

Strategies for Academic Management According to the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy in Thai-Cambodian Border Schools

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this research was to formulate strategies on academic management according to the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy for Thai-Cambodian border schools. The research tools included a questionnaire, a structured interview questions, and an evaluate form. The survey sample consisted of 66 administrators, multi-case study of 5 schools, in-dept interview of 5 experts. Informants for focus group were 15 stakeholders, and expert-judges for strategy evaluation were 15 connoisseurs. The statistics were Frequency, Percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation, and content analysis. The strategic vision was to develop students' quality, morality, living sustainably according to the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy. Four strategy issues were (1) Development of students' quality and desired characters, focusing on the school curriculum development based on the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy; (2) Teacher and personnel development towards learner center learning management, focusing on them to be sufficient persons; (3) Develop school management, focusing on developing teachers' competency according to the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy; and (4) Education for life quality and environment friendly, focusing learning resource development and agriculture for school lunches. The strategies were evaluated by 15 connoisseurs found to be highest levels both as a whole and in individual aspects.

Keywords

Strategy, Academic Management, Sufficiency Economy, Thai-Cambodian Schools, Philosophy

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Introduction

Managing schools in the 21st century is the tough and challenge job because everything, such as working environment, living situations, social activities, technology, economy, and so on, is rapidly changing. Recently, conventional planning and management has been replaced by strategic planning and management, believing organizations would be able to cope with rapid changing situations. At the same time, new directions and operations should have been carefully considered and planned so that our move forwards would be safe and sound. The Ministry of Education (2008:1) who are basically responsible to manage basic education in Thailand pronounced and supported the implement of the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy to educational planning and management. It was believed that the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy would strengthen Thai people with cautions and reasoning thinking strategy to working and living and prepare Thai people for the changing world of 21st century.

Teaching and learning are main components of schooling, or education provision in general, under a broad concept of Academic Management. School administrators and heads of Academic Divisions are key roles on teaching and learning in every schools, responsible for the success of school academic achievement. Chantanee Sa-Nguannarm (2010: 148-149) pointed out that academic management needed participation from all parts of stakeholders. Academic teamwork, school board, and personnel should participate in early stage of planning and evaluation of school work, aiming at school effectiveness, both of quantity and quality. However, in order to be successful, schools should have sufficient budget, qualified teachers, good management, and

community support. Office of the Basic Education Commission: OBEC (2006) reported that teacher-student ratio, which should be about 1:25, but in most Thai basic education schools, there were no sufficient teachers. Besides, teachers held heavy burden, teaching many classes and many subjects per day. School plants were not enough, or old without maintenance. Many schools did have laboratories for students to do lab works. Management were also problems including academic management especially in lack of teaching aids and technology, books and teaching materials, and teachers' lack of information communication technology skills and experiences. Thai-Cambodian border schools were no exception. They faced similar problems. Moreover, those schools, were situated in remote areas, so problems were more intensified. So, good strategies for running these remote schools were needed. This research aimed to look at the matter and find some ways out as follow.

Research Objectives

The purpose of this research was to formulate strategies on academic management according to the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy for Thai-Cambodian border schools, and three objectives.

2.1 To investigate the states of the problems in academic management according to the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economic of Thai-Cambodian border schools.

2.2 To develop strategies for academic management according to the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economic of Thai-Cambodian border schools.

2.3 To evaluate the strategies for academic management according to the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economic of Thai-Cambodian border schools.

Lituration Review

3.1 Strategy and Strategic Management

Strategy may mean different to different setting and have difficulty in defining the concept. However, reviewing some definitions would be the good start of understanding the term. Morden (2007: 15) defined strategy as the means or game-plan of the enterprise to carry out the mission and to achieve the objective.

Alkhafaji (2003: 8) referred strategy to the method or route by which an organization chose to achieve its objectives after assessing its resources and environment. Similarly, Wheelen and Hunger (2010: 966) wrote that strategy was a comprehensive plan showing how the organization would achieve its mission. And Teera Runcharon (2011: 70) defined strategy as a tool and basic planning guideline method model of decision or action plan which managers used as a guideline framework to achieve organizational goals and targets in the future.

