

Thepmondhri et al., 2018

Volume 4 Issue 2, pp. 619-638

Date of Publication: 3rd August 2018

DOI-<https://dx.doi.org/10.20319/pijss.2018.42.619638>

This paper can be cited as: Thepmondhri, R., Chuo-Chun, H., & Chih-Wen, F. (2018). Actors and Networking on Tvet Qa System of Thailand: A Study on the Implementation and Its Problems. PEOPLE: International Journal of Social Sciences, 4(2), 619-638.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

ACTORS AND NETWORKING ON TVET QA SYSTEM OF THAILAND: A STUDY ON THE IMPLEMENTATION AND ITS PROBLEMS

Rangsan Thepmondhri

Hua Shih College of Education, National Dong Hwa University, Hualien, Taiwan
rangsan_thepmondhri@hotmail.com

Hsieh Chuo-Chun

Department of Education and Learning Technology, National Tsing Hua University, Hsinchu, Taiwan
cc.hsieh@gapp.nthu.edu.tw

Fan Chih-Wen

Hua Shih College of Education, National Dong Hwa University, Hualien, Taiwan
fun5244@gms.ndhu.edu.tw

Abstract

This research was conducted to study the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Quality Assurance (QA) system in Thailand, its implementation, and its problems from 2000-2015 focusing primarily on the actors and their networking. Interviews were conducted with a purposeful sampling of participants who were from both the Office of the Vocational Education Commission (OVEC) and the colleges located in different regions of Thailand. Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) Framework was used as a theoretical reference. The research found that internal TVET QA board committee of the OVEC and the external TVET QA board committee of the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA) were the main policy actors. All actions and contributions of the OVEC and the ONESQA officials and staff, including

internal and external assessors, were recognized as a minor role comparing to those board committees of the OVEC and the ONESQA and people at the colleges. At the colleges, administrators and teachers were expected to implement TVET QA. However, their exact roles and duties were not well defined. Networking among the OVEC, the ONESQA, the colleges, and other supporting personnel was limited and focused solely on the assessment. Implementation of the TVET QA system was accepted as a viable means of quality development. However, there was speculation that the cost of implementing the system outweighed the benefits of it. There was concern over the absence of individual or institutional benefits. However, these concerns were not perceived as obstructive or problematic to the implementation of the TVET QA system. The implementation of the TVET QA system could have been greatly improved if the mechanisms by which information was shared, communication, and networking between actors were made more efficient.

Keywords

Technical and Vocational Education and Training; Quality Assurance; Quality Assessment; Quality Development

1. Introduction

Educational reform in Thailand came in 1999 with the passing of the National Education Act 1999 promulgated as the first law of Thailand addressing the needs, importance, and demand for a Quality Assurance (QA) system at all levels of education including technical and vocational education and training (TVET). The Office of the Vocational Education Commission (OVEC) was responsible to implement the government's vision of quality TVET (Ministry of Education [MOE], 2003). The TVET QA system started in the year 2000 and continued until 2015 and was operated on a 5-year cycle. 2000-2005 was the first round, followed by 2006-2010, and 2011-2015 respectively. Each cycle of the TVET QA system required TVET colleges, hereafter referred to as “the college” to undergo an assessment known as an “external assessment” conducted by the Office for National Educational Standards and Quality Assurance (ONESQA) once within each 5 years period. Furthermore, the colleges must partake in another assessment once within every 3 years called “internal assessment” that was conducted by the OVEC (MOE, 2003). Following its inception, the implementation of the TVET QA system in 2000 was designed with the expectation of improving TVET to better develop the manpower of Thailand.

The implementation of Thai TVET QA could still be said to be struggling in terms of what has and has not been achieved so far. It has been noted by the Office of the National

Economic and Social Development Board (2007) that “It is imperative Thailand produce a workforce, especially personnel with vocational training, in order to meet the demand and increase the country’s competitive capacity (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board [ONESD], 2007, Situation of the Country, para. 8). The 10th and 11th National Plans for Social and Economic Development (covering the periods of 2007-2011 and 2012-2016 respectively) also proposed suggestions for ensuring the quota of qualified TVET graduates (ONESD, 2007, 2012). The internal TVET QA system was managed by the OVEC and the external TVET QA system was managed by the ONESQA and has been performed since the enactment of the national education act in 2000. The mechanism for the internal and external assessments were expected for the development of TVET quality. However, it was found that since the implementation of the TVET QA in 2000 to 2015, there were many problems that existed. The implementation of the internal and external TVET QA was criticized. Private sectors were concerned with the quality of manpower entering to labour markets. The problems came that the National Reform Council of Thailand officially informed the MOE about the problems plaguing the QA system. There were contradictions between the internal and the external QA systems regarding the participation/involvement of educational institutions and people employed therein. There were also budget difficulties and problems with the assessment method. The quality of assessors and the assessment criteria/indicators, including the assessment process, were troublesome as well. The assessment strategy, implementation plan, and the accountability of the QA system were the most significant problems (National Reform Council [NRC], 2016). Therefore, in 2016 and 2017 a new TVET QA system was considered followed by the abolishment of assessments these years. In 2018, the ONESQA has announced the selection of universities to work as the ONESQA’s network in order to facilitate the external assessment activities (Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment [ONESQA], 2018). This network was expected to strengthen the cooperation, connection, and mutual understanding between educational institutions, including the colleges, and the ONESQA.

