

# Promoting an Environment of Professional Learning Community among Thai Teachers\*



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## Abstract

The environment in the school is supposed to be friendly and the importance of building a professional learning community (PLC) should be prioritised as it is an important criteria of professional development. In this vein, the environment in the school is of vital importance to the development of professionalism among teachers which concurs with many scholars and researchers. The school environment has a positive impact on teachers' professional development in today's 21<sup>st</sup> century. Therefore, administrators and teachers, need to be recognised as important and valuable quarters in creating a good environment of PLC in schools. The schools have always paid attention to the curriculum, activities in the school, teaching and learning of the students if the PLC environment is not recognised, this may result in a failure of the school system. Hence, this article aims to the importance of a PLC environment that encourages teachers in the professional learning community, to set their goals autonomously together and this will ascertain their full potential. The aim of this article is also to encourage a school climate, which is friendly and creative in establishing

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a PLC environment: *The Open Climate; The Autonomous Climate and The Familiar Climate*. These are the key elements in creating a community environment of PLC that encompasses respect, trust, high morale, opportunity for input, continuous learning and social growth, cohesiveness, school renewal and caring.

**Keywords:** Environment; Teaching and Learning; Professional Learning Community; School Climate; Thai Teachers



## Introduction

Organizational climate is an important variable in the study of human organization. It is a link between the visible natures of the organization, such as the statutory structure. Leadership and morale of workers. Organizational climate is a sense of performance toward the visible nature of the organization. It influences the behavior. Attitude of workers (Litwin & Stringer, 2002). In addition, the organizational climate is responsible for determining the behavior of the workers in the organization. Organizational climate also contributes to the formation of expectations. Membership in the organization. This will stimulate the attitude. Good for the organization and satisfaction in the organization. So if you want to improve, change or develop your organization. What the developers need to change is the first. Organizational environment. An environment of the organization is derived from the history and culture of the organization since the past (Steer, R. M., & Porter. L. W., 1983).

The concept of Brown and Moberg (1980) corresponds to the concept of Hellriegel and Slocum. (1974:430) All management should pay attention to an environment of the organization. Because an environment will help the management. Plan to change. In addition, it will offer or satisfy an environment that creates satisfaction. Of workers helps the organization to be more efficient. To achieve the goals of the organization faster. Steers and Porter's (1983) organizational climate is also important to executives and others, such as the suitability of individuals and organizations. It is important to determine the performance and satisfaction with one person within the organization. Steers and Porter found that the organization had an environment of power management. The power of decision is with the central. The personnel of the organization must strictly follow the regulations. This kind of environment makes the output low. The personnel of the organization are unhappy at work, and there are unwanted attitudes to the workers. The organization of an environment should emphasize the good relationship among the members of the organization. The aim of this study is to promote good visibility to the personnel of the organization and in an organization that has this kind of environment. As a result, there is organization's personnel satisfaction, achieved addition, the idea of many scholars said. Organizational environment Focus on the person, which consists of Open

communication. Joint advocacy and decentralization lead the good work of personnel. Reduce the number of employees Reduce production costs and reduce training time. For the above reasons. The authors have commented that in addition to an environment, the organization has. Management importance both the management and other people in the organization very much. It also influences job motivation and job satisfaction.

If any organization pays attention to this issue and applied to the management of the change to keep up with the modern era, blending seamlessly. It will make the organization flexible. Good results for workers who work together. They know each other's needs and satisfaction with each other. Finally, the achievement of the goals of the organization. The school is organized as an administrative organization that is organized similarly to a general management organization. The school administrators are responsible for organizing the same person as the management of other organizations to accomplish their goals. The division of duties and responsibilities which is the relationship between work and the ability of the person or group of people together to achieve success with minimal conflict. It also gives satisfaction to those who receive the work and the workers. Effective management must have the ability to organize people. The success of executives is not a matter of mandatory or knowledge-based work. One factor is the ability to manage in order to create a good management environment. Management style that creates a good environment is important for school personnel. Data from the current survey were used to determine the policy for problem solving and job development. Assignment Then, follow the help, take care of tiredness, praise, and have to create morale and joy. They also provide support to help each other. And participate in activities that will achieve the goals of the school together.

## Professional Learning Community

Although referred to by a number of different names (e.g.: professional learning communities, communities of learners, professional communities), the common goal of “community” models is to promote collaboration among teachers by creating a collaborative professional culture (Stoll et al. 2006: 222–23). PLCs offer an infrastructure to create the supportive cultures and conditions necessary for achieving



significant gains in teaching and learning and for assisting teachers to become more effective in their work with students (Morrissey 2000, 3).

