School Leadership and Management in Cambodia: National Culture and Its Impacts on Leading Educational Changes

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Ⅰ. Introduction

Changes in education systems have become a worldwide trend and this has converged into an ideal type of educational change globally rather than nationally and much less locally, while the quality of implementation remains in question. Hallinger (2001) calls this state of affairs the "globalisation of an educational ideal" (p.62). The effect of this ideal is more influential on the education systems in developing countries. This is partly because the governments of these countries are often faced with a minimal budget to cover any educational change associated with innovations, reforms and even the day-to-day operations of their education systems, and thus they have to seek potential international agencies which find these activities of interest (Samoff, 1999). They are bringing the best of their own countries to developing countries. Samoff (1999) argues that as a result, the broad national policies on education often become value-neutral and have many similarities regardless of the countries concerned − common findings, similar diagnoses and measures to lead the changes. Local and cultural traditions are increasingly threatened by "the spread of global influences" (Holmes and Crossley, 2004, p.197).

The decentralisation of education has made individual schools face this internationalisation of educational change. In centralised education systems, schools are doing what their national governments tell them to do. However, now schools particularly in developing countries have to deal with effects of both their governments and international agencies. Interventions from outside of their own countries may cause and/or broaden the socio-cultural divide between themselves and these donor agencies which often are from the West. In this regard, this

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study explores the extent to which the governments' broad national education policies and reforms correspond to reality in terms of the societal and cultural contexts of their own, which the author believes makes these policies and reforms work in practice. The societal and cultural norms cultivated and embedded in society which vary from one country to another characterise the behavioural patterns of people in the country, who implement the policies and reforms. Through this exploration, this study will focus on school principals in developing countries, particularly Cambodia－a country in Southeast Asia－and describe their roles as school leaders in leading and meeting the changes at school level. Then, it will be examined what types of school leadership are now required for individual schools in Cambodia to lead the changes in the context of this country.

The next section outlines the recent national education reforms in Cambodia, and the subsequent section reviews and analyses the literature on school management and roles of school principals in the international context. Before moving on to the discussions about and the analysis of findings from Cambodia's cases, the methodologies of this study are presented with the research questions. The fifth section addresses these research questions by mainly analysing the documentary evidence, and the key issues arising from the analysis are reflected in the sixth section. Some concluding remarks are also stated in this last section.

Ⅱ. Background and Context

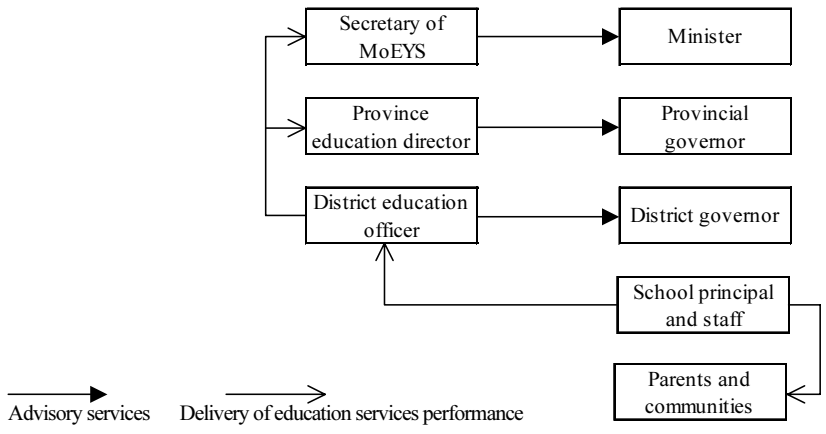
In 2003, the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGoC) officially released a plan for achieving Education for All (EFA) by 2015 － its fundamental thrust being to ensure that all Cambodia's children and youth have equal opportunity to access formal and non-formal basic education. One of the main policy objectives of this plan is "capacity building for decentralization through enabling operational autonomy of schools and institutions" (UNESCO, 2003, p. 1). For implementing its educational decentralisation policy, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) (2001) introduced a budget-allocation system to provide a school-operating budget to each school. Each school with the school-operating budget has been given autonomy over how to use the budget for school matters such as maintaining school buildings and purchasing educational equipment.

In its assessment of implementation of the policy, Asian Development Bank (ADB) (2004) emphasises the importance of establishing systematised mechanisms for maintaining the accountability of the education sector for its performance to the various stakeholders, especially parents and other community members. An ideal mechanism for maintaining accountability is as follows.

In one school, the school principal and other staff report the school's performance to the district education officer as well as to parents and other members in the community, the district education officer reports all the school performance records to the province education director, and the provincial office of education reports these records to the secretary in the central ministry. That is, the new budgeting system gives individual schools autonomy in their day-to-day educational activities, and at the same time, the accountability mechanism throughout the education sector enables the central ministry to monitor the progress of the schools. Figure 1 shows this mechanism for maintaining accountability.

A reason why MoEYS places individual schools under an obligation to produce school performance records and school development plans, and to report them to the ministry is:

> In the education sector, the persons who make the students' education achievement possible are the teachers and school principals. They are the direct providers of education to the children and youth, with the support from



Source: Adapted from ADB (2004, p.25)

Figure 1. Cambodian line of educational accountability

> education management officers in the district, the province, and the Ministry. Therefore, in order to achieve success in school management, the teachers and school principals have to coordinate well to make the improvement in planning their own work in schools based on actual school information as well as on existing resource ability, and on availability of community support, and encouragement of managers at all levels.
>
> (MoEYS, 2000a, Introduction)

Among school staff, the government regards school principals in particular as the lever bringing about "the greatest impact on policy implementation" (RGoC, 2001, p.235). School principals are now responsible for various kinds of school activities from school administration such as integrating the national policy plan into school objectives to pupils' learning such as following up pupils' progress and evaluations (MoEYS, 2000a). In the centralised education system, schools and principals ran these school activities with little flexibility, or even they had no authority to determine some of the activities. Yet, the views on education have changed. MoEYS (2000b) emphasises that the change should be brought about by school principals in collaboration with other teachers, and gives a reason why school principals have to cooperate more closely with other teachers as follows:

> In Cambodia, especially after 1979 [after the period of the Khmer Rouge], people in communities contribute to schools in many ways. ... Community support for Cambodia primary schools has been one of the important sources in education. ... Therefore, the school principals and staff have to cooperate more closely and play a significant role in acquiring support from the community, and using these funds effectively for yearly education programs and school activities. (Introduction, brackets added)

In short, Cambodia's education reforms have loaded new and additional responsibilities onto individual schools and principals, and these responsibilities should be conducted in participatory styles in one way or another. This is a challenge for principals to be faced with given that they have never been tried on their ability to successfully manage their schools with little government intervention.

