Optimizing the quality of Thai education: A comprehensive examination of the whole school approach

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ABSTRACT

This study looks into how a comprehensive school strategy improves education quality in Thailand. It focuses on 11 leading projects and 408 schools that have adopted this comprehensive approach. The findings indicate significant enhancements in educational quality, including better goal-setting, increased cooperation through professional learning communities (PLCs), improved teaching methods, efficient information handling, the creation of learning networks, and enhanced student safety. Based on these results, the research makes several suggestions for those involved in education. It recommends promoting a team-oriented environment that utilizes the skills of teachers, school leaders, parents, and external contributors. Emphasizing the role of PLCs in continuous teacher training to update teaching methods is also stressed. Additionally, the importance of providing tailored support to meet students' academic and personal needs is highlighted. Overall, this study demonstrates the positive impact of a whole-school strategy on education quality, suggesting that a cooperative approach, focusing on professional growth and comprehensive support for students, leads to a better and more effective learning experience for everyone involved.

1. Introduction

Education plays a crucial role in shaping a country's future. As societies become more complex, the need for quality education becomes more apparent. In Thailand, despite the government spending a large part of its budget on education-about 10% annually or roughly 8.5 billion dollars, making it the sector that receives the most funding-there are still ongoing challenges. These issues need to be addressed to achieve a consistent and comprehensive level of educational excellence (Idris et al., 2012).

The Thai education system faces complex and diverse challenges despite receiving significant financial support. A major part of the education budget, over 88 percent, is spent on salaries, leaving only a small portion for the holistic development of students. This reveals a critical issue: an imbalance in funding for the growth of both teachers and students. Additionally, there is a notable difference in educational quality between schools in cities, suburbs, and rural areas, with this gap being even more pronounced in marginalized communities lacking professional educators (Pongsudhirak, 2020).

The gravity of the situation becomes even more apparent when considering the top-down management structure prevalent within the education system. This approach, while aiming to streamline policies and strategies, inadvertently hampers the developmental prospects of students in local contexts (Pongsudhirak, 2020). Currently, policy formulation predominantly emanates from centralized governmental authorities, with administrators implementing these policies within their respective settings without due consideration for the nuanced needs of the students under their care. This often results in a disconnection between the overarching policies and the practical requirements of students. The consequence is an impediment to the holistic development of students, as their unique circumstances and challenges are not adequately addressed within the educational framework.

The culmination of these challenging circumstances, coupled with other systemic factors, has resulted in undesirable educational outcomes in

Thailand. According to UNICEF (2022), the foundational skills of basic reading and numeracy in early grades remain alarmingly low, while scores in science and mathematics stagnate at the lower secondary level. UNESCO's (2020) Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report provided additional insight into the extent of the issues affecting the quality of education in the country. A mere 85% of students complete lower secondary education, and a staggering 50% are not instructed in their native language. Shockingly, only 12% achieve minimal proficiency in mathematics at the end of primary education, while gender disparities persist, with 62% of out-of-school lower secondary students being girls. Even at the end of lower secondary education, a mere 50% demonstrate minimum proficiency in reading and just 46% in mathematics. Subpar infrastructure is also a concern, as only 45% of schools possess basic sanitation facilities, and 60% have access to clean drinking water. A stark divide is evident between economic strata, with 80% of the poorest managing to complete lower secondary education compared to 100% of the wealthiest. Distressingly, a significant 3.9 million adults in Thailand struggle to read a simple sentence, while incidents of bullying and physical violence among students remain prevalent, affecting a third of students aged 13 to 15 between 2010 and 2015. Durongkaveroj (2023) emphasized that despite significant investment in education, including substantial financial resources and efforts to reduce attendance gaps across socioeconomic groups, the learning outcomes of Thai students continue to be below standard. Particularly concerning is the decline in the performance of junior secondary school students in national examinations, particularly in mathematics and science. The performance of senior secondary school students, although slightly improved, still falls below satisfactory levels, with mean results for core subjects remaining below 50. The inequality is exacerbated by the uneven quality of education across regions, with students in poorer and remote areas facing even lower performance rates. International assessments reveal that Thai students are performing below the global average in core subjects. This situation is attributed to two primary factors: the role of small schools and the inefficient allocation of resources for education within public spending. As Thailand stands at a pivotal juncture in its economic development, the pressing need to expand human capital to avoid stagnation and demographic challenges underscores the urgency for comprehensive educational reform to ensure high-quality basic education for all.