In exploring the phenomena on the Thai TVET QA system since its beginning in 2000 till the complete recent cycle of assessment in 2015, it was significant to study the actors and their networks on TVET QA system and implementation. The present research to ask who the actors were, and how they networked, benefited, sanctioned, and were affected by the consequences of

their actions became the topic of exploration. The possible development of the Thai TVET QA system by improving and promoting the TVET QA implementation was expected.

2. Research Method

This research was conducted in line with the qualitative research method. The interview was conducted by the purposeful sampling with homogeneity of 40 participants responsible and involved in TVET QA system and implementation covering policy bodies, people at the colleges located nationwide, including internal and external assessors. Focus group discussion by the participants of 9 OVEC's officials was conducted. The archival data on the laws and regulations and official and legal documents were studied and triangulated. Coding was given to the participants as Internal TVET QA board committee (Inboard 1, Inboard 2), external TVET QA board committee (Exboard 1), high official (High 1, High 2), educator (Edu 1-3), supervisor (Sup 1, Sup 2), policy and planning analyst (Pol 1, Pol 2), internal assessor (Inass 1-8), external assessor (Exass 1-9), director and deputy director (Admin 1-10), and chief of QA office of the college (Chief 1-10). There were totally 49 participants for both the interviews and the focus group discussion.

3. Theoretical Framework

The Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) Framework developed by Ostrom (2005) was used as the theoretical framework for this research. The position, boundary, and aggregation rules provided who the people were on TVET QA and how their characteristics and actions were. Information rules related to networking gave what information available for working on TVET QA including the channels of communication and its frequency and accuracy needed for decision making. The payoff rules were used to analyze the actors by comparing the costs and the benefits of the TVET QA implementation. This included rewards or sanctions for working leading to the consequences for the action outcomes.

4. Actors on TVET QA System and Its Problems

A look at the implementation of TVET QA revealed the unsatisfactory record of achievement in this area, specifically in the area of manpower development. There were shortages in both the quality and quantity of manpower according to the reports from the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board (2007, 2012). It bore noting that QA and quality improvement were different, but connected approaches (Cuttance, 1997) with QA

representing a system for design, where quality improvement was action-oriented and was initiated by individual educational institutions (Mukhopadhyay, 2005). The alternative was maintaining the status quo, where there were often confusing assertions made and conflicts between those in charge of policy-making, those implementing TVET QA in the colleges, and the teachers charged with completing it. The classification of the actors on internal and external TVET QA system, their networks, benefits, the possible sanctions on their works, and the consequences of their actions provided the overall pictures of the TVET QA implementation

4.1 Internal TVET QA Actors and Its Problems

The policy actors within the internal TVET QA system was the TVET QA board committee of the OVEC. The Ministerial Announcement on QA stipulated the appointment of the QA board committee members for all levels of education. As for TVET, it was referred to as “*internal TVET QA board committee*” of the OVEC (MOE, 2010). The main cost of operating the board committees was shouldered by the OVEC and the benefits would be the TVET development. However, sanctions were possible since the committees consisted of some permanent high-ranking OVEC officials. Delay in action after the approval of the board committee was possible if the OVEC was uncertain about the costs and the benefits gained of each activity approved by the board committee. Decisions made by the board committee carry no consequence because the OVEC was the implementer and executer of the actions and activities in regards to the TVET QA implementation. It was revealed about this delay in action of the OVEC that:

TVET QA board committee, actually, has no real authority. Their works are just an office work considering on some official process and official regulation. Any regulations or announcement must be based on related official rules. So they act as an administrative decision and a pool of expert. (Pol 1, personal communication, October, 27, 2017)

The confirmation on the decision of the board committee was given that “Board committee who used to be a high official are working based on the government rules. Becoming the board committee with no real authority would contribute only a function of expert approval for TVET QA implementation. It was clear that recommendation and suggestion by the committee would be significant but no guarantee of compliance” (Edu 5, personal communication, October 27, 2017). The board committee was referred as “Paper Tiger” (Edu 1, personal communication, October 27, 2017). It was expressed more about the board committee and their works and the roles on TVET QA that:

Becoming TVET QA board committee without experience and understanding on TVET QA is very critical. From the 3 rounds of assessment, TVET QA board committee showed no responsibility for any comments about the failure of TVET quality. This may be that those committees are retired officials and the real work of TVET QA is actually under the OVEC. TVET QA board committee would affect nothing in implementing quality development. (Sup 1, personal communication, October 27, 2017)

