Strengthening a culture of collaboration within the organization to improve the quality of education.

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Abstract

This academic article presents an in-depth analysis and synthesis of a conceptual framework for fostering a collaborative organizational culture to improve the quality of education, integrating organizational behavior theory, open systems theory, transformational leadership theory, and Buddhist management principles. The study found that the current educational administration context faces limitations of the traditional bureaucratic structure, which emphasizes hierarchical command, leading to fragmented work, personality conflicts, and a lack of unity in goals. The transition to a high-performing educational institution requires the cultivation of a collaborative work culture through three levels: (1) the individual level, by modifying attitudes, values, and intrinsic motivation; (2) the group level, by developing listening leadership, open communication, collaborative decision-making, and constructive conflict management; and (3) the organizational level, by adjusting flexible structures, human resource policies that promote teamwork, and applying Buddhist principles such as the Four Noble Truths, the Four Noble Truths, common understanding, the Six Principles of Harmony, and reconciliation to reduce ego and create shared consciousness. Driving a collaborative work culture through professional learning communities (PLCs) and the 3 C-Educational Culture Model will be a crucial foundation for improving the quality of learning management and student competencies. And the sustainability of educational institutions in the era of change.

Keywords: Organizational culture, Collaboration, Educational quality development, Organizational behavior, Buddhist management.

Introduction

The rapid changes in global society, including the digital economy, information technology innovations, and demographic structural challenges, have had a profound impact on education systems worldwide, including in Thailand. Educational institutions no longer exist in isolation but must adapt to an open system that connects with the needs of the community, society, and the future labor market. Therefore, developing the quality of education in the modern era cannot be limited to simply transmitting knowledge from textbooks or evaluating results through traditional quantitative indicators. Instead, it must focus on creating innovative learning, developing learners' competencies in all dimensions, and fostering lifelong learning skills. This complex task is beyond the capabilities of any single teacher or administrator to accomplish alone.

In the era of the knowledge-based economy and rapid technological advancements, educational organizations face significant challenges in adapting to enhance the quality of student learning. School administration can no longer operate solely through traditional models focused on adhering to external regulations or formal hierarchical commands. Instead, it must rely on internal driving forces stemming from the potential, creativity, and genuine collaboration of all teachers and educational personnel. Educational institutions are considered " service organizations" with the primary mission of creating and delivering educational services to students, parents, and the community—values that society desires. However, in practice, educational administration often faces misunderstandings and rifts in relationships among personnel because educational institutions are centers of diverse individuals in terms of age, qualifications, personality, experience, senses, and individual values. When these diverse individuals have to work together under the pressure of workloads, performance evaluations, and educational competition, a lack of strong mechanisms for fostering understanding inevitably leads to interactive conflict, the silo effect, individualistic work, and resistance to organizational change.

bureaucratic organizational structures , emphasizing vertical relationships, strict chains of command, and clearly defined departmental responsibilities, while offering advantages in terms of order and control, often create significant obstacles to innovation and the development of educational quality. Such structures lead to slow communication, a lack of decision-making authority among personnel, and a "it's not my job" attitude. Past attempts to address these issues have typically focused on restructuring the organizational chart, improving procedures, or enhancing performance evaluation measures, which only address external phenomena and fail to tackle the root causes of human behavior. What educational organizations need today is the development of a “ collaborative organizational culture ,” which refers to shared values, beliefs, atmosphere, and social norms among members of the educational institution that create opportunities for knowledge exchange, mutual support, participatory decision-making, and teamwork to achieve the educational vision. This culture is like a “ central nervous system ” that connects the structure, innovation, and human resources to work together in a unified manner.

This academic article was prepared to answer three important questions : (1) What are the systemic characteristics and objectives of educational organizations? (2) How can the analysis of organizational behavior at three levels (individual, group, and organizational) be

applied to create collaboration? and (3) How can the integration of Buddhist management principles and educational administration strategies foster a collaborative organizational culture to sustainably develop the quality of education? The objective is to synthesize theoretical knowledge and propose an applied model for school administrators. This study synthesizes knowledge and proposes guidelines for fostering a collaborative organizational culture to improve educational quality. It applies organizational theory and organizational behavior frameworks, combined with Buddhist management principles , to provide guidance for administrators and educational personnel in creating a work environment conducive to sustainable educational quality development.