From definitions reviewed above, it could be concluded that strategy was an administrative plan derived from context analysis, setting vision, mission alternatives, goals and operational strategies to achieve organizational objectives.

An organizational strategy, mentioned above, was an only starting point of organizational success, but the as an equal part as strategy development was the implementation of the strategy, known as strategic management.

Bartol and Martin (1998: 220-221) defined strategy management as a managing model aiming to achieve organizational success by determining its environment, competitive position, setting mission and strategic goals, choosing operational strategies, strategic implementation, and strategic evaluation. Natepanna Yawirat (2006: 47-56) pointed out strategy management consisted of three elements, namely Strategy Formulation, determining goals and courses of action to achieve goals; Strategy in Action, integrating organizational strategies to organizational context; and Strategy Control, auditing and evaluating organizational success.

Nattapan Khejornnan (2009: 22-23) wrote that strategy management included 5 elements namely (1) Environment Analysis, both external and internal environments, (2) Setting Organization Direction, (3) Strategic Formulation, (4) Strategy Implementation, and (5) Strategy Evaluation and Control.

Sakorn Suksriwong (2012: 235) said that strategic management was an administrative model aiming to organizational success by using strategic management process consisting of (1) Internal and External Organizational Environment Analysis, (2) Setting Missions and Strategic Goals, (3) Strategic Formulation, (4) Strategic Implementation, and (5) Strategic Control and Evaluation.

From some literature reviewed above, it could be summarized that strategic management was a process by which an organization (1) analyse its environment, (2) define missions and strategic goals, (3) formulate

organizational strategies, (4) implement the strategies, and (5) evaluate strategic implementation.

3.2 Academic Management Concept and Components

According to Thai Educational Act 1999 (Government Gazette, 1999) Academic Management is one of four main functions of educational management, namely Academic Management, Budget Management, Personnel Management, and General Management. Academics and educationists might define academic management differently, but mainly it meant a process and methods administrators planned, executed, and evaluated educational activities to facilitate students' learning as defined by some educators as follow. Saman Asawapoom (2010:) defined academic management as a process of academic work operation focusing on instruction and students' learning to achieve educational aims effectively according to a curriculum

Roong Ratchad Wehachart (2007) pointed out that Academic Management was a process or activities of work operation related to instructional improvement including educational evaluation according to the curriculum for the benefit of students. And similarly, Tasnee Wongyuen (2010) wrote that Academic Management referred to all school activities, especially those involved with the improvement of instructional quality in order to achieve educational effectiveness and students' benefit.

Research Methods

Reviewing related literature from some sources revealed that Ministry of Education (2007) assigned seven functions of Academic Management as follow: (1) School Curriculum Development, (2) Developing Instructional Process, (3) Evaluation and Credit Transferring, (4) Educational Quality Research and Development, (5) Educational Media and Technology Development, (6) Developing and Promoting Learning Resource Centers, (7) Educational Standards and Internal Quality Assurance, and (8) Educational Supervision. While Kittima Preedeediloke (2008) proposed 6 functions of Academic Management namely (1) Academic Action Plan, (2) Curriculum and Teaching, (3) Instructional Management, (4) Teaching Medias, (5) Instructional Improvement, and (6) Educational Measurement and Evaluation. And Preeyaporn Wonganutararote (2010) proposed only four functions of Academic Management, including (1) Planning related to Academic Management, (2) Operation Management on Instruction, (3) Instructional Management, and (4) Academic Measurement and Evaluation.

From the literature reviewed above and some other sources, which were not included here, it could be concluded that Academic Management consisted of (1) Academic Planning, (2) School Curriculum Development, (3) Learning Process development, (4) Measurement and Evaluation, (5) Learning Resource Development, (6) Educational Supervision, (7) Development of Media and Technology for Education, and (8) Internal Quality System Development.