The whole school approach, a holistic educational strategy, has garnered attention globally for its potential to transform the learning environment and enhance overall student outcomes (Mogren et al., 2019). According to the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF, 2014), the approach is founded on the principle of treating the school as a comprehensive entity, addressing not only academic learning but also the broader aspects of students' well-being, character development, and community engagement. It integrates various components, including curriculum design, teaching methodologies, classroom management, student support services, parental involvement, and school infrastructure, into a cohesive framework that is designed to create a conducive and enriching educational experience. The whole school approach offers Thailand an opportunity to address the complex challenges outlined in the previous discussion. By fostering holistic development, promoting inclusivity, and encouraging localized decision-making, this strategy could pave the way for a transformative shift in the nation's education landscape, nurturing empowered, capable, and well-rounded citizens poised to contribute to the nation's growth and progress.

Therefore, the current study recognizes the relevance of the whole school approach in the Thai context and aims to explore its implementation and impact within the nation's educational landscape. The primary objective of this research is to comprehensively examine the whole school approach in the context of Thai education. By investigating the theoretical underpinnings, practical implementation, and potential outcomes, this study aims to contribute valuable insights that can inform policy decisions and educational practices.

2. Literature review

2.1. The whole school approach

The whole school approach in education development constitutes a holistic and integrated strategy that transcends traditional pedagogical paradigms (Jones and Bouffard, 2012). Rooted in the idea that a school functions as a microcosm of society, this approach seeks to cultivate not only academic prowess but also the social, emotional, and ethical dimensions of students' growth (Goldberg et al., 2019). A hallmark of this methodology is its all-encompassing perspective, encapsulating curriculum design, teaching methodologies, student welfare, community engagement, and school management within a cohesive framework (Mogren et al., 2019). Whole school approaches to education for sustainable development: A model that links to school improvement. This approach is underpinned by a belief that each element of the educational ecosystem is interconnected, shaping students' overall development and contributing to their future success. The whole school approach fosters an environment that is responsive to individual and collective needs, promoting active collaboration between educators, students, parents, and the community (Corter and Pelletier, 2005). The potential of the whole school approach to enhance the quality of education is noteworthy. By nurturing well-rounded individuals equipped with a comprehensive skill set, it aligns with the demands of a rapidly evolving global landscape. The holistic focus on character development, communication

skills, problem-solving abilities, and emotional intelligence equips students with tools that extend beyond academic achievement. This approach recognizes that academic success is intimately tied to students' emotional well-being, social interactions, and a sense of belonging, thus contributing to improved learning outcomes and lifelong learning habits. The following issues contribute to the success of the whole school's education development.

2.1.1. Setting a clear goal

Setting clear and well-defined goals is paramount in the successful implementation of the whole school approach in education development. By establishing concrete objectives that encapsulate both academic and holistic aspects of student growth, educational institutions can align their efforts toward a unified vision (Roberts, 2021). Clear goals provide a roadmap for educators, students, and stakeholders, fostering a sense of purpose and direction. They serve as a guide for curriculum design, teaching methodologies, and resource allocation, ensuring that all elements of the educational process work harmoniously towards a common aim (Dotson, 2016). Moreover, well-articulated goals enable effective assessment and measurement of progress, allowing educators to track students' development and adjust strategies as needed. Ultimately, setting clear goals promotes accountability and transparency, as educators, students, and the broader community can witness the tangible outcomes of their collective efforts. This sense of accomplishment not only bolsters motivation but also strengthens the cohesiveness of the educational ecosystem, contributing to a thriving learning environment that is conducive to holistic growth and academic excellence.