Ⅲ. Literature Review

1. Emergence of School Leadership and Management

The discussion about school management and leadership in Cambodia is linked to the discussion about decentralisation of education. Decentralisation of education has been a centrepiece in both developed and developing countries for the last few decades, and there have been a number of recent research projects, studies and their subsequent literature on this issue. Fullan and Watson (1999), however, contend that decentralisation often refers only to administrative elements, thereby missing the day-to-day capacities and activities at school level such as teaching strategies and assessment, and clerical work which would make decentralisation work for improvements in the quality of education. Chapman et al. (2002) also argue that although decentralisation is to get schools and principals to take new roles and greater responsibilities for decision-making, many advocates for decentralisation of education do not consider whether schools and principals can take on these responsibilities and how they manage human and financial resources.

Management "is a set of activities directed towards efficient and effective utilization of organizational resources in order to achieve organizational goals," (p.102) and it has interpersonal relationships based on expertise and autonomy (Sapre, 2002). In management, educational administrators such as provincial and district officials and teachers are to be accountable to pupils, parents and other community members for the education which they provide (Sapre, 2002). In order for schools to face and cope with these challenges, and realise the potential of school management, Sapre (2002), writing on India, suggests that:

> Since the primary condition for any organizational change to take place is collective will, administrators must become effective change agents. This calls for leadership, which is both collaborative and authoritative. School leaders need to have a vision as well as the ability to communicate that vision to all stakeholders (p.107).

Regarding leadership, Whitaker (1993) defines it as "behaviour that enables and assists others to achieve planned goals" (p.73).

> [L]eadership might have as much to do with making helpful suggestions as

with making strategic directives; it might be as much about listening to other peoples [sic] ideas as about expounding your own and as much about gentleness as about toughness (p.73, brackets added).

Herriot et al. (2002) say that today in some countries, principals are trained in school management practices, the central purpose being to improve the quality of education for their pupils. Fullan (1993) emphasises that principals' responsibility is "building learning organizations" (p.70) where people continually develop themselves to understand the complexities of the educational change occurring around and within their schools. Principals need to seek their own purposes and visions, but also listen to others' and then, attempt to integrate their own visions into those of others (Fullan, 1993). These characteristics of principals agree with those Whitaker (1993) uses to define leadership above and what Coleman (2003) calls transformational leadership: "[t]he principal who practices transformational leadership is not reliant on his or her personal charisma, but is attempting to empower staff and share leadership functions" (p.162).

Table 1. Transformational and transactional models of leadership

Transformational leadership	Transactional leadership
from the ground to the top	from the top to the ground
shaping the school in a new direction	maintaining the status quo
goal setting	a set goal
empowering others	personal charisma
sharing leadership functions	controlling others

According to Hallinger (2003), transformational leadership positively affects pupils' learning outcomes through having an influence on teachers' commitment to building learning organisations, and this is made possible because this style of leadership aims to develop other teachers' professional capacity as well as principals'. Transformational leadership is often contrasted with a more traditional model of leadership called "transactional leadership" (Coleman, 2003, p.162) – in other words, more authoritarian leadership. Leithwood (1992, as quoted in Coleman, 2003) says that transactional leadership "is based on an exchange of services (from a teacher, for example) for various kinds of rewards (salary, recognition

and intrinsic rewards) that the leader controls, at least in part" (p.162). This style of leadership is top-down, limits its focus predominantly on principals, and gets others to move towards the goals already set exclusively by their leaders (Hallinger, 2003). Table 1 summarises transformational leadership compared with transactional leadership.

2. Organisational and National Cultures

Hallinger and Kantamara (2000) say that the reforms following decentralisation of education and school management, the implementation of which has been difficult, long and uncertain even in their countries of origin, i.e. the West did and will find an even more tentative welcome in countries where hierarchical social and organisational cultures are embedded. The underlying values and assumptions of the global and modern school reforms run counter to the traditional cultural norms of these countries (Hallinger and Kantamara, 2000). The rest of this section reviews the literature on national cultures and their effects on leading educational changes.

Hofstede's (1980) well-known cross-national research on the differences in thinking and social action which exist among fifty countries and three multicountry regions concludes that:

> [O]rganizations are culture-bound. This applies not only to the behavior of people within organizations and to the functioning of organizations as a whole; even the theories developed to explain behavior in organizations reflect the national culture of their author, and so do the methods and techniques that are suggested for the management of organizations. The consequences of this cultural relativity are described for a number of areas: motivation, leadership, and decision-making. (p.372)

Thus, it is no wonder that the majority of literature on school management and leadership, the authors of which are predominantly from the West, analyse these issues from the perspective of culture of their own countries, and regard transformational leadership as better than the other. Further in practice, both of the two styles of leadership compared earlier emerged from the Western context (Hallinger, 2003).

Hofstede (1980) defines culture as "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another," (p.25) and creates a picture of how culture of one country is stabilised: a particular structure and way in which organisations such as schools and other educational systems function in society is led by a system of societal norms consisting of value systems of major groups of the population, the origins of which are in a variety of ecological factors which affect the physical environment in society. A value is "a broad tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over others and an attribute of individuals" (Hofstede, 1980, p.19). Also "value systems are a core element of culture" (Hofstede, 2001, p.10).