Another actor within the internal TVET QA system was the internal assessor appointed by the OVEC. The costs of the internal assessment and all the processes therein were the responsibility of the OVEC. Based on the research findings, the internal assessment had a lot of unrecognized costs. Individual benefits for assessors were not found. It was as the board committee where recognition was the only benefit. Many assessors were the director and/or deputy director of the individual colleges. They would use their knowledge and experience on the assessment for their respective colleges. The actions of these assessors were rarely unveiled, absent, or omitted leading to a lack of any consequence for any of their actions. The only other possible problem related to the internal assessment was the possible sanctions that could arise if the assessed college disagrees with the results of the assessment. Regulations allowed for disagreements over the assessment results which would force the assessors to either insist the assessment result was correct or reassess the college if the results are revoked (MOE, 2013).

The majority of actors within the internal TVET QA system were the people involved in the colleges. The problems in the colleges originated from one of the following people: the administrator, the teachers who were assigned to be the chief of the QA office, the head of each department, and ordinary teachers. There were different problems for each category of person since the conditions and responsibilities of their positions were different. The administrators (directors and deputy directors) were the only people who had an advantage on the TVET QA implementation as the outcome of the assessment could greatly influence their ability to get a promotion or transfer to the prestigious colleges. Directors and deputy directors took advantage of this by manipulating both the internal and external assessment to pass with high marks and claiming it as their achievements. On the other hand, passing the assessment with the minimum score would be normal and would yield no consequences. It was expressed that:

There is no actual benefit for those directors or deputy directors responsible for TVET QA of the college. Their professional promotion for a higher position may not require any information on implementing TVET QA. If the assessment result was positive they

would put it as their achievement if not there is not necessary to mention. (Sup 1, personal communication, October 27, 2017)

Other actors in the college were the teachers assigned and acted in different positions apart from the position as the teacher. It was mentioned that “I am sure that there is no individual or personal benefits for us to work on QA in the college. We are assigned to work on it by collecting data, documents, and information on different activities for assessment” (Chief 3, personal communication, December 11, 2017). The implementation of the TVET QA had no visible benefits for teachers in terms of their promotions. However, it was accepted that the success of passing both internal and external assessments with a very high score would greatly increase the perception of quality of teaching and learning at the individual colleges. For both administrators and teachers, the absence of individual benefit, reward, and sanction were not regarded as the problems for the TVET QA implementation in the college as well as those board committees and assessors. It was concluded that “I think all people are agreed that QA is used for the benefits of us as the providers of education” (Inboard 1, personal communication, November 24, 2017).

4.2 External TVET QA Actors and Its Problems

The external TVET QA system was managed by the board committee of the ONESQA and the external assessors as the main actors on the external TVET QA system. For the board committee, representatives from the OVEC and important main offices under the MOE were the committee being called “*external TVET QA board committee*”. This demanding for representatives from the different offices under the MOE attempted to diversify the representation of people related to education. Regarding their works, there were no rewards given to the board committee as in the case of the internal TVET QA board committee of the OVEC. It was stated that “I think it is my honor to work as the board committee. I know that I cannot control many things especially in term of the implementation. But I hope we can have a good policy and guidance for better education” (Exboard 1, personal communication, January 15, 2018). Sanction on their actions was not found on their working as added that “There is no sanction or interference from the ONESQA in our working. I did not see any lobbyist or this kind of incident happened because our works have no benefit for any stakeholders” (Exboard 1, 2018). Individual benefits for the external TVET QA board committee were the same as the internal TVET QA board committee of the OVEC. The members gained recognition rather than

individual reward or benefit. Rewards and sanctions were not practiced and the punishment or consequences for detrimental actions were also not found.

External assessor was another actor in external TVET QA system. One of the problem the external assessors faced was recognition. The assessors were not only required to have knowledge and experience in education, they were expected to have additional expertise with development of TVET to be competitive. It was expressed that “As I have mentioned there is no problem about having internal and external assessor. The problem is about the qualification of the assessors. They must be accepted by the colleges as an expert on TVET and quality” (Inboard 1, 2017). Internal assessors were familiar with the colleges since they were working in TVET as both administrators and senior teachers. External assessors seemed to be more estranged in term of recognition and familiarity. External assessors were in the same condition of internal assessors that they would work based on willingness and recognition. There was no reward in term of their working. Sanction was found in the case of assessment with the disagreement of the assessed colleges as the case of internal assessment. The assessors and their external assessments were regarded as no problems in the absence of reward, sanction, and consequences of their action as stated that “The assessors work without any sanction. I may know people in the colleges, but they would have no personal influence to me. We work in group and our decision on the assessment must be a mutual agreement” (Exass 5, personal communication, December 15, 2017). It was also confirmed that “There is no sanction from anybody about our work as the assessors. So I think there is no problem on our assessment” (Exass 2, personal communication, October 31, 2017).