2.1.2. Collaborative working between teaching staff and administrators

Promoting collaborative working among teaching staff and administrators is a cornerstone of the whole school approach's success in education development (Krasniqi, 2021). Adopting strategies like Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) fosters a culture of shared expertise and continuous improvement. Collaborative working transcends the boundaries of individual classrooms, enabling educators to pool their knowledge, experiences, and best practices (Harris and Jones, 2010). Through regular meetings, data analysis, and joint planning, teachers collectively identify areas for enhancement and tailor instructional strategies to meet the diverse needs of students. This collaborative synergy extends to administrators, who facilitate an environment that supports teamwork, innovation, and growth. In PLCs, educators engage in open dialogue, reflecting on their teaching methods, experimenting with new approaches, and fine-tuning their techniques based on the feedback and insights of their peers (Wood, 2007). The benefits of collaborative working are multifaceted. Firstly, it breaks down isolation barriers, allowing educators to tap into a wealth of collective wisdom and draw inspiration from each other. This results in increased professional development as educators engage in a dynamic exchange of ideas and strategies. Secondly, collaborative efforts harness the strengths of each staff member, leading to more effective problem-solving and innovative teaching practices. By capitalizing on diverse perspectives, educators can develop a comprehensive range of tools to cater to varying student needs. Lastly, the synergy between administrators and teachers nurtures a culture of continuous improvement, promoting adaptability and agility in the face of evolving educational challenges.

2.1.3. Classroom development

The development of teaching and learning stands at the very heart of education development (Munna and Kalam, 2021). At its core, this facet encompasses the dynamic evolution of pedagogical practices, instructional methods, and learning environments to meet the ever-changing needs of students. Recognizing that education is not confined to textbooks and lectures, the whole school approach places a premium on innovative teaching methodologies that engage students, encourage critical thinking, and promote experiential learning (Noreen et al., 2019). Central to this endeavor is the cultivation of a growth mindset among educators, fostering a commitment to continuous professional development and the exploration of innovative teaching techniques. Encouraging educators to embrace new technologies, interactive learning platforms, and interdisciplinary teaching strategies enhances their capacity to cater to the diverse learning styles and preferences of students. Moreover, the development of teaching and learning extends beyond the classroom, encompassing co-curricular activities, extracurricular programs, and community engagement initiatives that enrich students' educational journey (Tudor, 2015). By nurturing a culture of reflective practice and ongoing improvement, the development of teaching and learning resonates throughout the educational ecosystem, permeating the interactions between students, educators, administrators, and the wider community. As the heart of the whole school approaches, this developmental focus not only elevates academic achievement but also cultivates well-rounded individuals who are prepared to excel in an interconnected and rapidly evolving world.

2.1.4. Information management

Effective information management serves as the backbone of the whole school approach within education, enabling educators and administrators to harness the power of data for impactful decision-making. By collecting, organizing, and analyzing relevant information, schools gain insights into

student progress, learning trends, and areas needing improvement. This data-driven approach facilitates tailored interventions, personalized teaching strategies, and timely support for students. Administrators leverage information management to optimize resource allocation, enhance school operations, and ensure transparent communication among stakeholders. The integration of information management not only empowers collaboration but also enhances the overall learning environment, aligning with the holistic objectives of the whole school approach and contributing to a dynamic and student-centered educational ecosystem.

2.1.5. Creating learning networks

Establishing networks with external organizations stands as a key tenet of the whole school approach's commitment to enhancing educational quality (Zhao, 2019). By forging partnerships with external entities such as factories, businesses, and private sectors, schools can infuse real-world relevance into their curricula and foster an enriched learning environment. These collaborations bring forth expertise, resources, and experiences that complement traditional classroom instruction (O'Hara et al., 2021). For instance, schools can collaborate with factories to provide students with hands-on experiences related to industry practices. This not only introduces students to potential career paths but also bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Similarly, private sector partnerships can contribute through mentorship programs, workshops, and guest lectures, exposing students to professionals who share insights from their respective fields. These interactions provide students with a holistic understanding of the skills and attributes required for success in a diverse range of careers.

2.1.6. Providing social security for students

Ensuring social security for students lies at the core of the whole school approach, fostering an environment where students feel safe, valued, and supported both within the school and in their broader lives. By addressing students' well-being holistically, schools contribute significantly to their overall development and academic success. Creating a sense of safety within the school environment involves implementing measures to prevent bullying, harassment, and discrimination. Schools can establish clear policies and protocols to address these issues promptly and effectively. Furthermore, promoting open communication and fostering positive relationships between students, teachers, and staff cultivates an atmosphere of trust and respect. Beyond the school premises, extending social security to students' homes reinforces their well-being. Collaborating with families and communities to provide a supportive network ensures that students experience consistency in care

and encouragement across various aspects of their lives. This can involve workshops for parents on creating a safe and nurturing home environment, as well as engagement with local community organizations that offer additional resources and support (Baria and Gomez, 2022).