Dimmock and Walker (2000) argue that the dominance of Western theories understates the influence of culture and values on a particular model of school leadership and management, and the successful implementation of it, and state that leadership styles predominantly found in schools in one country are consequences of the country's national culture and values: to what extent people in one country expect and accept that their leaders can be transformational or transactional, i.e. authoritative power is either equally or unequally distributed in society, depends much on their values and the culture of the country.

Power relations are by no means negligible when we discuss school leadership in relation to interpersonal relations between principals and other teachers, given that power is, as said by Hofstede (1980), unequally distributed within an organisation. A social psychologist, Mauk Mulder (1977) defines power: "the potential to determine or direct (to a certain extent) the behaviour of another person/other persons more so than the other way around" (p.90).

3. Power Distance in the International Context

In countries where power is commonly concentrated in the hands of few, inequalities in authoritative power within a school are often accepted and legitimised. Hofstede (1980; 1997) calls these countries high power distance countries; those countries where power is widely distributed and inequalities are treated as undesirable are called low power distance countries. Mulder (1977) defines power distance as "the degree of inequality in power between a less powerful Individual

(I) and a more powerful Other (O), in which I and O belong to the same (loosely or tightly knit) social system" (p.90).

As for power distance and principals' relationship with other teachers, Hallinger and Kantamara's (2003) research in Thailand, one of the highest power distance countries and a neighbour of Cambodia, concludes that in this country, people with lower social status do not ask any questions to those with higher status and accept any decisions made by more powerful others, given that asking questions implies disagreement with and impolite challenge to those with higher social status. This leads to the situation that on the one hand, principals "proceed with confidence that other teachers will listen with a polite ear to new proposals and feel some obligations to comply" (p.118) and on the other hand, other teachers refrain from contributing new ideas (Hallinger and Kantamara, 2003). Other literature on school leadership by Hallinger and Kantamara (2000) shows that the principals in Thailand take advantage of this patron-client relationship with other teachers when they seek any changes in their schools.

Patron-client relations are not limited only to the field of education and schools. Chang (2002), exploring Chinese immigrants' perceptions of their leaders, reveals the reciprocal bonds between these immigrants and their leaders. Chang (2002) notes that the leaders use their followers' loyalty towards them, which is deeply rooted in Chinese culture and values, in order to incorporate their followers, uphold mutual interests and maintain social control. In this Chinese immigrants' case, patron-client relationships are used as an instrument by the ruling elites (Chang 2002).

As these two examples show, some Asian countries have quite a different power distance from the West, but as Hofstede (1997) says, its diversity has been often slighted in development cooperation where two, and often more than two, countries meet:

> Usually there is ... a gap (between donor and receiving countries) on the dimension of power distance. Most donor countries score considerably lower on this dimension than the receivers, and the donors' representatives try to promote equality and democratic processes at the receiving end. Donors tend to be disturbed by the fact that they cannot avoid powerful local leaders who

> want to use at least part of the aid to maintain or increase existing inequalities. These leaders rarely have any commitment to the kind of democracy the donors have in mind. (p.219)

Notwithstanding these intercultural misunderstandings between donor and receiving countries, the organisational structures in receiving countries are more often than not blamed for failure of educational and school reform implementation (Hofstede, 1997). Tabulawa's (1997) study provides an example of this: in Botswana, in spite of an influx of technical assistance to change teachers' didactic classroom practices into child-centred pedagogic styles, the attempts made have not been successful, and teachers have been blamed for this lack of success (Tabulawa, 1997). However, Tabulawa (1997) argues that no pedagogical styles are value-neutral:

> [T]he banking education pedagogical style ... is a product of social, economic and historical forces, and ...has evolved over a long period of time. It now constitutes the teachers' and students' taken-for-granted classroom world and is firmly embedded in educational institutions to such an extent that it is now almost a tradition. (p.193)

Not only Tabulawa (1997) but also Dyer et al. (2004), based on their research on in-service teacher education in India, point out some weaknesses of "skills- and knowledge-based" (p.40) approaches, and conclude that these approaches' faulty implementation for the practical use in classrooms is, as often as not, because of an insufficient recognition of teachers' beliefs and attitudes entrenched in the countries' social and cultural contexts where these teachers work and have grown up.

The above arguments based on empirical evidence remind us of a cycle of cultural stabilisation by Hofstede (1980). Furthermore, different societies have different understandings of what it is to teach and learn, and the differences in teaching and learning affect those in organisational structures, leadership and management, and curriculum (Dimmock and Walker, 2000). That is to say, we have to consider not only a style of leadership and management but also other elements of school structures when we attempt to encapsulate relationships between national and organisational cultures.