Based on the research findings, the external TVET QA system managed by the ONESQA was regarded as the most important assessment since the beginning of the TVET QA in 2000. The external TVET QA system consisted of only 2 groups of actors namely the board committee of the ONESQA and the external assessors. However, they were reflected as the problem on failing for quality development. The sanction on the actors of the ONESQA for the consequences and their actions was found by the continuous opposition and rejection of external assessment.

It should be noted that QA was often regarded as a burden with no real benefits, especially the method of evaluation (i.e. paper assessment) required the preparation of mass amounts of documents by staff. The importance of the assessment results where sometimes in doubt in regards to its usefulness for development. The assessment was perceived as potentially harmful to the institutions that failed to meet the standards (Sirirattanajit, 2014). The most

famous case involved the ignorance of a teacher in regards to QA implementation. Rewards or punishment unfound in the TVET QA system was understandable based on the principle of development. However, the lost sanctions would be more significant and essential in order to have a mechanism for inspection. Obviously, the research found no problem raised by the actors based on the absence of rewards, sanctions, and consequences of action on the TVET QA implementation. Based on the national education act and the ministerial announcement on QA, there was a clear description of the duties and responsibility of all actors (MOE, 2003). Even there was no obvious stipulation on individual and institutional rewards and sanction since all actors and their institutions were under the scope of government law. The absence of rewards, benefits, sanctions, and any consequences of action was with the confusion on the actions of the actors as explained that “If no shared meaning exists when a rule is formulated, confusion will exist about what action are required, permitted, or forbidden” (Ostrom, 2005, p. 20).

It was widely acknowledged that the internal TVET QA system was overseen by the OVEC and the external TVET QA system was overseen by the ONESQA. Both assessments needed to be justified in terms of their continued existence and continually improved by all actors to make them more effective, practical, and achievable. Moreover, the concurrent fostering of mutual understanding, commitments, and networking among all actors was essential for the continual improvement. Cost and benefits of the actors on TVET QA, reward and sanction on action, and consequences of their actions were significant where problems would be possible existed if the actors worked with the absence of those conditions.

5. Networking on TVET QA Implementation and Its Problems

What information needed for action and the channel of communication along with the frequency and accuracy of exchanging information provided in network in the TVET QA system and implementation were significant for the success and good understanding among the actors. Absence of information accessible to the actors and the limitations of the exchange of information and communication, its frequency and accuracy could lead to possible problems among individual actors and institutional networking.

Information on the internal TVET QA and external TVET QA implementation demanded by the national education act for the internal and external assessment were the 2 important information accessible individually and institutionally together with official communication on the exchanging of information. There should be no problems when retrieving this information.

Assessing criteria and indicators set forth by the ministerial announcement on QA, became the most important information for people working on the TVET QA circulated individually and institutionally. There was no problem accessing or retrieving this information for people working on the TVET QA at both policy bodies and the colleges. The channel of communication started with the OVEC and the ONESQA by having the TVET assessment, assessors, and standards and assessing indicators. Networking was based on the 2 different implementations of 2 systems where 3-year cycles of internal assessment were completed by the OVEC and 5-year cycle of external assessments completed by the ONESQA (MOE, 2003). The OVEC had the responsibility to assess around 1,000 public and private colleges within 3 years. The ONESQA had the responsibility to assess the same 1,000 public and private colleges within 5 years. This revealed a problem with the diversity of communication of the internal and external assessment, the diversity of the characteristics of the colleges, people, and their understanding. Diversity in these matters required effective networking. However, there was limited networking, communication, and collaboration between the OVEC, the ONESQA, and the colleges. The limitations could be related to the ethics and interference between the 2 bodies which could be a transparency problem. This happened during 15 years of the TVET QA implementation. The following figure showed the channel of communication of the internal and external TVET QA system and its network.