In Thailand, the whole school approach presents a promising solution to the country's educational woes. By actively involving all stakeholders, including urban and rural communities, parents, teachers, and administrators, this approach can effectively reduce the glaring disparities between schools in city and rural areas. Moreover, it has the potential to address the issue of budgetary allocation by optimizing resource distribution to encompass not only academic needs but also crucial support services like healthcare and counseling. Additionally, by shifting from a top-down decision management style to a collaborative and participatory model, the whole school approach can promote localized, context-specific policies and practices, fostering a sense of ownership and accountability. In this way, it offers a comprehensive and inclusive approach to education that has the potential to empower students and enhance the quality of education across Thailand.

2.2. Previous whole school project

In recent years, an emerging body of research has underscored the efficacy of the whole school approach in fostering transformative educational outcomes across various domains. Mogren et al. (2019) investigated the role of the whole school approach in supporting education for sustainable development. Their study scrutinized the distinctions between eight schools that adopted the whole school approach and twelve reference schools in Sweden. Employing a survey involving 256 teachers, their findings demonstrated that schools employing the whole school approach managed their educational processes differently, ultimately resulting in more favorable educational outcomes.

Ferrante (2017) explored the consequences of implementing a comprehensive school approach within the framework of inclusion, with a specific focus on disabled students and the social model of disability. Utilizing focus groups and thematic analysis within a framework of hermeneutic phenomenology, Ferrante's qualitative exploration centered on a Maltese school's adoption of the approach. The study aimed to understand the experiences of this school in fostering inclusion and to evaluate practices that facilitate or impede the integration of disabled learners into mainstream educational environments. The findings illuminated the positive impact of the whole school approach on enhancing the quality of education received by disabled students.

Building upon the notion of the whole school approach, Katikas and Sotiriou (2023) conducted an expansive study on its application in education for sustainable development across Europe. Their

research encompassed an analysis of sixteen whole school projects, probing the interconnectedness between the approach and sustainable education. The results highlighted the critical role of curriculum integration, active student participation, and collaborative partnerships. The approach's influence was observed in its facilitation of holistic understanding through curriculum integration and empowerment of students to engage in real-world sustainability initiatives. Additionally, the study underscored the importance of both internal and external stakeholders in driving the approach's success. Internally, educators and staff collaborated to integrate sustainability principles into the school's fabric, while external partnerships with community organizations and businesses enriched the learning experience. The present study adopts a vantage point that centers on the advantages of implementing the whole school approach to bolster the advancement of educational quality. This approach is harnessed to cultivate and enhance educational quality within the context of Thailand, with its effects subjected to empirical testing. The primary aim of this study is to delve into the impact of the whole school approach on the overall quality of education within the Thai context.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

The implementation of the whole school approach in Thailand was facilitated by the Equitable Education Fund, an entity operating under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education. In the selection process, 11 institutions were strategically chosen to spearhead the projects based on criteria that encompassed geographic diversity, school types (urban, rural), and socioeconomic factors. These 11 institutions were entrusted with the responsibility of advancing and monitoring the efficacy of the whole school projects in schools across the nation. In total, 408 schools were included in this endeavor, selected through a rigorous process that aimed to represent a broad spectrum of educational settings. Further details on the selection criteria and process are provided below:

- Geographic diversity: Ensure representation from urban, suburban, and rural areas to address regional disparities.
- Socioeconomic factors: Consider the socioeconomic status of communities to prioritize schools in need.
- Academic performance: Select schools with varying levels of academic performance to target both struggling and successful institutions.
- Infrastructure and resources: Assess schools' infrastructure and resource availability to prioritize those with immediate needs.
- Student demographics: Consider the diversity of student populations to ensure inclusivity.
- Community engagement: Prioritize schools with strong potential for community collaboration and involvement.

The details of schools selected by 11 institutions can be found in Table 1.