4. Conceptual Framework

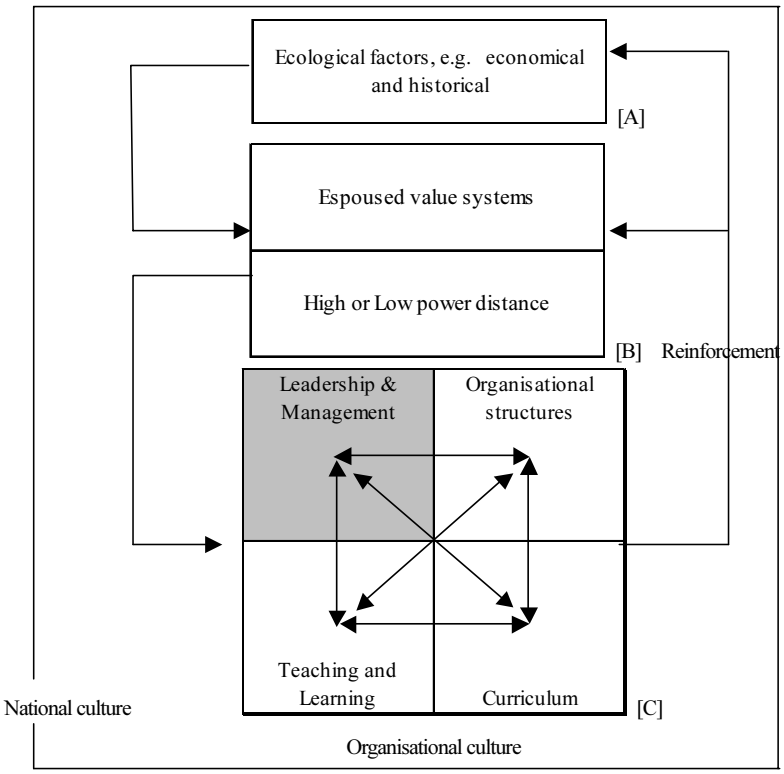


Figure 2. A cultural model for school leadership and management

Figure 2 was developed from Hofstede's (1980) cultural stabilisation and Dimmock and Walker's (2000) indication earlier. An arrow towards box B from another box A means that ecological factors, for example historical and economic, which differ from one country to another affect the creation of value systems of major groups of the population. Whether the country is classified as either a high or low power distance country is greatly determined by these espoused major value systems. For instance, a country where the majority of the population highly respect those with authority and wealth in overt and covert ways and accept the fact that authority and wealth are unequally distributed is categorised as a high power distance country.

An arrow towards the other box C from B means that organisational culture of the schools in one particular country is affected by the extent to which the

country is a high or low power distance country. Thus, an appropriate and widely accepted style of school leadership demonstrated by school principals in one country has to be considered in accordance with whether the country is a high or low power distance country. Furthermore, once the school structure and the way in which the schools function become stabilised, this structure reinforces the value systems, i.e. the societal norms, and ecological factors, both of which again lead to the maintenance of the school structure.

However, whether the country is classified as either a high or low power distance country is not a complete bipolarisation. Most of the countries are located somewhere between both ends of the power distance spectrum, partly depending on the extent to which people in the country value sources of power. Whether one person is classified as either lower-down or higher-up depends on the extent to which the person's institutional position, knowledge and access to information, experiences and tradition are valued (ActionAid, 2001). The differences in societal norms between high and low power distance countries are reflected in the appropriate and widely accepted styles of school leadership. In an extremely high power distance country, an ideal school principal is a generous autocrat. Conversely in an extremely low power distance country, an ideal school principal is one who demonstrates transformational leadership.

Although Hofstede (1980; 1997) focuses primarily on interpersonal relationships between more powerful and less powerful individuals in particular from the perspective of the latter, leadership and management within a school are also affected by the other three elements of the school structure as just briefly explained earlier. The six arrows crossing and directing to each element in box C in Figure 2 show this mutual relationship. For example, in some high power distance countries, teachers are expected to take all initiatives in their classrooms and they are leaders who transfer personal wisdom. Pupils often learn by heart and are rarely expected to question what teachers teach. According to Dimmock and Walker (2000), this teaching style is influenced by the purpose of the curriculum since the curriculum represents the form in which knowledge, skills and attitudes are arranged for delivery to the pupils. On the other hand, the purpose of the curriculum is affected by: the criteria and methods whereby

decisions on the curriculum are made; deployment of teachers; financial resources; and time allowed for a specific subject, i.e. organisational structures. Then, the degree of authoritarian-democracy displayed by the principals affects how these decisions are made, i.e. decision-making structures. Therefore, in order to encapsulate the appropriate styles of school leadership in particular society, the other three elements have to be considered in line with the country's societal norms.

Ⅳ. Methodology

The analysis of documentary evidence is the central method of this study. The documents used in this study are: Cambodian government's publications, the reports and studies by some major international agencies including non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Additionally, literature on the subject, but not necessarily on Cambodia will be used. Some of the government documents were produced for the purpose disseminating the government's current education policy and related reforms. Others were generated for the use of educational administrators. Thus, in this study, they are to be used in a different way from how they were originally intended, and it has to be borne in mind that these documents attempt to justify the government's policy and actions accompanied and the education system in reality may not be so prolific in its production of policy statements.

The analysis of these documents and reports begins with examining whether they take a view of what will happen and is happening to the day-to-day activities at school level, by showing some evidence not only from Cambodia itself but also from other developing countries. To achieve the overall aim of this study, three research questions below were identified.

- What are the challenges which schools in Cambodia face?
- How can school principals meet these challenges?
- What type of school leadership is required to meet these challenges in the context of Cambodia?

V. Analysis of Findings

1. Challenges of Cambodian Schools

This section looks at what is happening to day-to-day operations in schools in Cambodia in more detail, and how each of these operations can be connected to the four elements of schooling illustrated in Figure 2 will be explained.

Financing education at school level

Education at school level in Cambodia is largely financed by private contributions by households and communities, the share of which within the total amount of input to schools was approximately 60 per cent in 1997 whereas that of the government was less than 15 per cent, and enrolment at private schools is small as a proportion of the total (Bray, 1999). Also, apart from these private contributions, schools are traditionally taking advantages of Buddhist ceremonies and festivals held at the temples nearby in order to finance some of the school activities (Shimizu, 1997). The considerably high share of private contributions compensates for the shortage of the government's provision.

However, the Cambodian government now prohibits schools from receiving financial contributions including tuition fees directly from parents because the government considers that the existence of this type of private contributions prevents some parents from sending their children to schools (MoEYS, 2001). In return for this prohibition, the government introduced the school-operating budget system. Yet, as ADB (2004) assesses, the Education Finance Management Committee (EFMC) in Cambodia, which is in charge of releasing the budgets to schools, has had less success in securing timely release of the funds. Hanson (1986, as quoted in Davies, 1990, pp.27-28), writing on Venezuela, comments that this kind of unreliable release of the government funds is caused partly by the administrative procedures designed for use in ideal conditions where everything is predictable and controllable whereas in reality worn-out materials and frequent needs for building repairs are completely unexpected.

In addition to the unreliable release of the budgets, there is another difficulty which schools have to deal with. Pheng et al. (2001) point out that notwithstanding the autonomy given to schools by virtue of the school-operating budgets, schools

in Cambodia have almost no say in the budget preparation since the budgets provided by provincial offices of education in reality provide little else than the teachers' salaries. After the teachers' salaries are deducted from the budgets, there is little left for actual everyday school activities.