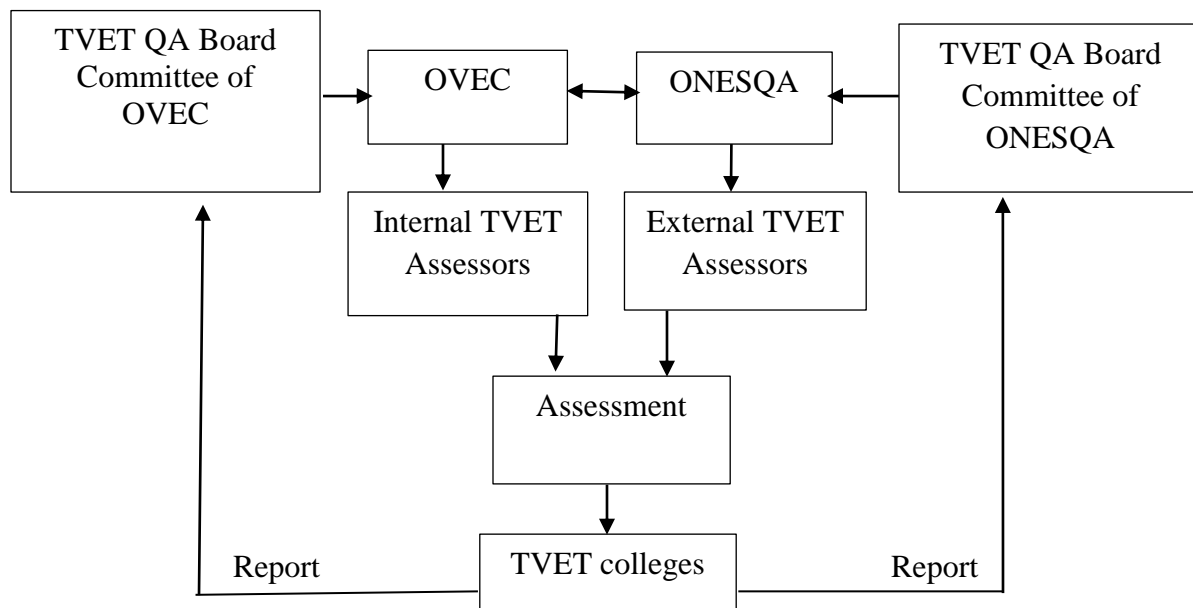


Figure 1: *Chanel of Communication for TVET QA system and TVET Assessment*

The National Education Act directed communication between the colleges and the policy bodies for assessment purposes (MOE, 2003) by stating that “Educational institutions shall lend co-operation in preparation of documents and evidence providing relevant information on institutions” (MOE, 2003, p.23). In reality, the TVET QA board committee of the OVEC and the ONESQA communicated with the colleges through the OVEC. They mostly shared guidance, manuals, assessment standards, and indicators used on the assessment. The communication was made only on the activities of assessment. The discussion on the communication and collaboration on the implementation of the TVET QA revealed a weakness with communication and collaboration originating with administration. Limitation of official communication led to limited collaboration by the official administrative procedure. The limited communication and cooperation between the 2 systems of TVET QA by its 2 assessments illustrated how the TVET QA system has been implemented through the diversity in the weakness of networking and linkage.

The demands of the OVEC stated in the ministerial announcement on TVET QA, the colleges were informed to establish a committee for the purposes of QA. A committee for development and a committee for monitoring were created (MOE, 2010). Management and control of those committees was retained by the director and deputy director who were regarded as the main actors. The system of the OVEC’s board committee was repeated at the colleges themselves. Different college QA committees had a function similar to that of the internal TVET QA board committee of the OVEC and the ONESQA (MOE, 2003). They were serving as the policy bodies on QA of the individual colleges. However, those college committees were both active and inactive in TVET QA implementation. Different colleges have different practices in regards to TVET QA. These differences were observed through the actions of their committees, their directors, and their deputy directors. The TVET QA implementation in the colleges was found to be dependent on the interests of administrators mainly the director and deputy director who played a major role. The network of TVET QA implementation was found to be in line with the hierarchy of administration starting from the director and deputy director, followed by the department, and subsequent offices of the college. The QA committee of the college was not found to be involved in the networking model. This showed the weakness of networking regarding TVET QA implementation of the college by having TVET QA committee. The committee for QA of the college were comprised of the representatives from each department

and included office personnel and teachers. Moreover, they were connected by their own positions rather than the mechanism network of the committee membership on TVET QA.

The frequency and accuracy of exchanged information was revealed through the assessment process. Each year, one third of all colleges will be informed to prepare for the internal assessment based on a 3-year cycle. The colleges have to submit their annual SARs and await the assessment. This was 1 step of the internal TVET assessment. As for the external assessment, each year, one fifth of all colleges will be informed by the ONESQA for external assessment based on a 5-year cycle. The OVEC and the ONESQA would reserve their rights to select colleges for assessment. Both the OVEC and the ONESQA would communicate with the colleges in accordance with their own practices. The diversity of the 2 systems together with the diversity of working at the OVEC, the ONESQA, the colleges, and people caused the implementation of the TVET QA uncontrollable and unpredictable.

There was a problem with mutual understanding and integration of the 2 systems and the people who were actually working on both the internal and external TVET QA system. It was expressed that “The problem is on the development. There are many problems in the colleges so how to solve the problems and develop TVET quality is more than the assessment” (Inboard 2, personal communication, November 24, 2017). It was added about the problem on the development that “There was critical in TVET QA system because when it comes to the development, many problems cannot be solved due to the difficulty of the laws, limitation of resources, and social related problems” (Inboard 1, 2017). Moreover, there were differences among the colleges in regards to size (small, medium, large) as well as differences between the types of college (technical college, vocational college, agricultural college, commercial college, business administration college, etc.). Their locations were also different. The OVEC and the ONESQA would have to deal with these differences since the same standards, process, requirements, and management practices were applied to all colleges. Small colleges were also required to follow the same assessment as large ones etc. Most small colleges were located in the rural areas comparing to medium and big size colleges located in larger cities. It was reflected that:

Quality of agricultural college may not appropriate by the assessment on employability of which the graduates are expected to get employed within one year after graduation. Polytechnic focuses on short course training where students are difficult to pass TVET national test or V-NET. Colleges located in remote areas may be unable to have enough

MOU signed with companies and private sectors. (Exass 6, personal communication, December 27, 2017)

Ignorance regarding TVET QA implementation by having no QA committee or inactive committee or no appointment of a chief of the QA office were seen in most small colleges. On the other hand, prestigious colleges would be in a better situation based on the findings of the past 15 years of assessments. Some well-known colleges would even establish different QA committees and the office of QA by senior teachers. Extra work was paid while less prestigious colleges would be different even appointed a temporary teacher as the chief of QA office. The practice and implementation of TVET QA in the colleges was varied based on the unique conditions of each college.

The situation regarding networking, information, and communication between the OVEC, the ONESQA, and its people has improved for the third round of external assessments (2010-2015). However, the OVEC and the ONESQA had to work separately on the assessment. This encouraged the diversity in terms of the system rather than people since the same people from the OVEC could work for both the internal and external assessments. They could work in positions such as the board, high officials, and operating officials of the college. Based on the research findings, technology was implemented to manage the TVET QA system and people more efficiently. It was expected that the effective information and communication through technology would kick start a new era in TVET QA. People and actors were connected via computer applications and the data of the colleges related to TVET QA implementation was available online. Policy bodies, people, assessors, college people, and interested people were all able to access the online information. The use of ICT would be expected regarding to the actors of the TVET QA system and its problems.

Based on the information rules of the IAD Framework, the problems with the TVET QA system and its implementation for over the last 15 years would be related to the characteristics of networking, information, and communication. The inactiveness of networking across a variety of different actors and the colleges was identified as the main obstructive factor. There was limited information distributed to welcome people to work on TVET QA. People connected with the OVEC and the ONESQA accessed information via personal connections rather than through the official network. Official channels of communication were regarded as the only way to distribute information. Information on the TVET QA could be communicated after the approval of the board committee of both the OVEC and the ONESQA. The information would be circulated in a

form of official communication and announcements. There were no specifications on the frequency of communication except for the monthly meetings of the board committee and the annual SARs reported by the colleges. Communication existed and information on TVET QA was circulated around the time of the internal and external assessments. There were actually no rules or regulations regarding information and communication among people within the TVET QA system. This caused people to access most information individually which led to misunderstandings and diversity on their practices and different individual communication as stated under the default of information rules that “Each player can communicate any information via any channel available to the payer” (Ostrom, 2005, p. 211). Based on the constitution, all educational information must be made available to the public. However, the channel by which the information was made available was different for each government agency. It was also happened to TVET QA information and communication that most information and communication would be individually acquired while official information and communication were for formal and official works limited in some groups of people and limited only on TVET assessment. With a goal to improve the management and system planning, some researchers pointed to the need to use ICT for data collection and information management for TVET QA implementation (Sukchoo, 2011). Indeed, the use of ICT for teacher training regarding TVET QA was discussed in research conducted by Wongsuwan (2001) and showed that effective training could satisfy teachers and all concerned parties. The use of ICT was not only important for data collection and information management, it was also important for sharing and communication information among people working on TVET QA. It played an important function of sharing resources and information on implementing TVET QA among the colleges and their personnel (Kunsanvanit, 2014).

6. Findings and Implication on Actors and Networking on TVET QA

Implementation and Its Problems

Actors within the TVET QA system were mostly government officials of the OVEC and employees of the ONESQA who were working for their respective institutions. Cost, benefit, and reward were related to the institution namely the OVEC, the ONESQA, and the colleges. The TVET QA board committee of the OVEC and the ONESQA were comprised of high official from both the OVEC and the ONESQA. Outsiders on the committee were mostly retired official and renowned people. They would gain no advantage by working as a board committee member.

There were also no punishments or sanctions where levied during the past 15 years of the TVET QA implementation. Directors, deputy directors of the colleges would use the results of both the internal and external assessment as leverage for their professional promotion to higher level positions. In contrast, negative results would yield no punishments or sanctions as it was stated in the law that the results of the assessment were for “quality improvement not punishment” (MOE, 2003). Teachers also remained intact by the concept of cost, benefit, reward, and sanction. It was found that teachers regarded the TVET QA as an assessment activity used to improve the management and administration of the individual colleges. Based on the payoff rules of the IAD Framework, the TVET QA system involved different actors who were mostly within the OVEC and the colleges. They were omitted in the rules regarding rewards, sanctions, and any consequences of TVET QA implementation since most of them were government officials. Costs of the internal and external assessment were the responsibility of the OVEC and the ONESQA. The cost of the external assessment managed by the ONESQA was concerned as the problem while the cost of internal assessment was acceptable. Benefits were broadly stated by claiming the need for the assessment of education and its assurance system of the quality improvement. Rewards and sanctions on people working on the TVET QA were not found in the system. Participants expressed a lack of either rewards or sanction during the past 15 years of the TVET QA system and its implementation. The default payoff rules would exist that “Each player can retain any outcome that the player can physically obtain and defend” (Ostrom, 2005, p. 211). Under the TVET QA system, all people and positions acted under their own roles and there were a number of obstructions based on the inaction of some people based on their own preferences.