3.2. Instrument

3.2.1. Whole school project

The central intervention in this study centers around the implementation of the whole school project, which was introduced to a total of 408 schools during the academic year of 2022. The overarching objective of these whole school projects is to facilitate comprehensive enhancements in various aspects of education. This includes a strategic emphasis on goal setting, the establishment of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to foster teachers' professional growth, the refinement of classroom practices, effective information management, the establishment of networks with external stakeholders, and the assurance of student security. To oversee the successful execution of these projects, 11 designated head projects assumed the responsibility of coordinating activities, conducting workshops, and providing guidance to the schools under their purview. This proactive involvement ensures that each school aligns its efforts with the specified focus areas and works toward optimizing the educational experience for its students.

Table 1: School under the project

Head of the project	School under the ministry of education		School under the local administration		Private schools		Total
	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Lam Plai Mat Pattana Foundation	43	100%	0	0%	0	0%	43
Future Skill Foundation	47	94%	3	6	0	0%	50
Starfish Country Home School Foundation	26	78.09%	3	9.34%	4	12.12%	33
Khon Kaen University	22	77.33%	3	10%	5	16.67%	30
Prince of Songkla University	51	78.46%	0	0%	14	21.54%	65
Siam Commercial Foundation	36	94%	2	6%	0	0%	38
Kanchanaburi Rajabhat University	47	100%	0	0%	0	0%	47
Naresuan University	40	88.89%	3	6.67%	2	4.44%	45
Phuket Rajabhat University	24	96%	1	4%	0	0%	25
Ratthaburut Foundation	0	0%	20	100%	0	0%	20
Surin Educational Service Area Office 2	12	100%	0	0%	0	0%	12
Total	348	85.29%	35	8.57%	25	6.14%	408

3.2.2. Education quality evaluation form

The education quality evaluation form comprises eight items distributed across six distinct evaluation aspects. These aspects encompass setting clear goals, fostering collaboration between teaching staff and administration through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), classroom development, efficient information management, establishment of learning networks, and provision of social security for students. The form has been thoughtfully designed to utilize a 5-point Likert scale, allowing respondents to express their level of agreement or disagreement with each question. This comprehensive approach enables a nuanced assessment of the various dimensions essential to gauging and enhancing educational quality. Additionally, the Education Quality Evaluation Form includes an open-ended question at the conclusion, providing respondents with an opportunity to offer qualitative insights, suggestions, or comments that may not be captured by the predefined questions and Likert scale responses. This end-of-form question encourages participants to share their perspectives, concerns, or ideas, ensuring a more comprehensive and holistic understanding of the educational quality landscape and potential areas for improvement.

3.3. Data collection and data analysis

The whole school project was implemented during the 2022 academic year, and our survey data collection was strategically divided into two phases: one at the outset of the project and the other at its conclusion. By gathering responses both 'before' and 'after' the project, we aimed to capture any changes or impacts resulting from the implementation accurately.

To ensure the reliability of our findings and minimize bias, we conducted the 'before' and 'after' surveys at distinct and predetermined points in time. This approach allowed us to measure respondents' perceptions and experiences in a way that reflects the true effects of the whole school project.

In terms of data analysis, we employed a combination of quantitative methods, including descriptive statistics and relative gained scores, to assess the project's impact quantitatively. Qualitative data from open-ended questions were transcribed and subjected to content analysis, providing a nuanced understanding of the project's effects.

Our survey administration and data analysis were carried out meticulously to provide a comprehensive and accurate evaluation of the whole school project's outcomes.

4. Results

Table 2 illustrates the effects of the whole school approach on schools' progress. The study's findings indicate that prior to the implementation of the whole school project, the educational quality of the schools involved was assessed to be at an intermediate level ($\bar{x}$=3.30, S.D=0.92). Following the project's implementation, the school's quality experienced a significant enhancement, reaching a notably elevated level ($\bar{x}$=4.33, S.D=0.71). These results suggest a noteworthy transformation in the educational quality of the participating schools. Prior to the initiation of the whole school project, the schools demonstrated a moderate level of educational quality. However, after the project's implementation, there was a substantial and positive shift, resulting in a significantly higher level of educational quality. This shift underscores the impactful influence of the whole school approach on enhancing the overall educational experience within the schools.

Furthermore, in terms of the relative gained score analysis, notable improvements were observed across various aspects from the initial assessment to the final evaluation. Specifically, the aspects that displayed the most substantial enhancements in order were setting clear goals (s=63.64), providing social security for students (s=63.29), fostering collaboration between teaching staff and administration through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) (s=61.70), classroom development (s=59.77), creating learning networks (s=58.54), and information management (s=58.37), respectively.