In regard to teachers' salaries, the government now plans to increase the share of performance-based payment within the total amount paid as teachers' salaries, expecting that this will eliminate the need for informal parental payments to teachers (RGoC, 2001). For introducing this plan, the government plans to spend more public expenditure on education. Yet, an increase of public expenditure on education primarily for an increase in the performance-based teacher salaries cannot resolve the difficulties of either little flexibility in the use of the school-operating budgets or the unreliable release of the budgets. These will remain as the challenges at school level.

Regulating education at school level

Regarding regulating education at school level, one of the foremost changes is to formalise double-shift schooling for the purpose of a more efficient use of classrooms and thus expanding access to schooling (RGoC, 2001). Currently approximately 65 per cent, i.e. more than 3,000 of the total number of primary schools in Cambodia operates on a double-shift while more than 100 schools operate a triple shift (RGoC, 2001). On the other hand, given the extensive migration to more urban areas, some of the schools in rural and remote areas are now stopping operating on a double-shift and starting to introduce multi-grade teaching.

Double-shift schooling is to increase the supply of school places while avoiding serious strain on the budget (Bray, 2000). Therefore, this system seems to be one of the last resorts to help Cambodia to move towards EFA by 2015. However, to make this system work successfully, each school has to carefully organise and arrange its classes and timetables, and staffing and managing are particularly challenging in overlapping shift systems (Bray, 2000). In Cambodia, arranging classrooms and timetables, and deploying teachers between shifts are now responsibilities of schools, particularly of principals (MoEYS, 2000a). Schools need to consider which teachers should teach in either the morning or the

afternoon, or even all day long, and whether the same teacher should teach different grades in the morning and the afternoon. In regard to deploying teachers on a double-shift, Morefield (2003a) argues that if teachers work in the morning or afternoon, this results in two or three completely different sets of teachers, which thus makes it difficult for principals to establish team building among teachers.

On the other hand, multi-grade teaching seems to be relevant for the reason that around 40 per cent of the schools in Cambodia do not offer the full grade range (ADB, 2004). These incomplete schools are usually located in rural and remote areas, and repetition and dropout rates of the incomplete schools are higher than those of the schools offering the full range of primary grades (RGoC, 2001). For example, the dropout rates in rural and remote areas in 1997 were 15.2 per cent and 29.2 per cent respectively while that of urban areas was 9.2 per cent (MoEYS, 2000f). In spite of some advantages such as expanding access to schooling of children who otherwise would remain left out of schooling, multi-grade teaching can have disadvantages especially in terms of the quality of education.

Aikman and Pridmore (2001), writing on Vietnam, say that "[f]or most teachers, posted to these [multi-grade] schools, their teaching task is a burden," (p.522, brackets added) in that firstly, since teachers' guides and pupils' textbooks provided by the central government are organised only for use in mono-grade classrooms, teachers in multi-grade schools have to rearrange these guides and textbooks for their classroom use, which is very demanding of teachers' time. Although these issues may not be necessarily the same in Cambodia, it is at least part of the teachers' workloads to organise the textbooks and curricula produced and distributed by the central ministry for practical use in multi-grade classrooms (RGoC, 2001).

Providing education at school level

Provision of education differs from the financing of education in that the former deals with provisioning and managing the education system while the latter relates to the sources of funding to maintain the system (Naidoo and Kong, 2003). The decentralisation policy on education in Cambodia has made the responsibility of provision of education shared with schools. However, ADB (2004) assesses

implementation of the policy and says that despite the fact that schools now annually receive the school-operating budgets and the allocations are to be adjusted to meet specific local circumstances, target setting and planning processes are still being driven by central allocation criteria with little room for flexibility at school level. ADB (2004) continues: "[t]his constitutes a potential constraint on accelerating decentralisation of education planning and management and greater dialogue between [schools] and communities on school performance oversight" (pp.23-24, brackets added).

It seems to be saying that more bottom-up approaches are required to contribute to the greater quality of education in terms of improving and accelerating the individual schools' accountability to the communities. Yet, the suggestion above does not consider the extent to which teachers and principals possess professional capacity for taking on the responsibility to stimulate dialogues with communities and parents. Without teachers with appropriate experience and ability in place, any educational system and reform are little more than "empty exercises" or "organograms decorating the walls of bureaucratic offices" (Sander, 2001, as cited in Naidoo and Kong, 2003, p.26). Regarding teachers' professional capacity, the number of qualified teachers in schools in remote areas still remains 71 per cent while according to the government's estimation, over 90 per cent of the teachers nationwide became academically qualified by 1999 (RGoC, 2001). Under such circumstances where there is a shortage of qualified teachers on the ground, particularly in remote areas, it is in doubt whether any system and reform for stimulating accountability to parents and communities could work successfully.

The discussions throughout this section revealed that there are many issues which are not found in the documents produced by the central government describing the broad national policy. Before moving on to the next discussion based on the issues raised here, it will be attempted to briefly describe how these issues are connected to each of the four elements of the school structure pictured in Figure 2.

As for organisational structure, schools in decentralised systems have more school-based management structures than those in centralised systems (Dimmock and Walker, 2000). Financial resources determine what schools can or cannot do,

and thus schools which raise revenue themselves such as those in Cambodia can also more or less control the distribution of these resources. For example, the rapid expansion of the number of pupils who enter schools requires individual schools to appeal to parents and communities as well as international NGOs and political parties to find any financial resources in order to build new buildings and equip schools with teaching and learning materials, which is often the principals' task (Morefield, 2003a). Therefore, according to Dimmock and Walker (2000), the decision-making processes and structures concerning the distribution of these resources reflect leadership and management styles of the schools.

Curriculum as well as teaching and learning are at the heart of schooling. One of the characteristics of any curricula is their goal which varies in line with how and by whom the curricula are developed (Dimmock and Walker, 2000). However, in Cambodia although MoEYS (2000a) states that schools and principals are responsible for developing curriculum plans, target setting and planning are still driven by the central ministry. Thus, individual schools and principals do not have enough capacity and flexibility to adapt the national curriculum to their own goals and targets. There may be little room for demonstrating leadership in this field.