According to the organization and the benefits of individuals and organizations, human resource was one frame of organization stated that “A good fit between individual and organization benefits both: human beings find meaningful and satisfying work, and organization get the human talent and energy that they need” (Bolman & Deal, 1991, p. 121). This came the importance on the benefits of actors on TVET QA implementation. Moreover, consequences of actions via reward, sanctions, or punishment would be the factors on the working of organization as well as TVET QA implementation of the OVEC and the ONESQA as stated that “In sum, people try to satisfy their needs, become unhappy when their needs are frustrated, and are more likely to learn things that are relevant to their needs than things that are irrelevant” (Bolmand & Deal, 1991, p.125). The practices of the TVET QA system seemed to be contradictory to the

concept on organization and its human resource by a mechanism for improvement uncertain in the absence of reward, benefit, and sanction.

Exchange of information and communication in the form of networking were found in the official channels limited the access of people with no responsibility on QA. Different offices under the OVEC were excluded from networking and information from the TVET QA system and disconnected with board committee. This kind of administration and management obstructed the involvement and participation of people responsible for different activities of TVET at different levels of the education system. Different offices under the OVEC have not used TVET QA results to implementing changes to improve. People working at the OVEC were skeptical about the outcomes of the TVET QA implementation. The problems with the TVET QA implementation within the OVEC may be how different offices under the OVEC would use or ignore the TVET QA results for improvement. The OVEC would only communicate with their assessors and the colleges when the assessment had to be implemented and completed. This was the problem the management and administration of information and communication. Moreover, the information and communication among the colleges towards QA implementation and the exchanging of information and best practices were rarely seen. People communicated based on the channel or official processes that were already in place with limited communication and the exchanges of the information. The problem was the lack of information availability for interested parties both within the colleges and among the public. The problems with information and communication came with the problem of how to use technology to administering and managing TVET QA. The use and integration of technology were expected for the development of the TVET QA system and different educational activities as suggested that:

With regard to ICT and its innovative power, the organizational perspective becomes more crucial. First of all, dealing with change is core process in school development. This is often related to schools as learning organization (Leithwood and Seashore 1998; Fullan 2001; Fauske and Raybold 2005. Secondly, technological innovations have to be embedded in the organizational culture to secure sustainability (Volkoff et al. 2007). (Ruhe & Breiter, 2018, p.318)

The research found that the availability of data and information was a problem based on individual colleges and their practices. The absence or unavailability of data especially online was the main problem that the QA office of the colleges responsible for data collection needed to overcome. The use of technology to manage data and the development for the TVET QA system

was an accepted idea that was found to have limited implementation. ICT was considered as important for TVET QA system and its implementation for the college development and its sustainability as reflected by Ruhe and Breiter (2018).

7. Conclusion

Referring to the research questions on “How Thai TVET QA has been implemented during 2000-2015” and “What are the problems on the implementation of Thai TVET QA” for the exploration and investigation on Thai TVET QA phenomena and its problems by the use of position, boundary, aggregation, information, and payoff rules of the IAD Framework, the research found that the actors and the concept of cost, benefit, and reward as of the payoff rules of IAD Framework were not relevant to the works on TVET QA. Of course, skepticism was found because of the absence of sanctions or any consequences of actions for all actors. However, it was not considered as the problem for the implementation of the TVET QA system or its success. The problems found were the issues related to the information rules of the IAD Framework, illustrating the significance of channels of communication that can facilitate frequent and accuracy communication in the form of networking. Considering the assessment, information and communication for both the internal and external assessment were acceptable while information, communication, and networking after the assessment for all issues related to further development of the TVET system were virtually nonexistent.

The distance of the ONESQA and the educational institutions was seen in the administrative structure of the MOE which excluded the ONESQA as “*Public Organization*” not “*Government Organization*”. Therefore, development would be the responsibility of the OVEC that had close relationships between its staff and the internal assessors that facilitated better communication and information sharing compared to the ONESQA. This mechanism would help the colleges with the internal assessment because they had access to coaching and consultancy. Individual colleges would provide the QA system with support for development based on the support of the OVEC for them. The whole process of development was under the control of the OVEC and the colleges. Moreover, the internal assessment of the OVEC by assessing the colleges in different indicators would be ineffective and outdated method as suggested that “Quality assurance relies heavily on institutional monitoring and reporting to ensure no problems or deficiencies arising from its operation and structure. This is perhaps the oldest concepts of internal quality assurance in use in industry” (Cheng, 2003, p. 205). This would come the

shifting focus from the assessment to the development of internal TVET QA. The ONESQA managed the external assessment and touted it as necessity for quality control. The problem was that the people expected quality development from the external system despite the mechanism for quality development being ingrained inside the internal system. All necessary information and communication including support and coaching were between the OVEC and the colleges. The shifting from external assessment to internal mechanism for development was also found in the case of German QA as stated that:

This approach to self-evaluation within the quality control system demands a change of the role (and duties) of the school supervisory authorities: external check ups are replaced by internal self-evaluation and by external evaluations such as meta-evaluations of the school reports on self-evaluation as well as by inspection. (Huber & Gordel, 2006, p. 201).