According to Crow, “a professional learning community requires intention, a focus on learning, a focus on results, a commitment of collegiality and a willingness to reshape a school’s culture” (2008: 4). In order for collaborative cultures to be successful and collegial, teachers need to participate in authentic interaction that includes openly sharing both failures and mistakes and to possess the ability to respectfully and constructively analyze and criticize practices and procedures that promote self-reflection (Marzano, 2013). These learning communities may consist of teachers who share subjects, students, or grade levels (Armstrong 2010: 15). Louis and Kruse (1995:736) explain that one of the primary characteristics of an individual in a successful PLC is willingness to accept feedback and work toward improvement. To be successfully implemented, a PLC must have members who meet often and regularly as part of their teaching program (Voelkel, 2011). According to the model developed by Hord, PLCs have the following dimensions:(1) supportive and shared leadership, (2) collective creativity, (3) shared values and vision, (4) supportive conditions, and (5) shared personal practice (1997).

The concept of PLCs has evolved over the years, and the latest model by DuFour (2004) identifies six components that effective PLCs share: (1) a focus on learning; (2) a collaborative culture, including shared beliefs, values, and vision, and an atmosphere of trust and respect; (3) collective inquiry into best practices; (4) an action orientation;(5) a commitment to continuous improvement; and (6) a results orientation. This model is based on the assumption that “the core mission of formal education is not simply to ensure that students are taught but to ensure that they learn” (8). It is a shift from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning (8). A study by Louis, Marks, and Kruse (1996:757–98) that documented the benefits of teacher learning communities found that teachers who collectively held themselves and their colleagues accountable for student learning honored a sustained commitment to overall student improvement. DuFour (2004) states that when teachers make it their responsibility to ensure the success of each student, profound changes can take place:

*The school staff finds itself asking, what school characteristics and practices have been most successful in helping all students achieve at high levels? How can we adopt those characteristics and practices in our own schools? What commitments do we have to make to one another to create such a school? What indicators could we monitor to assess our progress? When the staff has built shared knowledge and found common ground on these questions, the school has a solid foundation in moving forward with its improvement initiative. (2004: 8) The importance of Professional Learning Community.*

PLCs have been shown to be an effective strategy in improving student achievement and increasing teacher quality (Dufour and Mattos 2013). Successful implementation of PLCs requires that an organization of teachers and administrators work collaboratively in an ongoing process of structured inquiry and action research for the purpose of achieving better results for their students by ensuring high levels of learning for all (Washington County School District 2011).

## **The Importance of Professional learning community**

Professional learning community (PLC) is based on the business sector about the ability of the organization to learn. PLC is based on the application of the concept of learning organization. Apply to the school of learning. However, the management of the school organization is generally influenced by the concept of management sciences in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, according to Wood, describing of the organization by its management. By organising, ordering, commanding, coordinating and controlling, it also focuses on technical training rather than on-the-job training. Most of the school administrations are supervisory and vertical control systems. Then lack of cooperation in work, modular work and not learning the job, cannot solve the problem.

In turn, the different dimensions of the 21st century are the age of knowledge that is changing, transferring, and linking rapidly. Information technology is at the fingertips. The rapid development of technology and innovation. The changing world affects the learning pathways to learners (Panich, 2011). Changing like this is a warning sign that the work and learning of the teacher profession cannot be solitary. Divide by work. Or work within a conceptual framework that focuses on content rather than on



learning. This is why the development of the learning and development of the school organization called, the community of Professional Learning or PLC is based on a variety of contexts.

The goal of creating a community of professional learning is to: 1) build professional learning on a continuous basis, 2) make changes by learning from the real work of the teacher. Teachers' development through student development. It is a review of teacher performance that affects learners' learning and 3) created a collaborative work of teachers. Collaborate the strengths of all parties of the development of learners. Learn to focus on the learning process and cooperate to develop the way teachers work.

Therefore, educational organizations or schools that aims to reform their learning by using PLCs to develop the profession base on their authentic work. No matter what kind of the organization is, the schools need to see the importance of organizational climate. The administrator must take into account the influence of organizational climate on the personnel of the organization.

## **The Importance of the Environment in creating a Learning Community in Schools.**

The school environment is the result of interactions between people and the environment of the school. Organizational climate in schools influenced personnel of school and good school environment. The most important thing to do of a school environment is to organize the school environment, where the details of the arrangement and the environment are the subjects. Each school has a different environment and the demand is different. The school environment is influenced by all personnel in the school.

