the ONPEC 1989, there is the criteria for selection and

promotion of the school administrators. The criteria consists of three parts for the selection process; 1) written examination, 2) work and experience appraisement 3) short course training and also the qualifications. However, if research evidence is available regarding the relationships among administrative abilities, administrative behaviours and personal attributes and other variables in respect of effective school administrators, a criteria for selection and promotion of primary school administrators could be developed in a scientific and systematic manner.

If the answers to the above issues are to be sought, it is essential to take up a scientific investigation through which competencies required for a school administrator's job at primary stage could be identified, scientific instruments to measure them could be developed and relationships among other related variables could be studied to develop a set of valid criteria for a school administrators' selection. The fund of knowledge generated through this process would help in identifying and selecting effective primary school administrators, developing training inputs for the training courses to be organized for new as well as inservice school administrators, and in turn this process would improve the quality of education in the primary schools.

Statement of the Problem

Within the broad theoretical framework outlined above, the research problem selected for the present study is titled as under:

"IDENTIFICATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE COMPETENCIES OF PRIMARY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS IN THAILAND AND DEVELOPMENT OF A SET OF CRITERIA FOR THEIR SELECTION"

Assumptions of the Study

Considering the nature of the study certain assumptions are stated hereunder:

1. There are certain competencies which are required for doing a primary school administrator's job effectively, which can be identified and measured.

2. A set of valid criteria for the selection and promotion of primary school administrator can be developed.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To identify the administrative competencies of primary school administrators in Thailand in carrying out activities in terms of administrative abilities and administrative behaviours.

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2. To develop an instrument for measuring administrative competencies of primary school administrators.

3. To study the relationship between administrative competencies and the following personal attributes and variables:

      3.1 Sex

      3.2 Age

      3.3 Teaching Experience

      3.4 Experience Before Achieving Position

      3.5 Administrative Experience

      3.6 Present Administrative Position

      3.7 Educational Qualification

      3.8 Administrative Training

      3.9 Special Recognition Achieved

      3.10 Honour Conferred

      3.11 School Size

4. To develop a set of criteria for the selection and promotion of school administrators.

Explanation of Terms

Administrative Competencies : It refers to the ability to make decisions and to act effectively in appropriate situations. They comprise of the essential principles and techniques for carrying out the primary school administrators' job in both process and activity by using the various combination of techniques and interaction of factors such as attitude, understanding,

experience, knowledge and skill.

Administrative Abilities : It refers to decision-making ability required for carrying out the administrative functions like planning, organizing, controlling, finance, leadership, budgeting, etc., in administrative process in primary school.

Administrative Behaviours : It refers to actual behavioural competence needed for carrying out activities like academic affairs, personnel, pupil activities, management and finance, facilities, school-community relations, school plant, transportation, instruction, finance, etc. in primary school.

School Administrators : They refer to the administrative heads of Primary Schools in Thailand. They are appointed by the ONPEC as Director, Principal or Head master depending upon the school size, qualifications of the incumbents, position classification etc.

Teaching Experience : It refers to the number of years for which the administrator has taught in school from the beginning.

Experience Before Achieving Position : It refers to the number of years and positions which the school administrators worked for various organizational responsibilities before being administrators such as: classroom teacher, academic school teacher, supervisor, assistant head master, assistant principal and assistant director.

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Administrative Experience : It refers to the number of years which the school administrators worked as head master, principal and director.

Present Administrative Position : It refers to the responsibility in school administration as a head master, principal or director at present.

Educational Qualification : It refers to certificates, diplomas and degrees which the school administrator possesses.

Administrative Training : It refers to a training received specially in management area.

Special Recognition Achieved : It refers to the number of times within 10 fiscal years which the school administrator got his salary increase doubles steps instead of step by step.

Honour Conferred : It refers to the number of times the teacher/administrator has received certificate of honour or remained representative in administrative area.

School Size : It refers to three sizes of the schools in terms of number of pupils. They are as under:
    (a) large size for the number of pupils more than 300.
    (b) middle size for the number of pupils between 120-300.

(c) small size for the number of pupils less than 120.

Hypothesizing

Considering the nature of the present study, particularly those aspects which aim at examining the relationship between the administrative competencies and personal attributes and other relevant variables, it was thought appropriate to formulate certain hypotheses. The basis on which the hypotheses are formulated are given below.

Basis of Hypotheses

In Thailand like many other countries there had been a role differentiation in both the sexes in practical life. Due to tradition, some difference is perceived till todate. Therefore, not due to the biological difference but, the actual working of both sexes may have some impact on their expertise as administrators. Therefore, sex is considered to be significantly related with the administrative competencies.

Age increases the maturity of an individual and thereby may enhance the understanding of the administrators to perceive and solve the problem. Similarly, the experience of the administrators provides an opportunity of solving the problems and managing work in the actual field. This experience may facilitate the

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functioning of an administrator in educational situations faced by him subsequently.

It was also considered that the academic qualification and administrative training would have certainly made them more knowledgeable and skillful in the administrative work. In addition to this, special recognition and honour conferred also might be motivating an administrator; it may be having some impact on their interest in the work, initiative, etc. Therefore, these variables may have significant relationship with the competencies.

The school size is another variable which researcher thinks may influence the actual functioning of an administrator. Administrator's work is expected to increase and become more stranuous with the increase in the size of the institution. Thus, school size can be considered to be significantly related with competency of an administrator. Alongwith the basis discussed so far, the administrative abilities and administrative behaviours are also considered to be significantly related as these are two components of the administrative competencies. The hypotheses formulated on the above basis are stated hereunder:

Hypotheses

1. There is significant relationship between

   1.1   sex and administrative abilities.

   1.2   sex and administrative behaviours.

2. There is significant relationship between

   2.1   age and administrative abilities.

   2.2   age and administrative behaviours.

3. There is significant relationship between

   3.1   teaching experience and administrative abilities.

   3.2   teaching experience and administrative behaviours.

4. There is significant relationship between

   4.1   experience before achieving position and adminis-
         trative abilities.

   4.2   experience before achieving position and adminis-
         trative behaviours.

5. There is significant relationship between

   5.1   administrative experience and administrative
         abilities.

   5.2   administrative experience and administrative
         behaviours.

6. There is significant relationship between

   6.1   present administrative position and administrative
         abilities.

   6.2   present administrative position and administrative
         behaviours.

7. There is significant relationship between

   7.1 educational qualification and administrative abilities.

   7.2 educational qualification and administrative behaviours.

8. There is significant relationship between

   8.1 administrative training and administrative abilities.

   8.2 administrative training and administrative behaviours.

9. There is significant relationship between

   9.1 special recognition achieved and administrative abilities.

   9.2 special recognition achieved and administrative behaviours.

10. There is significant relationship between

   10.1 honour conferred and administrative abilities.

   10.2 honour conferred and administrative behaviours.

11. There is significant relationship between

   11.1 school size and administrative abilities.

   11.2 school size and administrative behaviours.

12. There is significant relationship between administrative abilities and administrative behaviours.

   12.1 planning abilities and administrative behaviours.

   12.2 organizing abilities and administrative behaviours.

   12.3 controlling abilities and administrative

behaviours.

12.4   administrative abilities and administrative
behaviours.

In this chapter the conceptual frame work, rationale of the
study, statement of the problem, assumption and objective of the
study, operational definitions and hypotheses have been given. The
next chapter presents the review of the related literature.