3.3. Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy

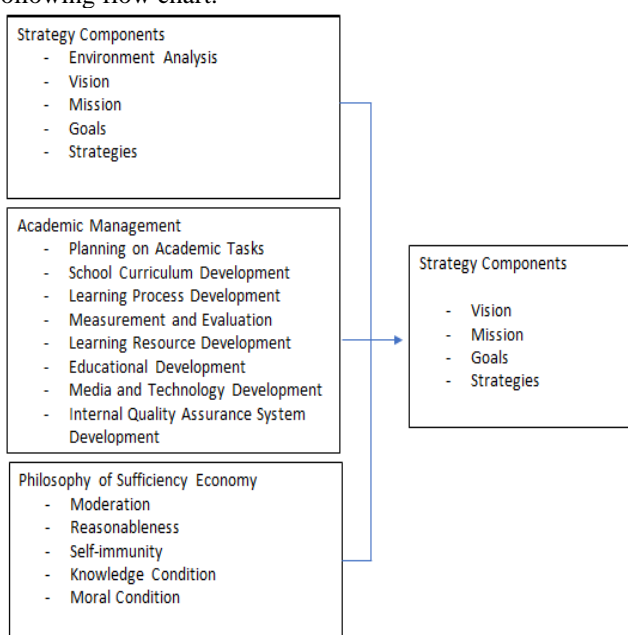
Philosophy of Sufficiency of Economy had been perceived and known among Thai people for sometimes before, but formally adopted in The Ninth National Economic and

Social Development Plan (2545-2549 B.E.) (The Office of National Economic and Social Development Plan Commission, 2003). The meaning of Philosophy of Sufficiency of Economy as reviewed by some Thai academics were summarized as follow. Sumet Tantiwetchakul (2000: 2) said that Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy referred to as ability of living without troublesome, confined oneself to live reasonably, not passionate of materialism, and adopted the middle path as ways of life. Pravet Wasee (2007: 28) defined Philosophy of Sufficiency of Economy as seven sufficiency elements, namely, Sufficient for everyone, Sufficient mind, Sufficient environment, Strong and Sufficient community, Sufficient Culture, and Sufficient Stability. With the equilibrium of all these elements, everything became normal and sustainable. Saneh Jamarik (1998: 164-167) perceived Philosophy of Sufficiency of Economy as pillars of living and stability of land. It was a way of life-performance based on the principle of poverty, which lead to the integration of body, mind, society, culture, and environment.

In summary, Philosophy of Sufficiency of Economy referred to as the principle of living to guide oneself behaviours, such as living moderately, reasonably, with self-immunity, based on mindfulness, harmony, and generosity in utilizing natural resources and technology for the public good. Three pillars of the philosophy and two supplements included Moderation, Reasonableness, and Self-immunity along with Knowledge Condition (Prudence, Careful) and Moral Condition (Integrity, Diligence, Patience, Sharing) (The Chaipattana Foundation, 2012: 13)

Conceptual Framework

Three main sets of variables, as reviewed above, were used as basics of this research, namely Strategy Components, Academic Management Components, Philosophy Sufficiency Economy Components as presented in the following flow chart.



Methodology

This research consisted of three phases, Basic Information Investigation, Strategy Formulation, and Strategy Evaluation.

Phase One: Basic Information Investigation, consisted of three steps, namely Survey on State and Need on Strategies, Multiple-case Study, and Expert Interview.

1.1 Survey on State and Need on Strategies

1.1.1 Literature review and research framework development by documentary studying, analyzing, synthesizing, and reporting.

1.1.2 Research instrument, a survey questionnaire, was constructed by using research framework reported in the literature review. The instrument content evaluation was done by using IOC (Index of Item-Objective Congruency) and the index of all items were equal .60 or higher. The reliability of the questionnaire on the state of academic management was .99 and on the need of academic strategies was .90.

1.1.3 The sample used in this research were 66 secondary schools, listed as Thai-Cambodia border schools and a key informant from each school was either the school director or acting school directors, totally 66 persons.

1.1.4 Statistics used in analyzing data included Frequency, Percentage, Mean, and Standard Deviation.

1.2 Multiple-case Study

Multiple-case Study was used to gather the experiences and practice of the case, based on the following activities.