Research Objectives

1. Basic structure and concepts of educational organizations.
2. Three-level organizational behavior analysis for promoting collaboration.
3. Applying Buddhist management principles to shape organizational culture.

Literature Review

1. Basic structure and concepts of educational organizations.

Characteristics of educational organizations.

An organization refers to a systematically established social unit, a group of individuals who coordinate activities and carry out shared tasks under a clearly defined structure, chain of command, and goals. In the educational context, educational institutions differ from typical business organizations by being classified as " service organizations ," where their primary output is not in the form of tangible objects, but rather " behavioral, intellectual, and moral changes in learners. " This is a product that cannot be immediately seen or measured in monetary value.

Furthermore, educational institutions are considered " secondary organizations ," meaning they are formally established with laws, regulations, and a social contract governing the relationships among members to ensure stable and fair operations. At the same time, educational institutions operate as an " open system " with a dynamic relationship to the external environment, such as ministry policies, the community, parents, the economic situation, and technology. Their work processes consist of inputs, a transformation process , outputs , and a feedback mechanism.

The three missions of educational organizations.

Successful school administration requires striking a balance between the organization's three core objectives, which are closely interconnected as shown in the following table.

Objective Dimension	Theoretical essence	Applications in educational administration.	Impact on work culture.
1. Creating values that society desires. (Social Value Creation)	Organizations exist to meet the needs and create benefits for society as a whole.	To deliver quality learning experiences, develop learners' competencies, and build ethical resilience in youth.	Creating a shared purpose so that teachers see the value in teaching as more than just a routine task.

Objective Dimension	Theoretical essence	Applications in educational administration.	Impact on work culture.
2. Responding to member needs (Member Satisfaction)	Organizations must look after the well-being, psychological needs, and advancement of their people.	Develop welfare benefits, a safe work environment, recognition and honor, and career advancement paths.	This fosters organizational commitment and reduces turnover or burnout rates.
3. Organizational Survival & Growth	Organizations must be able to adapt, remain stable, and continuously develop their capabilities.	Efficient resource management, developing innovative learning methods, and building collaborative networks with the community.	Creating a culture of learning and adaptability (Adaptive Culture).

Paradigm shift from vertical to horizontal structure.

Creating a collaborative culture calls for a paradigm shift from a vertical hierarchical structure, emphasizing control, authority, and division of labor, to a horizontal collaborative structure that prioritizes flexibility, cross -functional teams , and teacher empowerment. This shift will reduce fear of communication, open up opportunities for exchanging ideas, and encourage teachers to collaboratively design learning experiences that are responsive to learners in a timely manner.

2. Three-level organizational behavior analysis for promoting collaboration.

Organizational Behavior (OB) is an interdisciplinary field that applies knowledge from psychology, sociology, social psychology, anthropology, and political science to understand, explain, predict, and control human behavior in organizations. Creating a collaborative work culture requires analysis and implementation through three coordinated levels:

Individual Level Behavior

Individual behavior is the most fundamental foundation of an organization. Every human being is unique (individual differences) resulting from genetics, learning, and social conditioning. Promoting a collaborative work culture at the individual level requires focusing on analyzing and developing the following factors:

Changing Attitudes and Values : A positive attitude towards teamwork and the value of interdependence are key. Organizations must promote organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) , which is the behavior of employees willingly helping others and the organization without expecting anything in return for their original duties.

Intrinsic Motivation : Relying solely on extrinsic motivation, such as salary or position, is insufficient for building lasting collaboration. Organizations must apply motivational theories (such as Herzberg 's Two-Factor Theory or Self-Determination Theory) that emphasize fostering a sense of autonomy in the workplace, professional expertise, and a perceived value of the work performed.

Developing Perception and Learning : Perceptual biases , such as judging based on first impressions or generalizing, are often the root cause of conflict. Personnel need training in open listening skills and empathy .

Group Level Behavior

Groups serve as a bridge between individuals and organizations. Most work in educational institutions takes place within group contexts, such as subject groups, grade-level teams, or operational committees. Promoting collaboration at the group level requires focusing on four key factors:

1. Transformational Leadership : Educational leaders must shift their role from commander to inspirer and facilitator, stimulating creativity , acknowledging individual differences, and setting a positive example for collaboration.

2. Open Communication : Two - way communication that allows members to express their opinions, concerns, and suggestions without fear of punishment creates "psychological safety," a necessary condition for innovation.