The importance of the colleges on the management of their colleges and the importance of OVEC as the supervisory office excels the external assessment. Accordingly, the research found the need for strengthening the work of the college and the OVEC as prior to the external system of the ONESQA. There were different offices and actors under the OVEC responsible for budgeting, personnel development, curriculum, and cooperation who were left unconcerned with TVET QA policy and planning. For the colleges, more channels of communication among the colleges and policy body must be made available where information about TVET QA implementation in the college could be widely circulated. There was a need for strong connections to foster the exchange of information and communication. Reward, sanction, or any rules on the benefits of both individual people and colleges were reflected as insignificant for the success of the TVET QA implementation. Networking, information, and communication in its many forms and channels of communication are the most significant factors for success of the TVET QA system success.

This research excluded the factors on TVET QA of different types, size, and locations of the college and the study was conducted with only the public colleges. There would be significant to conduct a further research on the implementation of TVET QA by putting the emphasis on the significant of the locations, size, and types of the colleges. Comparison on the TVET QA implementation of public and private colleges was also significant.

References

- Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. E. (1991). *Reframing organizations*. California, USA: Jossey-Bass Inc.
- Cheng, Y. C. (2003). Quality assurance in education: internal, interface, and future. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 11(4), 202-213. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09684880310501386>
- Cuttance, P. (1997). Quality assurance for schools. In Townsend, T. Editor (Ed.). *Restructuring and quality: Issues for tomorrow's schools* (pp.100-114). London: Routledge.
https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203435922_chapter_6
- Huber, S. G., & Gordel, B. (2006). Quality assurance in the German school system. *European Educational Research Journal*, 5(3-4), 196-209. Retrieved from
<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.2304/eerj.2006.5.3.196> <https://doi.org/10.2304/eerj.2006.5.3.196>
- Kunsanvanit, T. (2014). Evaluation of environment for internal quality assurance in the northern technical college under the office of the vocational education commission (Master's thesis, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang, Bangkok, Thailand). Retrieved from
http://tdc.thailis.or.th/tdc//dccheck.php?Int_code=101&RecId=5873&obj_id=60767&showmenu=no
- Ministry of Education. (2003). *National education act 1999*. Bangkok: Thailand: Author.
- Ministry of Education. (2010). *The Ministerial regulation regarding the systems, regulations, and methods for internal quality assurance 2010*. Bangkok, Thailand: Author.
- Ministry of Education. (2013). *The Ministerial regulation regarding vocational education qualification and standards B.E 2556*. Bangkok, Thailand: Author.
- Mukhopadhyay, M. (2005). *Total quality management in education*. New Delhi, India: Sage Publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14783360500077245>
- National Reform Council of Thailand. (2016). *Recommendation and suggestion for postponement of QA*. Bangkok, Thailand: Author.
- Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment. (2018). *Announcement of ONESQA on the selection of universities for ONESQA's network*. Retrieved from
<http://www.onesqa.or.th/upload/download/201806291623303.pdf>
- Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board. (2007). *10th Economic and social development plan*. Bangkok, Thailand: Author.
- Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board. (2012). *11th Economic and social development plan*. Bangkok, Thailand: Author.

Ostrom, E. (2005). *Understanding institutional diversity*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Rube, A. H., & Breiter, A. (2018). Paper versus school information management system:

Governing the figurations of mediatized schools in England and Germany. In Hepp, A., Breiter, A., & Haseblink, U. (Eds). *Transforming communication-studies in cross-media research* (pp.313-339). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-65584-0_13

Sukchoo. C. (2011). *Management information system affecting quality assurance standard of schools under the office of the vocational education commission*. (Master's thesis,

Petchaburi Rajabhat University, Petchaburi, Thailand). Retrieved from

http://tdc.thailis.or.th/tdc/dccheck.php?Int_code=14&RecId=970&obj_id=7353&showmenu=no&userid=0

Sirirattanajit, A. (2014, July 2). What do you think about QA and ONESQA. *Manager Online*.

Retrieved from

<http://www.manager.co.th/Local/ViewNews.aspx?NewsID=9570000082248>

Wongsuwan, R. (2011). *Database system development of quality assurance in vocational education*. (Kasetsart Univeristy, Master's thesis, Bangkok, Thailand). Retrieved from

http://tdc.thailis.or.th/tdc/dccheck.php?Int_code=91&RecId=49769&obj_id=352831&showmenu=no