1.2.1 Five selected schools were used in Multi-case study step. The criteria used for selecting the case included (1) Being national award schools, (2) Managing schools according to the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy, and (3) Joining Quality Improvement Project and outstanding performance.

1.2.2 Research instruments were a check-list form and a structure-interview questionnaire, developed under intensive supervision of the thesis advisors.

1.2.3 Field-work technique was used in collecting data and the data were analyzed by content analysis and descriptive report.

1.3 Expert Interview

Expert Interview technique was applied to gather opinions and suggestions on strategy drafting by experienced and outstanding school directors, based on the following activities.

1.3.1 The criteria used to select the experts were (1) National awarded school directors, (2) Successful and accepted by peers on academic management according to the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy.

1.3.2 The research instrument was a semi-structure interview questionnaire, developed under intensive advice of thesis advisors.

1.3.3 Gathering data by using interview technique, and the data were analyzed by content report. analysis and descriptive

Phase Two: Strategy Formulation, consisted of Three steps, Tows-Matric Analysis, Strategy Drafting, and Strategy Revision.

2.1 Tows-Matric Analysis

2.1.1 Tows-Matric Analysis: In this step, the matrix table was built to pair four categories of findings from Phase One, in relation to Treats-Opportunities-Weakness-Strength, by using Survey Results and Expert Interview.

2.1.2 Strategy Drafting: Based on the information obtained from Tows-Matric Analysis, Literature Review, and the researchers' experiences with intensive supervision of the thesis advisors, the strategy on academic management was drafted.

2.1.3 Strategy Revision: The strategy draft was revised and improved by using Focus Group Technique as follow.

(1) Focus Group members compiled of 15 experienced stakeholders including 6 outstanding school directors, 3 educational supervisors with doctoral degree, 5 experienced teachers, and 1 school board president.

(2) Focus Group activities included presenting the strategy draft, discussion and suggestion by Focus Group members, and evaluating the strategy draft.

(3) Revising the strategy by using the information gathering from Focus Group activities, under intensive supervision of the thesis advisors.

Phase Three: Strategy Evaluation, consisted of two steps, namely Connoisseurship Evaluation, and Evaluation Report.

3.1 Connoisseurship Evaluation

3.1.1 Participants: Stakeholders participated in strategy evaluation in this research consisted of 6 outstanding school directors, 3 supervisors, 2 university professors, 3 teachers, and 1 school board president.

3.1.2 Evaluation activities: Main events of evaluation activities included presentation of the revised strategy, discussion and suggestion by the participants, and the strategy evaluation on Suitability, Feasibility, and Utility Aspects by the participant. The strategy evaluation form was constructed based on the strategy content, under intensive supervision of the thesis advisors.

3.2 Evaluation Report

3.2.1 The statistic used for data analysis included mean and standard deviation.

3.2.2 The report was presented in two parts, the tables showing the suitability, feasibility, and utility of the strategy as a whole and in individual aspects and the summary of the participants' opinions and suggestions.

Data Analysis And Results

The research findings would be presented in three sections, Basic Information Investigation, Strategy Formulation, and Strategy Evaluation.

6.1 Basic Information Investigation Results

6.1.1 Survey Results

Table 1 State and Needs on Academic Management according to the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy

Variables	State			Need		
	□	S.D.	Interpretati on	□	S.D.	interpretati on
1.Structure	3.59	0.85	High	4.36	0.66	high
2.Service	3.42	0.79	Moderate	4.25	0.66	high
3.Personel	3.55	0.86	High	4.35	0.62	high
4.Budget	3.62	0.86	High	4.34	0.69	high
5.Instruction al materials	3.55	0.82	High	4.46	0.58	high
6.Management	3.57	0.80	High	4.28	0.64	high
Total	3.55	0.83	High	4.34	0.64	high

From the table above, it revealed that as a whole and most aspects were performed at the high level except for the Service Aspect, while the needs for academic management strategy were at the high level in both as a whole and all individual aspects, with the needs of instructional materials at the highest mean core, structure aspect in the second place, and personnel in the third.