3. Participative Decision Making: Decision-making based on consensus and agreement fosters a sense of ownership of policies and projects, leading to smoother implementation.

4. Constructive Conflict Management : Task conflicts are normal and can lead to new ideas if the group can prevent them from escalating into relationship conflicts by using the principle of win-win negotiations.

Organizational System Level Behavior

The overall structure and systems of an organization frame the behavior of its members. Creating a collaborative work culture at the organizational level requires improving three fundamental infrastructure areas.

Design : Reduces complex processes, creates a flatter organizational structure , and supports the formation of task forces or cross-functional innovation teams.

Collaborative HRM Policies: Adjust the recruitment, selection, performance evaluation, and reward systems by shifting from competitive individual performance evaluations to team-based evaluations and emphasizing helpfulness and assisting others.

Information Systems and Knowledge Management (KM & IT Infrastructure): Providing technology and digital platforms that enable teachers to easily and quickly share lesson plans, learning materials, and student information without barriers between subject areas.

3. Applying Buddhist management principles to shape organizational culture.

Educational organizational management in the Thai social context can integrate Buddhist principles, representing intellectual and spiritual wisdom, with Western organizational theories to foster ethical awareness, reduce ego, and cultivate a collaborative work culture in a tangible way, as follows:

Four Noble Truths and Driving Awareness in Work

Four Paths to Success are principles for success in work, consisting of (1) Chanda, which is love, satisfaction, and a love for the work of studying, leading to working together with the heart, not just doing one's duty; (2) Viriya, which is perseverance, determination, and not giving up in the face of obstacles and conflicts; (3) Citta, which is intention, attentiveness, and dedication to the team's goals; and (4) Vimamsa, which is the use of wisdom to reflect, examine, and evaluate work rationally for continuous improvement.

The Four Noble Truths and the Systemic Approach to Organizational Problem Solving

Four Noble Truths provide a scientific and systematic framework for analytical and problem-solving. It can be applied to organizational management as follows:

Problem Identification: Recognizing and accepting the problems occurring in the educational institution, such as declining academic achievement or conflicts among teachers.

Root Cause Analysis (Samudaya): Identifying the true cause of a problem in depth, without focusing only on external phenomena. For example, discovering that the problem stems from a failed communication system or a lack of trust.

Nirodha (Goal Formulation): Clearly define the goals and the desired outcome that you both want to achieve.

Strategic Plan Implementation: Develop a strategic plan and implement it step-by-step, relying on the cooperation of all members of the organization.

The principle of common understanding, the six principles of harmonious conduct , and reconciliation.

A key factor in reducing attitudinal conflict is the principle of "Ditthi Samanyuta," which means aligning opinions, values, and ideologies to achieve common educational goals. This should be coupled with the practice of the Six Principles of Remembrance (Saraniya Dhamma 6), which emphasizes loving-kindness in physical actions, verbal actions, and mental actions; sharing; maintaining ethical conduct; and having shared views. This leads to a state of harmony where members of the educational institution work together with love, respect, and unity.

Buddhist Leadership and the Art of Communication: Four Characteristics

Buddhist educators must position themselves as "good friends" and apply four aspects of communication skills to motivate their personnel:

Clarifying (clearly): Explaining goals, policies, and missions in a clear, transparent, and unambiguous manner.

Motivation: To invite agreement and motivate someone to willingly cooperate and perform the work.

Samuttechana (Braveness): To inspire courage, confidence in one's own potential, and readiness to face challenges.

Sampahangsana (cheerful): Create a relaxed, cheerful, happy, and vibrant work atmosphere.

Conceptual Framework

By synthesizing organizational behavior theory, open systems theory, leadership, and Buddhist management principles, an integrated knowledge framework, the " 3 C-Educational Culture Model," can be developed . This model can be used to foster a collaborative organizational culture to improve the quality of education, as shown in the following structure.