The good environment of the school will bring the productivity of the work to reach the important point which is to learn about the academic environment social development and curriculum updates. The school is an important place for both teachers and students to spend their valuable time (Fox et al., 1973). According to McGill et al. (1988: 46, 56-58) the environment is important to for organizations in especially for schools where students and teachers be aware, when controlling the

student's academic ability and economic and social well-being, it was found that Environment is a powerful predictor of organizational climate of significant academic achievement and Peter (1996) also mentioned the importance of a corporate environment. The organizational climate is the ability to use resources in the change process. To achieve the purpose of the organization (doing thing right). The effectiveness of the program is a matter of concern and do the right things.

Therefore, the importance of the good environment of the school will make the work in achieving the important goal in learning about the academic. The school is a place that is meaningful and pleasant. The both teachers and students. The organizational climate will affect the mental attitude to the personnel of the organization. This will affect the work behavior, the satisfaction, and the efficiency, effectiveness and effectiveness of the work.

## **The Environment of Professional Learning Community in good schools.**

In 1996, Halpin and Croft (1995: 133-181) studied organizational climate of schools. In conclusion, the organizational climate in schools depends on the behavior of the administrators as the school leaders and the behavior of teachers as individuals in schools. The following are the organizational characteristics 6: 1) The Open Climate) 2) The Autonomous Climate) 3) (The Controlled Climate) 4) The Familiar Climate) 5) The Paternal Climate) and6) The Close Climate). In this article, the author proposes a community environment for professional learning in schools.

1. The Open Climate is the environment in which the members of the group, good morale. The teacher has a good job of each individual. It makes good work each of us has the satisfaction with working and solving problems together. We are proud to be members of the school. The behavior of the administrator should be a good role model who is respected and desired by the teachers. In addition, they assist the teachers in their work, the administrator does not have to wait for orders or control and supervise often because the teachers have a good discipline and good relationship with the management. The rules and regulations that are necessary for the administration and



control of teachers are also available but flexible according to the situation. The management is not focused on the work, so this atmosphere is the most desirable to the members and the best.

2. The Autonomous Climate is a clear environment where the administrator encourages teachers to create a friendly environment. This environment tends to be more satisfying for teachers to build a friendly relationship than satisfaction from the success of their work. The teachers are united and cooperate well. Administrators have different rules or regulations, and are to facilitate the work of the teacher. The teacher has a good morale but get little success. The administration is based on rules rather than on individual basis. The relationship between the administrators and the teachers is small, supervision, supervision and supervision of the teacher.

It gives teachers the opportunity to choose their work independently and by their ability. The administrator will show mercy and help the teachers in their work from time to time. Most of them will use hard work practices and create good work examples. The administrator tries to promote the welfare of the teachers. This behavior of the executive is more rigorous than the bright executive.

3. The Familiar Climate is an environment in which the administrator and teachers have a friendly relationship. The administrator is less interested in the neglect of orders, regulation or supervisory Teachers lack of unity in work and do not have a job but personal relationships are good. They have moderate morale because of the friendly relationship. There is lack of satisfaction and pride in the success of the work. The administrator lacks management skills, but tries to show that all teachers are family members.

The administrator makes mercy and will not try to destroy the mind of the members. Evaluations of works or arrangements, both direct and indirect, are very few. Teachers will urge administrator to be strong at all times.

According to the environment of these three dimensional organization, the environment is the most desirable environment. These is a way to create a working environment for teachers and these is the efficiency. The ability of the administrator of effective leaders exist In order to control the working environment. It is beneficial to practice because people do not work alone but the work is under control. The school's

model of leadership, regulations, and environment may not be seen in the school. These things affect the person. But these is influence on behavior and attitude.

The school environment affects the performance and satisfaction of teachers. Affecting School Loyalty School environment in school, this is a characteristic that shows the interaction of the behavior of school personnel. The involvement of the administrator in commanding or motivating the subordinates to practice or not to do what the administrator sets. This will influence the morale and job satisfaction of subordinates. The school environment is dependent on the behavior of the administrator.

Additionally Fox et al.(1973:7-9) determine whether a school has a good environment or not. It can be seen from the composition of the environment: respect, trust, high morale, opportunity for input, continuous academic and social growth, cohesiveness, school renewal, and care.

Here, the author offers only seven important elements and is about creating a community of professional learning in schools. Each element has as the detail below;

## **1. Respect**

All people in the school should have a sense of self. There are different opportunities for knowledge and opinions. The executive teachers and students in schools receive acceptance as appropriate to status. A school administrator is a person who is legally authorized to lead the operations of a school and to achieve the objectives set. It is well-known that management is influential in the minds and behaviors of co-workers. They also play a role in the success and failure of the work. One important role of the administrator is in making a product effective and efficient. It is the recognition that occurs in the school. Acceptance is a factor in human society of schools. Every human being wants to be accepted by others.