6.1.2 Multi-case Study Summary

Needs for academic management strategy in each aspect were as follow. In the aspect of planning, crucial suggestions were that all learning units should integrate the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy into lessons and should adopt it as the school policy. In the aspect of school curriculum, there was misunderstanding that the philosophy was applicable for agriculture only. In fact, it could be applied and integrated in all subjects. In the development of learning process, schools should advise and facilitate to use the concept of the philosophy in class whenever possible. In the aspect of measurement and evaluation, there should be using variety of measuring and evaluating methods. For learning resource aspect, community participation and involving were important. In educational supervision aspect, there was suggestion that supervision should apply the concept of the philosophy, moderate supervision, for example.

The suggestion for media and technology aspect was to use media and technology at maximum value and with care. In the aspect of quality assurance, informants suggested that budget should be spent reasonably. Moreover, students should be guided and developed in balance of knowledge and morality.

6.1.3 Expert Interview

Crucial suggestions on strategy formulation, summarized from the interview, were as follow.

- 1) The strategy should be presented under four sections, Vision, Mission, Goals, and Strategy Issues.
- 2) Vision: Thai-Cambodian border schools operate academic management to develop students' quality, morality, living sustainably according to the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy.
- 3) Mission: Informants suggest 4 missions, namely Academic management planning; Developing educational media, innovation, technology, and learning resources; Developing supervision system and quality system; and Developing teachers, personnel, and students as sufficient persons, reasonable, self-immunity, knowledge, morality, public mind, environment friendly, and transferring to community.
- 4) Goals: Eight goals were summarized from the interview as follow, To have plan and manage systematically and with quality; Curriculum development systematically and participation of stakeholders; Developing learning processes according to the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy; Developing and using learning resources; Systematically developing supervision system; Developing educational media, teaching media, and technology; Creating measurement and evaluation system; and Creating effective and efficient internal quality system.
- 5) Strategy Issues: Four strategy issues were suggested, namely, Achievement and students' desired character development; Developing teachers and personnel on learner-centered education; Developing administrative system; and Education provision to promote life quality and environment friendly.

6.2 Strategy Formulation Result

This section was the final product of the second phase, which consisted of 3 steps, and the revised version of the strategy was as presented.

6.2.1 Vision: Thai-Cambodian border schools shall educate student of high quality, morality, and sustainable life according to the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy

6.2.2 Mission: (1) Execute academic management according to the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy; (2) Develop instructional media, technology, and learning resources according to the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy; (3) Develop supervision and quality assurance processes according to the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy; and (4) Develop teachers, educational personnel, and students according to the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy such as being moderate, reasonable, self-immunity, knowledgeable, morality, service-mind, protect environment, and ready to transfer to community.

6.2.3 Goals: Perform the academic tasks according to the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy.

- 1) To create systematic academic plans of quality;
- 2) To develop school curriculum;
- 3) To develop and implement learning processes efficiently;
- 4) To develop and use learning centered education;

5) To create high quality and systematic supervision and implement sustainably;

6) To develop teaching media, innovation, and technology sustainably;

7) To use variety measurement and evaluation effectively; and

8) To use develop and implement effective and efficient quality system.

6.2.3 Strategy Issues: Academic management strategies formulated in this research could be categorized into 4 strategy issues and 15 sub-strategy issues as follow:

1) Student Achievement and Desired Character Development

This strategy issue included 5 sub strategy issues, compiled of Curriculum development based on the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy; Integrating the concept of the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy to learning processes; Applying the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy to measurement and evaluation; Developing and utilizing learning resources according to the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy; and Developing and utilizing instructional media, innovation, and technology based on the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy.

2) Develop Teachers and Personnel on Learner-centered learning

This strategy issue included 3 sub-strategy issues, compiled of Developing teachers, personnel, and students as sufficient persons; Practice-based learning management; Transforming lessons to school network.

3) Develop Administrative System

This strategy issue included 4 sub-strategy issues, compiled of Create academic planning system according to the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy; Using lessons learnt from supervision to improve instruction; Quality assurance effectively and efficiently according to the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy; and Developing effective utilization of policy implementation lessons.