Similarly, styles of teaching and learning affect, and are affected by, styles of leadership and management (Dimmock and Walker, 2000). O'Leary and Nee (2001) analyse pupils in Cambodia, and say that they are given little, if any, opportunity to think independently or use their own initiative: passive learning is predominantly seen in schools in this country. Beliefs about education are formative in the development of learning processes: listening to the teacher, waiting for the teacher to start the lesson and copying the exercises from the blackboard. Also formalising multi-grade schools may further this attribute and the teachers' didactic teaching styles.

2. Challenges of Cambodian School Principals

This section examines how school principals in Cambodia meet the challenges such as those discussed in the preceding section. After analysing the documents, culture and values which are widely seen in Cambodia and their historical

background are looked at.

School principals in Cambodia

As a result of implementation of decentralised education management, school principals in Cambodia have been given an important say on matters concerning school management such as preparing school development plans and managing school-operating budgets. Concerning the school development plans, the government (MoEYS, 2000a) says that the processes of developing the plans should be participatory, i.e. involving other teachers not only in their implementation but also in their planning processes:

> The old-way is one-person plans and the other group or departments implement the plan. This takes a lot of time, create[s] misunderstanding, generate[s] poor relationships, and result[s] in sub-standard quality. The modern way is the responsible group plans and implements their work together. More ideas are combined into a common objective. The same people or group plan the work, and implement their plan. Result is then acceptable as expected and of a good quality. (p.6, brackets added)

A reason why the government encourages principals to cooperate with other teachers is that changes in school structures towards better school performance require changes in management styles and collective will (MoEYS, 2000b). In order to prepare the school development plans which should be produced annually, principals have to list almost all the school activities planned within each school year, and then propose these planned activities to school support committees to obtain their consensus (MoEYS 2000a; 2000b).

However in reality, despite these rapid changes and increases in principals' workloads, principals in Cambodia have no training to become principals: before becoming the principals, they were in many cases assistant principals and appointed as principals by the ministry (Morefield, 2003a). Furthermore, Morefield (2004) argues as follows:

> Khmer [Cambodian] principals have little practice in building relationships with teachers, parents or especially children. Current relationships in education are hierarchical. The top people order the people below them, who order the

> people below them. It is the way the principals are treated by DOE [district office of education] and it is how they treat the teachers. Increasingly, however, they are hearing the message [from the central ministry] that they must change, that they must work to build relationships. But no one shows them how to do it. (Workshops section, ¶4, brackets added)

Involving other teachers not only in the implementation stages but also in the preparation processes, this style of school leadership and management is what the literature on school management and leadership reviewed earlier recommend as being effective and ideal. MoEYS (2000c) intends that this leadership and management style motivates other teachers to work together in order to achieve their shared and common objectives. Yet, the government documents describing the principals' new roles specially emphasise only an importance of collaboration with and participation of other teachers. They do not explain how principals can mobilise other teachers' will to achieve the targeted goals of the schools. In other words, the documents do not consider how other teachers react to this style of principal leadership and what kinds of interpersonal relationships the principals in Cambodia, in general, possess with other teachers.

In addition, the underrepresentation of female teachers in management in schools is another concern when principals attempt to stimulate other teachers' participation in decision-making. Davies (1992) notes that in decision-making positions in schools, female teachers are less influential than male teachers, and they are often assigned more private and caring tasks such as pupil welfare and school cleanliness while male teachers do more public work such as chairing meetings and making examination arrangements. In this regards, school principals in Cambodia need to pay attention to the possibility of this female underrepresentation especially given the decline in gender parity within the active teaching force in Cambodia (Global Campaign for Education, 2003).

Principals in Cambodia have now become required to commit themselves to pupils' learning in classrooms, its assessment and evaluations as well as to school administration (MoEYS, 2000d). In evaluations and assessment, they are required to show pupils' and schools' performance and progress with some clear indicators (MoEYS, 2000e). According to MoEYS (2000e), these indicators help principals to

understand how far their schools have progressed and have to go in order to achieve the set goals. As some of the reasons for this new task set to principals, MoEYS (2000d) says that pupil evaluations by school principals are for giving feedback to both other teachers and pupils, for modification of learning activities and for selection of pupils according to their needs. In order to realise this change, principals and other teachers have to share as much information of pupils' academic performance as possible, which is another demanding challenge for principals.

In this regard, Morefield (2004) notes that since principals in Cambodia have been accustomed to seeing themselves just as managers who are responsible for the operations of their schools such as worrying about crumbling buildings and filling in the reports for the ministry, they feel uncomfortable with the concept of leadership which requires them to do something about teaching and learning. Morefield (2003b) encapsulates this rapid change and increase in principals' workloads as follows:

> Things are changing very quickly for school principals in Cambodia. For many years after Pol Pot [the Khmer Rouge], the job of the principal was simply to manage, to worry about the buildings, resources etc. It was the teachers' job to worry about teaching and learning. Now, they are encouraged to reach out to the community and engage them in school life and to expand their role to include teacher supervision. They are being asked to reach out to parents and to become a leader for teaching and learning. This evolution of the job is very challenging for some. Few of them have role models of strong school principals, so it is hard for them to picture what this form of leadership actually looks like. (First section, ¶7, brackets added)

Culture and values of Cambodia

Although the documents analysed above assume that principals and other teachers cooperate with each other once the former exercise a certain style of leadership, the literature on culture and societal values of Cambodia analysed in the following part of this section shows that this cannot be easily realised. The literature will be examined from the perspective of the country's historical

background and its education system: this is because the development of a model for school leadership and management in Figure 2 shows what we can now see as the school structure is originally influenced by some ecological factors such as economic and historical background, but in turn the background was in the past reinforced by the education system of the country.