Moreover, the in-depth content analysis of the responses provided in the open-ended questions reveals a rich tapestry of insights that further underscores the transformative influence of the whole school approach. One of the prominent takeaways is the heightened awareness that participants have gained regarding the critical focal points for bolstering educational quality. By immersing themselves in the principles and practices of the whole school approach, participants have developed a keener understanding of the nuanced areas that demand attention and improvement within their educational settings. This newfound clarity empowers them to proactively address these challenges and steer their institutions toward more effective and impactful educational experiences.

Equally noteworthy is the impact of engaging with scholars from universities and foundations. This collaboration has proven to be a catalyst for innovation and creativity. The insights and recommendations provided by these external experts have contributed to the enrichment of pedagogical strategies and the implementation of cutting-edge educational practices. Participants have realized that by leveraging the expertise and fresh perspectives offered by these scholars, they can infuse their educational environments with dynamic and relevant approaches, ultimately benefiting both teachers and students.

Table 2: The effects of the whole school approach on the education quality development

	Before the whole school project		After the whole school project		Difference	Relative gained score (s)
	x̄	S.D.	x̄	S.D.		
Setting clear goals	3.35	0.85	4.40	0.62	1.05	63.64 (1)
The school establishes clear and quality-oriented school goals with the participation of all relevant parties and defines a clear timeframe for achieving these goals	3.32	0.86	4.40	0.62	1.09	64.60
The school develops a challenging and clear school development plan that aims to equip students with knowledge, ethics, competencies, and learning skills aligned with the demands of the 21st century and in line with the school's objectives	3.39	0.85	4.40	0.62	1.01	62.63
Fostering collaboration between teaching staff and administration through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)	3.22	0.95	4.32	0.65	1.10	61.70 (3)
The school employs the Professional Learning Community (PLC) process as a tool for the self-development of administrators, teachers, and staff, aimed at systematically developing the school and managing teacher learning	3.22	0.95	4.32	0.65	1.10	61.70
Classroom development	3.26	0.84	4.30	0.65	1.04	59.77 (4)
Teachers engage in designing active learning experiences and crafting proactive learning plans enriched with learning activities	3.26	0.84	4.30	0.65	1.04	59.77
Information management	2.73	1.21	4.05	1.04	1.33	58.37 (6)
The school establishes an information system through the utilization of software developed by the Equitable Education Fund	2.73	1.21	4.05	1.04	1.33	58.37
Creating learning network	3.31	0.90	4.30	0.71	0.99	58.45 (5)
The school establishes collaborative networks with individuals and various organizations, both within and outside the school, to support school development, management, learning organization, and comprehensive student assistance	3.31	0.90	4.30	0.71	0.99	58.45
Providing social security for students	3.94	0.79	4.61	0.57	0.67	63.29 (2)
The school provides systematic, comprehensive, and continuous support for students facing challenges, disadvantages, or special needs	3.87	0.82	4.59	0.59	0.72	63.99
The school ensures the safety and well-being of students, addressing both their physical and mental health through a consistent and equitable approach via the active participation of parents and the community to ensure holistic and equal safety provisions	4.00	0.75	4.63	0.55	0.62	62.50
Overall	3.30	0.92	4.33	0.71	1.03	

Furthermore, the significance of networks has become increasingly evident to participants. As they navigate the complexities of educational quality enhancement, they've recognized that interconnectedness plays a pivotal role in achieving their goals. By actively participating in networks, participants are exposed to a diverse range of ideas, strategies, and experiences. This interconnectedness not only widens their perspectives but also equips them with valuable resources and support systems that contribute to continuous improvement.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study robustly demonstrate that the implementation of the whole school approach yields substantial improvements in the educational quality of the 408 schools within the Thai educational landscape. This positive outcome resonates with previous research conducted by Ferrante (2017), Mogren et al. (2019), and Katikas and Sotiriou (2023), who also identified the beneficial impact of the whole school approach in diverse contexts. These collective findings underline the broad applicability of this approach and its potential to enhance educational quality across various settings.