4) Education for Life Quality and Environment Friendly

This strategy issue included 3 sub-strategy issues, compiled of Developing learning resources to promote life quality and environment friendly; Promoting students' occupation skills; and Promoting students' service mind.

6.3 Strategy Evaluation

The evaluation revealed that the strategy was perceived as the highest level of suitability, feasibility, and utility, in both as a whole and all individual aspects. The utility of the strategy was rated as the highest mean scores in all components: vision, mission, goals, and strategy issues.

Discussion And Conclusion

According to the findings presented above, there were some important points the authors would like to bring to discussion. The first point was that academic services among Thai-Cambodia border school were rated as “moderate level” which signs to be a crucial problem because an educational institution is a service-based organization. If academic services are run effectively, quality is hardly achieved. Besides Ciobanu (2013) pointed out that without effective services, students might not have academic, emotional, and social connection with the institutions, which might lead to lose interests in learning and likely dropping out. It might be concluded that schools should be well aware and pay more attention to improve academic services to meet students’ needs.

The second point was due to the survey result that the needs for academic strategies were at the high levels in both as a whole and in individual aspects. These might be good signs indicating that Thai-Cambodia schools recognized that they were facing problems that needed good strategies to run their schools. The finding was similar to a research done by Karaferye (2017) that with strong effect of globalization, knowledge-based societies, competitiveness, and technology, educational upon universities, interest and need in academic management and leadership were increasing. Applying concept of the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy might be alternative strategies as pointed Mingmai Mungmajon (2009) that application of the concept to environment and curriculum management increased changes in students’ behaviors, desired characteristics, and life in general. It was probably true in all levels of institutions. It could be concluded that when we accepted that we had problems and needed improvement, the doors were opened to more effective management. It was recommended that schools should consider and apply the strategies suggested in this research to their situations.

The third point that should be mentioned and discussed was component of the strategy, which included five aspects, namely vision, mission, goal strategy issue, measure and indicators. Most textbooks and researches concluded that strategy statements were presented under these headings: vision, mission, goal, strategy issue, measure and indicator (Wheelen and Hunger, 2009; Sirichai Kanjanawasi, 2008; Nattapan Khejornnan, 2009; and Ek-kachai Boonyatistarn, 2010). However, details might be varied. In this research, the authors decided to use only four aspects of strategy: vision, mission, goal, and strategy issue which included measure and indicator under the last aspect. Vision was the organizational intention and position, mission was what the organization would do to achieve vision. Goal was the operative target that the organization strived to achieve, while the strategy issue was a choice of operative actions the organization would do to achieve the goal. And under each strategy issue or sub-strategy issue, there would be a set of measures to guide operative action and a set of indicators to guide evaluation. From the discussion presented above, it could be concluded that the component of strategies was a framework by which strategies were presented in written or spoken forms. The authors or the researchers should decide whatever frameworks to employ and have clear essences of what to be included in each aspect of the strategy.

The last point was the result of the strategy evaluation which revealed that the strategy utility was evaluated by experienced and related stakeholders of Thai-Cambodian border schools as the highest levels in both as a whole, and in individual aspects. This might be because the strategy formulation was based on information related to schools’ problems and needs, along with suggestions for strategy revision provided by stakeholders. The application of the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy for academic management strategies might be the right alternative for remote area schools like Thai-Cambodian border schools. So, it was recommended for not only Thai-Cambodian border school directors to consider using the strategies, but also other remote area schools as well.

Research Contributions

The findings of this research suggested that:

- (1) Academic service performance was perceived as “moderate” among Thai-Cambodian border schools. So, it was recommended that school directors should pay more attention to the matter because service was the crucial task of service organizations as such schools.
- (2) Since the utility of the strategy was rated the highest mean score, it suggested that the strategy derived from this research was likely useful. So, it was recommended that Thai-Cambodian border school directors should consider apply the strategy to their own situations. The strategy handbook was the good source to begin with.
- (3) From the contributions mentioned above, it was recommended that further researches should be on a model of effective operation of academic management in Thai-Cambodia border schools, or an experimental research on the implementation of the strategy school management: a case study in a particular school.

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