As for the hierarchically structured society in Cambodia, O'Leary and Nee (2001) say the following:

> In Cambodian society social stratification and differences in status are extremely important. Everyone knows, and needs to know, their place relative to that of others. This is exemplified through the everyday language people use to address each other which acknowledges their respective age and status. (p.48)

Similarly, Ovesen (n.d., as quoted in O'Leary and Nee, 2001) explains:

> The all-pervasive guiding principle for Khmer [Cambodian] social life is the notion of hierarchy. All social relations are hierarchically ordered. The hierarchy is primarily expressed in terms of age. An elder is a person who has authority through his/her higher social status. Such status is not exclusively a function of chronological age, but is determined as the sum of a number of dimensions including − apart from chronological age − gender, wealth, knowledge, reputation of the family, political position, employment, the character of the individual and religious piety. The social order is felt to depend upon everyone observing the status hierarchy and keeping his/her place in it (p.48, brackets added).

On the other hand, looking specifically at relationships between people's education levels and their social status, Robert (1993) notes that in Cambodia one's social class is defined by formal education, and given the fact that there are still few people with any appreciable level of formal education, only the very limited number of people with educational certificates do non-agricultural work such as running the machinery of business and working for the government, whereas large numbers of people remain farmers and simple workers. That is, the social structure of Cambodia having few people with a certain level of formal education contributes to people feeling that their social status is determined by employment, knowledge

and positions.

In this sense, following Hofstede's (1980) notion of power distance, Cambodia is classified as a high power distance country, i.e. a country where people accept the fact that power is unequally distributed in society. To understand why Cambodians accept the unequal distribution of power, respect social status and even accept such highly divided social stratification, the country's historical background has to be looked at. The historical background of the existing hierarchical structure in Cambodia goes back to the pre-colonial period:

> In respect of the present study, we need to keep in mind three central features of the pre colonial [prior to the 1860s] system. First, the individuals who constituted Khmer society—the king, his officials, the clergy, and the people of the villages—participated in the system through their involvement in a web of patronage and clientship. Survival at the bottom of the hierarchy was reliant on securing powerful patrons, while survival at the top depended on establishing a network of clients large enough to neutralize potential rivals. Second, the notion of mutual obligation did not exist. While those at the top governed, those at the bottom existed to be governed. The relationship between those with power and those over whom that power was exercised flowed in only one direction. The result was that power became an end itself: those with authority sought to become more powerful while having absolutely no obligation to better the lives of those on whom their authority had been established. The third central feature of the social system was its maintenance through the teaching of local monks. (Ayres, 2000, pp.11-12, brackets added)

The quotations above clearly show that a patron-client relationship has been embedded and cultivated in Cambodia since the pre-colonial period, and interpersonal relations between those higher-up and those lower-down in terms of authority and social status were one-sided dependencies. People were identified as either those who 'have' or those who 'do not have' according to their social status relative to others (Ayres, 2000).

With regard to education in the temple schools during the pre-colonial period, Dy (2004) says that education in the temple schools was operated in order to maintain the existing socio-cultural systems: this echoes the above quotation

from Ayres (2000). In the temple schools, pupils were taught by monks, i.e. their religious leaders (Dy, 2004). This made it possible for children to accept their teachers as essential "conduits" (p.14) in the support and maintenance of the social and cultural systems (Ayres, 2000). Further, a predominant teaching and learning style in these temple schools in pre-colonial Cambodia was copying the written characteristics, reading the Buddhist sacred texts and learning the texts by heart (Bilodeau, 1955, as quoted in Clayton, 1995, p.2). These didactic ways of teaching and learning are still widely seen in present-day schools in Cambodia.

Apart from the teaching and learning styles in the temple schools, the curriculum of instruction employed was also playing a significant role in maintaining the social system of reciprocal relationships between those with power and those with less power, and promoting the dependencies of the latter on the former (Ayres, 2000). Ayres (2000) also argues that in the education processes in the temple schools, the relationships of those higher-up with those lower-down were replaced with "the lop-sided friendship between a teacher and student" (p.14). Chandler (1998) comments that the reciprocal and patron-client relationships are still normative in Cambodia and the curricula introduced in schools emphasise the importance of the relationships.

Even during the French colonial period, education in the temple schools was more popular among people than French-sponsored education (Clayton, 1995; Ayres, 2000). Dy (2004) says that a reason why the French modern education system could not gain popularity among local people is because Cambodian people feared that the French modernity would lead to the end of their traditional culture and values inherited from their ancestors. The French governors underestimated the strength of this locally embedded social system and patron-client relationships (Ayres, 2000). Although the Khmer Rouge excesses disrupted the education system, the societal norms and value systems which took root and were embedded in this country were not completely destroyed. After the Khmer Rouge period, traditional monk teachers assisted children and other people to recreate the normality of everyday life once lost (Duggan, 1996).

As for the present-day social system in Cambodia, Turner (2002) claims that the system is still "the one-sided dependency relationship" (p. 361) and the

hierarchical personal relationships and patron-client relations embedded in Cambodia work against realising the predicted effects of people's participation in decision-making on any matter and making those with authority and power accountable to other people. Charya et al. (1993) analyse the present-day decision-making processes in villages in Cambodia, and comment that decisions are normally made only among community representatives, and other members of the communities are just provided with information rather than being allowed to involve in the decision-making processes. Similarly, but referring to the current movement towards decentralising education management in particular, Turner (2002) indicates that school principals are seen as community representatives in virtue of their societal position, levels of formal education and authority, and thus, people's participation depends much upon their leadership.

It could be argued that this attitude of principals has to be changed for other teachers to participate in both the implementation and planning of school activities as the government emphasises the importance of this. Yet, before discussing any leadership style appropriate to the schools in Cambodia, the country's highly hierarchical societal structure and values need to be carefully considered.

3. Cambodian School Leadership

Based on the culture and values in Cambodia explored in the preceding section, this section examines appropriate styles of leadership for schools in Cambodia. In countries such as Cambodia where the hierarchical social structure is widely seen and people accept the fact that authority and power are unequally distributed in society, the leadership style which the literature reviewed earlier suggests, transformational leadership, seems to be inappropriate given that this style of leadership assumes an equal relationship between principals and other teachers. On the other hand, another style of school leadership which is situated at the other end of the leadership spectrum, transactional leadership, cannot be recommended, either. This is because this style of leadership just maintains the status quo and thus, does not bring about any change in school management.

