

# Transforming Thai University Demonstration Schools into Learning Communities: A User Experience and Design-Based Research Approach

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## Abstract

*This study aimed to develop a model for the administration of demonstration schools in public universities based on the concept of "School as a Learning Community" (SLC). The research utilized user experience and design-based research in three phases. Phase 1 involved analyzing the current administrative practices of school administrators under the SLC framework with a sample of 5 administrators. Phase 2 focused on developing a model for promoting SLC-based school administration, targeting 63 participants, including administrators and teachers from Ramkhamhaeng University Demonstration School, Bangna Campus. Phase 3 evaluated the feasibility and suitability of the developed model using a sample of 657 stakeholders, including seven administrators, 52 teachers, and 598 parents of students in grades 1–5. Research tools included interviews and questionnaires, with data analyzed through content analysis, percentages, mean scores (M), and standard deviations (SD). The findings revealed: (1) user experiences highlighted key practices such as inclusive decision-making, shared learning spaces, and stakeholder collaboration, (2) eighteen prototype models for SLC-based administration were developed, integrating stakeholder-driven vision, excellence-focused philosophy, and professional learning community activities, (3) stakeholders most preferred Model 17, selected by 19.33%, emphasizing a shared vision (A2), the philosophy of excellence (B3), and collaborative activity systems (C2), and (4) expert evaluations showed high feasibility (97.40%) and suitability (96.10%) of the proposed model. This study contributes to the literature by providing an actionable framework for transforming demonstration schools into thriving learning communities and fostering collaboration among diverse stakeholders to enhance educational quality and administration efficiency.*

**Keywords:** Design Research, Public University Demonstration School, School Administration Model, School as A Learning Community, Thailand, User Experience Research.

## Introduction

Educational administration encompasses all processes and operations within schools to achieve the goals of education and the curriculum. This aims to ensure that learners develop good health, moral integrity, love, and an awareness of national identity while applying their knowledge effectively and happily in society. These objectives align with the education reform principles outlined in Thailand's National Education Act of 2002 (Loganathan et al., 2022). Currently, there are various models of educational administration. Among the widely accepted and successfully adopted models in several countries around the world are the following four approaches: Participative Management (PM) (Qing & JinHua, 2023), School-Based Management (SBM) (Impong & Buaraphan, 2023; Setiawan, 2021), Professional Learning Community (PLC) (Bunnaen et al., 2022; Meesuk et al., 2021; Sarimanond et al., 2024), and school as a Learning Community (SLC) (Kerdtip & Angkulwattanakit, 2023).

The concept of "School as a Learning Community" (SLC) in Thailand has been adapted from the SLC framework developed by Manabu Sato (Zhang & Fang, 2024), a Japanese scholar who advanced Japan's educational reform initiatives. Since 2002, Sato's (2018) concept has been implemented to enhance teacher development. According to Sato, an SLC school is where students learn collaboratively, teachers work together to enhance their professional practices, and parents participate and learn alongside the school community (Ueno, 2024).

In light of the rapid global changes and the diverse needs of various stakeholders with differing social

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contexts, this study employs user experience research as its methodological framework (Blanchard, 2023). User experience research can reflect the needs of all stakeholders in educational administration, thereby enhancing the quality and efficiency of educational management.

At Ramkhamhaeng University Demonstration School, Bangna Campus, the school administration policy emphasizes collaborative efforts involving administrators, teachers, students, parents, and the surrounding community (Saleekongchai et al., 2024). These efforts create opportunities for all parties to participate in designing and managing the school's education system. Additionally, this approach ensures that school administration meets the needs of learners and other stakeholders. By applying the SLC model through user experience and design-based research, this study analyzes administrators' experiences and identifies the essential requirements for school management. The data is used to develop a model for promoting school administration at the demonstration school in line with the SLC framework (Veepion et al., 2023). The study further evaluates the implementation of this model. It seeks to establish a guideline for school administration in public university demonstration schools, serving as a foundation for future experimentation and research.

### *Conceptual Framework*

#### *School as a Learning Community (SLC)*

The "School as a Learning Community" (SLC) concept emphasizes the importance of everyone working together—teachers, students, and the community—to improve schools. Saito et al. (2024) explained that SLC encourages teachers to reflect and collaborate while involving students and community members in decision-making. This shared approach makes the process more inclusive and spreads the responsibility for change.

Listening and caring are at the heart of SLC. Teachers are encouraged to pay attention to minor signs in students' behavior that might indicate struggles or changes and to take steps to support them. Saito (2024) notes that when students feel cared for by teachers and classmates, they are more likely to open up about what they need. This fosters trust and improves communication within the school.