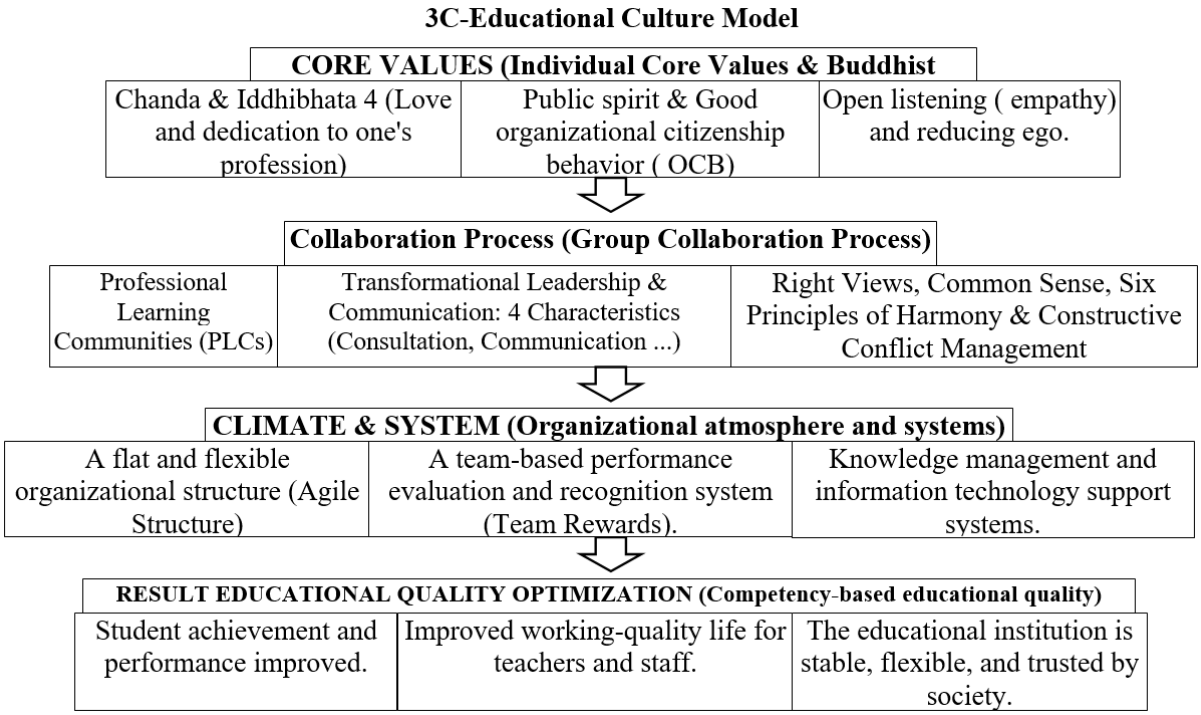


Fig.1 The 3C-Educational Culture Model can be briefly

From Figure 1, the 3C-Educational Culture Model can be briefly explained as follows: The 3C Educational Culture Model is a conceptual framework for educational development that integrates three levels. It begins with Core Values at the individual level, emphasizing Buddhist principles and open-minded listening. This continues to the Collaboration Process at the group level, utilizing Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) , transformational leadership, and the principles of good conduct for collaborative work. Finally, it contributes to creating a Climate & System at the organizational level with an agile structure that supports knowledge management . The overall goal of this process is to enhance educational quality, positively impacting student competencies, the quality of working life for personnel, and public trust in the educational institution.

Research Methodology

This academic article presents an in-depth analysis and synthesis of a conceptual framework for fostering a collaborative organizational culture to improve the quality of education. The study synthesizes knowledge from organizational behavior theory, open systems theory, transformational leadership theory, and Buddhist management principles.

The study focuses on the basic structure and concepts of educational organizations, the three-level organizational behavior analysis for promoting collaboration, the application of Buddhist management principles to shape organizational culture, and strategies and processes for concrete implementation in educational institutions.

The analysis is organized into three coordinated levels of organizational behavior: the individual level, the group level, and the organizational system level. At the individual level, the study considers changing attitudes and values, intrinsic motivation, and developing perception and learning. At the group level, the study considers transformational leadership,

open communication, participative decision making, and constructive conflict management. At the organizational system level, the study considers organizational design, collaborative HRM policies, and information systems and knowledge management (KM & IT Infrastructure).

The study also integrates Buddhist management principles with Western organizational theories to foster ethical awareness, reduce ego, and cultivate a collaborative work culture. The principles considered include the Four Paths to Success, the Four Noble Truths, the principle of common understanding, the Six Principles of Remembrance (Saraniya Dhamma 6), and Buddhist leadership and communication.

The analysis further considers strategies and processes for concrete implementation in educational institutions through three phases: Phase 1: Awareness and Preparation (Unfreezing Stage), Phase 2: Creating Mechanisms and Developing Skills (Moving/Changing Stage), and Phase 3: Cultivating and Strengthening (Refreezing Stage). Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are considered as a key driving mechanism for transforming the work culture in educational institutions.