## **2. Trust**

Trustees reflect the trust of the person. All the staff in the school respect each other's ideas. Trusting each other and honest with both yourself and the agency. The trust in all the staff in the school are importance and reflects the good environment in the school. If the school personnel lacked trust among in each other, the environment



in the school is not good. It is necessary for the administrator to create an environment of trust among all levels of staff in the school. A sense of trust can only arise when others honor each other. Trust is one important factor. This will result in the work of the institution achieving the intended purpose of building trust.

### **3. High morale**

People with high morale there is a good sense of place and a sense of being able to face events at all times (Fox, et al., 1973:8). Morale is important to the job. Collaboration to achieve the objectives. It is generally accepted that the morale of the people influences the efficiency of the operation. People with little knowledge but the morale is good, they may work better than someone who has the ability but morale is not good.

### **4. Opportunity for input**

Everyone is not able to take part in the decision. It's important to know about important issues, but everyone is confident that they have the opportunity to express their opinions and know that the opinions are being considered. The expectations of school administrators. It is the administrator of educational institutions to meet the purpose of the establishment effective and efficient. This is one of the key principles that will make school administrators achieve this goal the subordinate or co-worker is involved in proposing ideas and judging critical issues in management which is based on the school (Fox et al., 1973: 7-8).

### **5. Continuous academic and social growth**

All personnel in the institution have a desire to develop themselves. In academic terms, it is social skills, knowledge, and attitude. The school administrators have an important role to play in addressing students' academic, social, physical, and attitudinal needs. Hence the administrator must create a good academic environment. It also analyzes the needs of the society in order to meet the needs of the society.

### **6. Cohesiveness**

It is the feeling of the person towards the school. They feel that they are part of the school. I want to stay at this school and try to find opportunities to bring their

talents to use to benefit the school and help other people in the school. In the management, all school administrators wish to find success. The problem facing the administrator is how to get things done. Performance is a powerful combination. Unity, to work, unity and cooperation in the work will be much less depended on the person. School administrators can join forces to build up the cooperation of subordinates. The work will be done well. Administrators must have high leadership. For pushing or crystallizing to bring the organization to efficiency and effectiveness.

Hence, the administrators must realize its obligations. In order to seize power, they must strengthen solidarity and cooperation among the personnel or subordinates of their own. To complete the task successfully, the objective is to be effective.

## 7. Caring

In regard to personnel in the organization, there is a sense that other people are involved with them as individuals. Living together in society and understand the nature of the colleagues. To create morale for all people on the basis of justice and equality. People in academia feel, that other people are involved with them as a human being. Join the society. Each person must know and understand the nature of his colleagues. Work satisfaction is the satisfaction of work and willingness to work for the purpose of the organization. The personnel in the unit will feel satisfied with the work. When the work returns the objectives and the mind and it can meet his needs, including salary and welfare. The personnel is already available. It in terms of psychological rewards, the administrator must create the satisfaction of the personnel in the institution and take care of the needs to solve problems when personnel need help.

In addition, administrators must cultivate all personnel to take care of all students in the institution. When students have problems, the teachers must resolve it and everyone in the school wants love and care of the people around. Based on this concept, the administrator must take care of the needs of the school personnel by creating morale and job satisfaction of personnel. If the school personnel is satisfied with the work, it will affect the efficiency and effectiveness of the work.

Therefore the environment of the community, organization of professional learning in educational institutions, the behavior of interactions between teachers, students, administrators, and school personnel are collective efforts.



## Conclusion

The atmosphere that supports the professional learning community can be developed in an organization or school. Each environment is good, depending on the needs of the environment and group purpose to manage the operations of the organization and achieve the results achieved, depends on the type of organization to choose. This is importance by establishing an academic environment in schools to be a professional learning community. The environment should be flexible. (Provisionalism) Allow all teachers the flexibility to try new things and promote creative thinking, empathy, understanding and listen to the problems of all teachers.

In addition, all teachers appreciated the feelings and values of equality. Sincere disclosure and spontaneity is free from all other hidden motives. Teachers should express their opinions freely. The professional learning community focuses on problem-oriented and creative problem-solving, a cause of harmony (Cohesiveness). This means that people in the organization or school feel that they are members of the same organization. Schools have an influence on themselves. They have the desire to participate in the school work together and the professional learning community in this school will have innovation or innovators. Maybe there will be a system that will focus on new practices, new goals, new ones, better productivity. To conclude, there are growth, development, and change instead of the original, preserved or original.

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