Before going into further description of more appropriate school leadership in the context of Cambodia, the discussions so far need to be synthesised. Firstly,

the value systems embedded and cultivated in this country are created from the country's historical background, and the education system itself plays a pivotal role in maintaining the hierarchical societal systems. Cambodia's societal norms and power concentrated national culture will constrain school principals from demonstrating fully collaborative styles of leadership which assume that leadership can be shared between principals and other teachers. Also considering the social norms of Cambodia, other teachers may not expect their principals to behave in a democratic way. They will accept principals' didactic ways as school leaders. Secondly, there is the matter of the structure of schools in Cambodia, where organisational culture has many constraints imposed on principals and other teachers to exercise their autonomy in decision-making on school matters. This limited flexibility in the ways in which the school structure works leads principals to show their leadership in less collaborative ways. This is because the limited financial resources, centrally driven curricula and didactic ways of teaching and learning leave little room for the principals to collaborate with other teachers and fully enjoy their autonomy.

In this sense, the school leadership styles which are most likely to be exercised by and appropriate to principals in Cambodia may be those whereby the principals still take the lead in decision-making and inform other teachers. However, at the same time and most importantly, principals need to make sure that other teachers understand that they have a right to know why they are expected to do something. Namely principals have to be aware that it is of importance that there is a consensus between them and other teachers about why they are doing it, and towards which goals the school is moving. Conversely, the worst scenario is that principals go straight into the tasks on which they make decisions without giving any explanation of the whys and the wherefores to other teachers.

The point now is how principals in Cambodia can obtain such styles of leadership. The examples from other countries below provide some useful guidelines. Writing on Hong Kong, Bodycott and Walker (2000) say that when a hierarchy among people such as that between principals and classroom teachers is obvious, small groups work better for people to contribute than the whole group, and subsequently the opinions are provided to the whole group. Bodycott and Walker (2000)

further state that these people prefer being called upon to give a response to participating and standing out above others in open and critical discussions: they respond more easily to factual-recall type queries and more willingly recount their own experience in narrative terms.

Thus, also in Cambodia having a hierarchical culture similar to Hong Kong, while taking the lead and informing other teachers, principals can consult other teachers in small and informal groups rather than in whole teacher meetings. This may make other teachers feel more comfortable to contribute their opinions. Also it will work successfully for principals to formally ask some specific teachers to give some comments and share their own experience in order to deal with the challenges and new tasks loaded onto them.

As an example of a principal training programme in other developing countries, in its national principal training programme, the government of Malawi designed one unit for school principals and some other senior staff to examine and evaluate their attitudes to and ways of interacting with other teachers (Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, n.d.). The government of Malawi (Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, n.d.) regards leadership which is shared and fulfilled by everyone in the school communities, i.e. transformational leadership, as effective leadership and suggests that principals delegate some tasks to others with the ultimate responsibility being retained by them. However, in evaluating this training programme, Kadyoma and Longden (2001) note that notwithstanding a number of improvements in principals' management knowledge and skills, they are still reluctant to share with other teachers some issues which they feel may undermine their authority. Principals in primary schools in Malawi hide some information from their staff if they think the information contradicts their practice. Kadyoma and Longden (2001) argue that we can espouse new attitudes, but cannot easily put these attitudes into practice.

Lessons learned from Malawi's case above are that delegating and letting others do some tasks, and allowing them to come to a decision might motivate some teachers only if successfully implemented. This implies that principals must be willing and classroom teachers must be prepared to take on new responsibilities: any change in attitudes and behaviour of both principals and other teachers

should receive special attention.

Although Morefield (2003a) proposes an example of a training programme for Cambodian school principals to expand their understanding of the leadership role, the programme will need reconsideration since the programme is only designed to provide principals with the opportunity to create leadership shared with other teachers and community members: this will meet some obstacles to implementation as seen in Malawi's case. In order for the leadership styles appropriate to principals in Cambodia suggested earlier to be realised, both principals and classroom teachers should be targeted at in any principal training programme. This will give school principals some opportunities to become aware of the values, beliefs and norms of other teachers who they work together with.

Principals in Cambodia need to acquire not only the managerial skills but also the necessary knowledge and skills for establishing team building within the schools. They need to understand that: other teachers do not necessarily expect for principals to entirely delegate some tasks; smaller groups will work better than whole group meetings for other teachers to contribute their opinions; and other teachers will feel easier to express their actual experience and share with others. Principal manuals and guidelines cannot provide these knowledge or skills, however. Principals can obtain these necessary knowledge and skills through actually communicating with other teachers.

Ⅵ. Reflections and Conclusion

In order for the schools to meet the challenges, the analysis of the documentary evidence showed that the Cambodian government required school principals to play a key role in changing the school management styles into more participatory styles. However, the exploration of the culture and values of Cambodia revealed that the highly structured social system of this country would prevent principals from exercising this leadership style, which the majority of the literature whose authors were from the West regarded as promoting effective and ideal leadership. Rather, classroom teachers in Cambodia will expect their principals to take the lead in decision-making and will not expect to be consulted. These reciprocal and patron-client relationships between those higher-up and lower-down in terms of

social status are rooted in the country's societal background and now part of the societal norms. Hence, the school leadership styles in Cambodia, in order for them to be put into practice, have to reflect these cultural values and societal norms.

Sayed (2004) directly phrases what was discussed throughout this study: "[n]ational policies upfront, this is what we want our education system to do." The central governments' underlying beliefs about teaching and learning, and other day-to-day operations at school level are not necessarily relevant to the realities on the ground. The lists of steps and measures found in the governments' documents are manifest in theory, but not always pertinent in reality. Especially in developing countries such as Cambodia where the influences of international agencies are clearly seen on the national policies on education and these influences are unavoidable, the explicit and hidden differences which the national policies bring may challenge the attitudes and behaviour of teachers in schools who are actually implementing the national education policies. Enough and careful attention has to be paid to the cultural and social contexts of each country before trying to find any cause of faulty implementation in the country. Therefore, the end-result of this study is an argument for the need for and importance of the adaptation of the broad policies to the local contexts, in order to lead educational changes and put them into practice.

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