The results of the analysis and synthesis are used to develop an integrated knowledge framework, the “3 C-Educational Culture Model,” which integrates three levels: Core Values at the individual level, Collaboration Process at the group level, and Climate & System at the organizational level. The overall goal of this process is to enhance educational quality, positively impacting student competencies, the quality of working life for personnel, and public trust in the educational institution.

Research Results

The results of the analysis and synthesis of concepts related to fostering a collaborative organizational culture to improve the quality of education can be presented according to the three main objectives as follows:

Objective 1. The results showed that the basic structure and concepts of educational organizations consist of characteristics of educational organizations, the three missions of educational organizations, and a paradigm shift from vertical to horizontal structure.

Characteristics of educational organizations.

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Objective 2. The results showed that organizational behavior analysis for promoting collaboration consists of three coordinated levels: individual level behavior, group level behavior, and organizational system level behavior.

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Objective 3. The results showed that the application of Buddhist management principles, together with strategies and processes for concrete implementation, can be used to shape a collaborative organizational culture.

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Discussions

Strategies and processes for concrete implementation in educational institutions.

Changing organizational culture is not an overnight event; it requires a step-by-step planning and strategic process, as detailed in the following change process table.

Driving range	Key measures and activities.	Support mechanism	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
Phase 1: Awareness and Preparation (Unfreezing Stage)	• Communicate the vision and the need for change. • Facilitate meaningful dialogue to listen to concerns. • Review and highlight the limitations of the traditional culture.	Management team and change agents .	Employee awareness of organizational goals and the level of openness to change.
Phase 2: Creating Mechanisms and Developing Skills (Moving/Changing Stage)	• Establish professional learning communities (PLCs). • Develop teamwork, communication, and coaching skills. • Improve the work structure and decentralize decision-making.	Knowledge management platform (KM Platform) tools and supporting budget.	PLC groups formed and the frequency of cross-departmental knowledge exchange.
Phase 3: Cultivating and Strengthening (Refreezing Stage)	• Improve the performance evaluation system to focus on team performance. • Hold an awards ceremony to recognize and honor outstanding teams. • Extract lessons learned from successes and disseminate best practices.	HR policies and the recording of learning innovation databases.	Increased organizational satisfaction index and improved student academic achievement.

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) as a key driving mechanism.

Learning Communities (PLCs) are a highly effective, tangible tool for transforming the work culture in educational institutions. A PLC is not merely a formal meeting process, but a continuous collaborative process among teachers and staff to exchange knowledge, analyze student problems, jointly design lesson plans, observe teaching (open classes) , and reflect on lessons learned for continuous improvement. The PLC process helps break down barriers to conflict, build trust, and transform teachers' professional lives from working in isolation to becoming " co-learners. "

Knowledge from Research

The synthesis of organizational behavior theory, open systems theory, transformational leadership theory, and Buddhist management principles leads to the development of the **3 C-Educational Culture Model** as an integrated framework for fostering a collaborative organizational culture to improve the quality of education.

The 3C Educational Culture Model is a conceptual framework for educational development that integrates three levels. It begins with **Core Values** at the individual level, emphasizing Buddhist principles and open-minded listening. This continues to the **Collaboration Process** at the group level, utilizing Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) , transformational leadership, and the principles of good conduct for collaborative work. Finally, it contributes to creating a **Climate & System** at the organizational level with an agile structure that supports knowledge management . The overall goal of this process is to enhance educational quality, positively impacting student competencies, the quality of working life for personnel, and public trust in the educational institution.

The knowledge obtained from the synthesis can be summarized through three interconnected components:

1. Core Values: Individual Level

The foundation of collaborative organizational culture begins with individual personnel. Teachers, administrators, and educational personnel need to develop positive attitudes toward teamwork, shared values, intrinsic motivation, open-minded listening, empathy, and willingness to work for common educational goals. Buddhist principles provide an ethical foundation that helps personnel reduce ego, develop responsibility, and recognize the value of collaborative work.

2. Collaboration Process: Group Level

Individual values are transformed into collective action through collaborative processes. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) serve as a central mechanism for teachers and administrators to exchange knowledge, collaboratively solve problems, reflect on practice, and improve teaching and learning. Transformational leadership, open communication, participative decision making, constructive conflict management, and Buddhist principles of harmonious conduct strengthen trust and psychological safety within the group.