Rappleye and Komatsu (2024) see SLC as a fresh alternative to traditional Western education systems, highlighting its emphasis on collaboration and relationships, key values in East Asian educational traditions. Ueno (2024) links SLC to Japan's Lesson Study approach, a significant force in school reform since the 1990s. This approach shifts the focus from rigid industrial-era teaching methods to flexible, inquiry-based learning, which suits today's rapidly changing world.

Overall, SLC transforms schools by fostering a sense of community and shared responsibility, helping them meet the challenges of modern education.

#### *Demonstration Schools Administration*

Demonstration schools are designed to be role models for other schools, so they need strong leadership and thoughtful planning. Yuchompoo and Umuayrat (2020) outline three key areas for effective administration: input, process, and output. Inputs include resources like the school's environment, leadership, and networks. Processes focus on planning, engaging stakeholders, and ensuring quality. Outputs are about delivering excellent students, curricula, and teaching.

Saengchan (2024) adds to this by highlighting child-centered learning, active teaching methods, and preparing students to become global citizens. The study shows success depends on modern classrooms, updated teaching tools, and ongoing teacher training. Administrators must be clear about their goals and motivate their teams to perform at their best.

Leadership plays a significant role in managing demonstration schools. Thongprong et al. (2020) identified four traits that great administrators share: vision, trust, communication, and teamwork. Their study shows

that these traits are currently strong in demonstration schools and will continue to be relevant in the future.

Hunsanimitkul and Pongpeng (2018) tie school management to Thailand's 4.0 policy, emphasizing innovation and adaptability. They argue that schools should adopt flexible teaching methods and evaluate their environments regularly to stay ahead of changes. Their strategies focus on preparing students to innovate while keeping schools adaptable to the needs of modern society.

In short, demonstration schools thrive when they combine strong leadership, clear strategies, and the ability to adapt. They can continue to set an example for other schools by following these principles.

## Research Objectives

- To analyze the current practices of school administrators under the concept of school as a Learning Community (SLC) using user experience research.
- To develop a model for promoting the administration of public university demonstration schools in line with the SLC framework through design-based research.
- To examine the feasibility and appropriateness of the developed model for promoting the administration of public university demonstration schools under the SLC concept.

## Methods

This study employed a mixed-methods research approach, combining user experience research, design-based research, survey research, and qualitative research methods. The research process was divided into three phases, each aligned with the study's objectives, as detailed below:

### *Phase 1: Analysis of Current Administrative Practices Using User Experience Research*

The first phase focused on analyzing the administrative practices of school administrators under the SLC framework. This phase addressed the first research objective by utilizing user experience research. Five school administrators with experience applying the SLC concept participated in this phase.

Qualitative data analysis was used to interpret insights gathered through interviews. Key steps included condensing the data, coding the information, and conducting content analysis to identify themes and categories. The findings were then validated through further coding verification. This process helped identify key issues and generate foundational questions for designing a model to promote school administration based on the SLC concept. These findings also guided the design process in the subsequent research phase.

### *Phase 2: Development of the Administrative Model Using Design-Based Research*

The second phase applied design-based research to develop an administrative model for demonstration schools at public universities, aligning them with the SLC framework. This phase addressed the second research objective by integrating findings from Phase 1 with the design-based research methodology.

Quantitative survey methods were used in this phase to explore the model's initial development. The target group included seven school administrators and 56 teachers from the Ramkhamhaeng University Demonstration School, Bangna Campus (totaling 63 participants).

Two primary research methods were employed:

- User Experience Research: Findings from Phase 1 were used to explore five dimensions of user experience—roles, emotions, perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors.

- Design-Based Research: The study used design principles to create the initial framework for the SLC-based school administration model. Although the model was not tested in real-world settings, it was refined through a prototype testing process using surveys.

Survey tools were designed using the factorial design framework of Gunst & Mason (2009), enabling the simulation of scenarios through structured items. Respondents—administrators and teachers—were asked to rate their behavior and choices in specific scenarios related to the proposed model. The survey results provided a quantitative understanding of the extent to which the model's variables were perceived and accepted. Factorial design principles were applied to test combinations of scenarios and variables systematically.

### *Phase 3: Feasibility and Suitability Study of the Proposed Model*

The third phase evaluated the feasibility and suitability of the proposed SLC-based administrative model. Since the study aimed to develop an initial model rather than implement it in real-world settings, survey research used factorial design principles to assess various features and scenarios.