A key factor contributing to the effectiveness of the whole school approach is its emphasis on inclusive and collaborative school management practices that harness the strengths of all stakeholders involved. Teachers, administrators, parents, and even the private sectors are integral components of this collaborative network. By fostering a collaborative environment, the approach taps into the diverse expertise and perspectives of these stakeholders, resulting in a holistic and well-informed decision-making process. This collaborative ethos empowers educators to collectively shape the school's policies, strategies, and goals, thereby cultivating a sense of ownership and alignment with the broader educational vision.

Furthermore, the success of the whole school approach is intertwined with its focused attention on enhancing teaching practices. This is achieved through mechanisms such as Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), which encourage continuous professional development among teachers. The emphasis on teaching development ensures that educators are equipped with the latest pedagogical methods, enabling them to deliver effective and engaging lessons that cater to the evolving needs of students. This dynamic approach not only elevates instructional quality but also contributes to a culture of continuous improvement within the school community.

Equally vital is the personalized care that the whole school approach extends to students. By fostering an environment that values both academic and social well-being, students are provided with a holistic educational experience. This focus on individualized support nurtures a sense of belonging and promotes positive social interactions, thereby enhancing the overall learning environment.

Through the provision of comprehensive student support, the approach reinforces the notion that quality education extends beyond academics and encompasses the broader personal growth and development of each student.

The whole school approach in Thai education is poised to have both short-term and long-term impacts of significant importance. In the short term, the approach is expected to yield immediate benefits by addressing pressing issues such as disparities between urban and rural schools, resource allocation challenges, and the overall quality of education. Students may experience improved access to support services, a more inclusive learning environment, and enhanced academic performance. Additionally, teachers and communities may witness positive changes in school culture, increased parental involvement, and more effective teaching methods.

Looking ahead to the long term, the whole school approach has the potential to bring about lasting and transformative changes in the Thai education system. By fostering a culture of collaboration and inclusivity, it can contribute to sustained improvements in educational outcomes, narrowing the achievement gap and preparing students for a rapidly evolving future. As students progress through the education system with the benefits of a holistic and supportive approach, they are more likely to become engaged, well-rounded individuals equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in the 21st century. Ultimately, the whole school approach represents a strategic investment in the future of Thai education, with the potential to create a lasting legacy of equitable and high-quality learning opportunities for all.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the core objective of this study was to scrutinize the impact of the whole school approach on the enhancement of education quality within the unique context of Thailand. Engaging 11 institutions as head projects and involving 408 schools that adopted the whole school policies for educational development, our investigation yielded valuable insights into the efficacy of this approach. The results unequivocally attest to its efficacy in improving various dimensions of education quality. Notably, the implementation of the whole school approach led to advancements in setting clear educational goals, fostering productive collaborations between teaching staff and administration through the facilitation of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), nurturing classroom development, streamlining information management, establishing robust learning networks, and ensuring comprehensive social security for students.

For policymakers in Thailand, we recommend a steadfast commitment to the whole school approach as a foundational strategy for advancing the nation's education system. In light of its potential to address disparities between urban and rural schools, optimize budgetary allocation, and foster collaboration among stakeholders, this approach aligns closely with the overarching goals of educational equity and excellence. To maximize its impact, policymakers should prioritize consistent implementation across schools, ensuring that the principles of inclusivity, community engagement, and holistic development are integrated into education policies and practices at all levels. Furthermore, ongoing support for professional development, data-driven assessment, and regular monitoring of the approach's outcomes will be crucial for tracking progress and making informed decisions. By endorsing and sustaining the whole school approach, policymakers can pave the way for a more equitable, effective, and responsive education system that empowers students and prepares them for a prosperous future in Thailand.

Building upon these findings, this study offers a set of academic and pedagogical recommendations for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders invested in enhancing education quality. Firstly, institutions contemplating the adoption of the whole school approach should focus on cultivating an inclusive and collaborative environment that draws upon the collective expertise of educators, administrators, parents, and external partners. This collaborative ethos should be harnessed to develop comprehensive strategies that drive the institution's educational agenda. Secondly, the integration of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) should be emphasized to facilitate continuous teacher development. Encouraging educators to engage in ongoing learning and skill enhancement enhances their capacity to deliver effective and modern instruction. Finally, prioritizing individualized student support mechanisms, such as those demonstrated by the provision of social security and holistic care, will foster an environment that nurtures both academic growth and personal development.

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Compliance with ethical standards

Conflict of interest

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