3. Climate & System: Organizational Level

Sustainable collaboration requires organizational structures and systems that support collaborative behavior. Educational institutions need flexible organizational structures, collaborative human resource management policies, knowledge management systems, digital platforms, team-based evaluation mechanisms, and organizational policies that recognize and reinforce collaborative practices.

Educational Quality

The integration of Core Values, Collaboration Process, and Climate & System creates a collaborative organizational culture that contributes to improved educational quality. The expected outcomes include improved student competencies, enhanced quality of working life among educational personnel, increased organizational adaptability, continuous professional learning, and greater public trust in educational institutions.

Therefore, the knowledge derived from this article can be summarized as:
Core Values (Individual Level)
Collaboration Process (Group Level)
Climate & System (Organizational Level)
Collaborative Organizational Culture
Educational Quality
Student Competencies + Quality of Working Life + Public Trust

Conclusion

The development of a collaborative organizational culture is an essential mechanism for improving educational quality in the context of rapid social, technological, and economic change. Educational institutions cannot achieve sustainable development through hierarchical command structures, individual work, or external performance measures alone. Instead, they require a work culture in which administrators, teachers, and educational personnel share common values, communicate openly, participate in decision-making, exchange knowledge, and assume collective responsibility for student learning.

The analysis of organizational behavior at three levels demonstrates that collaboration must begin with the individual level through positive attitudes, intrinsic motivation, open-mindedness, empathy, and shared values. At the group level, transformational leadership, open communication, participative decision-making, constructive conflict management, and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) provide mechanisms for transforming individual potential into collective organizational capacity. At the organizational level, flexible structures, collaborative human resource management policies, knowledge management systems, and supportive technologies are required to sustain collaborative behavior.

The integration of Buddhist management principles further strengthens the ethical and relational foundations of collaboration. The Four Paths to Success, the Four Noble Truths, common understanding, the Six Principles of Remembrance, reconciliation, and Buddhist communication principles provide practical guidance for reducing ego, resolving conflict, developing mutual respect, and creating shared consciousness among organizational members.

The synthesis leads to the 3 C-Educational Culture Model, consisting of Core Values, Collaboration Process, and Climate & System. These three components operate systematically from the individual level to the group and organizational levels. When integrated effectively, they create a collaborative organizational culture that supports student competency development, personnel quality of working life, organizational adaptability, and public trust.

Therefore, educational quality development should not be viewed merely as the improvement of curricula, teaching techniques, or assessment systems. Sustainable educational quality depends fundamentally on the development of organizational culture. When collaboration becomes a shared value and an everyday organizational practice, educational institutions can become learning organizations capable of responding effectively to change and continuously improving the quality of education.

Suggestions

Changing organizational culture is not an overnight event; it requires a step-by-step planning and strategic process, as detailed in the following change process table.

Phase 1: Awareness and Preparation (Unfreezing Stage)

1. Communicate the vision and the need for change.
2. Facilitate meaningful dialogue to listen to concerns.
3. Review and highlight the limitations of the traditional culture.

Management team and change agents .

Employee awareness of organizational goals and the level of openness to change.

Phase 2: Creating Mechanisms and Developing Skills (Moving/Changing Stage)

1. Establish professional learning communities (PLCs).
2. Develop teamwork, communication, and coaching skills.
3. Improve the work structure and decentralize decision-making.

Knowledge management platform (KM Platform) tools and supporting budget.

PLC groups formed and the frequency of cross-departmental knowledge exchange.

Phase 3: Cultivating and Strengthening (Refreezing Stage)

1. Improve the performance evaluation system to focus on team performance.
2. Hold an awards ceremony to recognize and honor outstanding teams.
3. Extract lessons learned from successes and disseminate best practices.

HR policies and the recording of learning innovation databases.

Increased organizational satisfaction index and improved student academic achievement.

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) as a key driving mechanism.

Learning Communities (PLCs) are a highly effective, tangible tool for transforming the work culture in educational institutions. A PLC is not merely a formal meeting process, but a continuous collaborative process among teachers and staff to exchange knowledge, analyze student problems, jointly design lesson plans, observe teaching (open classes) , and reflect on lessons learned for continuous improvement. The PLC process helps break down barriers to conflict, build trust, and transform teachers' professional lives from working in isolation to becoming " co-learners.

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