Data collection utilized two main research tools:

- Questionnaires: A sample of 657 participants was selected using multistage sampling. The questionnaire included items measuring perceptions of the administrative model using a five-point Likert scale. The quality of the tool was validated through content validity analysis, with an IOC range of 0.60–1.00 and internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha coefficient) ranging from 0.79–0.98. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze respondents' demographic data.
- Evaluation Forms: These forms were used to assess the feasibility and suitability of the proposed model. Feedback was collected from seven experts, including two educational administration experts, four school administrators, and one teacher. The evaluation criteria covered three areas:

*Presentation Format: Four Items.*

*Content: Four Items.*

*Usability: Three Items.*

Experts rated each item for feasibility and suitability, and their feedback was analyzed to calculate the percentage of agreement among evaluators.

In addition, a guidebook summarizing the proposed model was prepared and reviewed by the expert panel. Inter-rater consistency analysis comprehensively assessed the model's presentation, content, and practical application.

## **Results**

The research findings are organized into three sections:

### *Section 1: Analysis of School Administrators' Practices Based on the School as a Learning Community (SLC) Concept*

This section focuses on analyzing the practices of school administrators using user experience research.

- Roles
- School administrators primarily served two roles: (1) implementing SLC principles as the foundation for school administration and (2) receiving training on applying SLC in school

management.

- Emotions
- Administrators expressed highly positive emotions toward using SLC in school management. Stakeholders demonstrated satisfaction with the approach, fostering a sense of inclusivity and collaboration. The school environment shifted to one characterized by cooperation and mutual support, enabling collective learning and teamwork.
- Perceptions
- Administrators' perceptions of SLC were divided into two areas:
  - Understanding the core components and principles of SLC.
  - Recognizing the benefits of implementing SLC in school management.
- Attitudes
- Administrators exhibited both positive and negative attitudes:
  - Positive attitudes: Fostering a participatory organizational culture, encouraging teamwork, and respecting diverse perspectives through reasoned dialogue.
  - Negative attitudes: Administrators stressed the importance of thoroughly understanding SLC principles to ensure effective implementation.
- Behaviors
- Administrators demonstrated largely positive behaviors, such as creating opportunities for stakeholders to participate in school activities, collaborating on resource allocation to enhance learning, and fostering knowledge exchange between schools and local communities.

## *Section 2: Development of the Model to Promote Demonstration School Administration Based on the SLC Concept*

### *Design Principles and Framework*

The model for promoting demonstration school administration was developed using insights from:

Synthesized Data from Phase 1: Three key approaches were identified:

Engaging stakeholders in participatory school management.

Establishing a collaborative organizational culture that encourages teamwork and leads to the development of shared classrooms.

Facilitating knowledge sharing and collaborative development planning.

Literature and Research on SLC: Key components of SLC included:

Vision (A1: University policy vision; A2: Stakeholder-driven vision).

Philosophy (B1: Public-oriented philosophy; B2: Democratic philosophy; B3: Philosophy of excellence).

Activity Systems (C1: Cooperative classroom learning; C2: Professional learning communities; C3: Engagement of parents and local communities).

These components were combined to create a design framework for the model based on Van den Akker's (1999) design principles.

### *Model Development*

The model incorporated the following elements:

- Argument (Rationale): The principles and beliefs supporting each approach.
- Intervention (X): Activities designed to promote demonstration school administration based on SLC.
- Outcome (Y): Enhanced stakeholder participation and improved attitudes toward school administration.
- Context (Z): Demonstration schools in public universities.

Through factorial analysis, 18 prototype models were generated by combining different sub-characteristics of the SLC-based administration framework.

### *Section 3: Feasibility and Suitability of the SLC-Based Administrative Model*

#### *Model Selection by Stakeholders*

Stakeholders ranked their preferences for the 18 prototype models. The top three selected models were models 17, 18, and 12. These models shared the following key characteristics:

- A stakeholder-driven vision (A2).
- A combination of the philosophy of excellence (B3) and public-oriented philosophy (B1).
- Activity systems that integrated professional learning communities and local community engagement (C2 and C3).

Model 17 was the most favored, selected by 19.33% of stakeholders, while model 8 was the least favored, chosen by only 0.30%.

#### *Feasibility and Suitability Assessment*

The feasibility and suitability of the selected model were assessed using expert evaluations. Seven experts, including two educational administration specialists, four school administrators, and one teacher, reviewed the model using an 11-item evaluation form covering three areas:

- Presentation Format: Four items.
- Content: Four items.
- Usability: Three items.

The experts provided the following feedback:

- Suitability: The model scored an average of 74 out of 77 points (96.10%), indicating a high level of suitability.
- Feasibility: The model scored an average of 75 out of 77 points (97.40%), indicating a high feasibility level.

These results suggest the model is highly suitable and feasible for promoting demonstration school administration based on the SLC concept.

## Discussion

This study yielded several important findings to facilitate knowledge exchange and provide a foundation for future applications. The discussion focuses on three key aspects: the user experience of school administration under the SLC concept, the characteristics of the developed model for promoting demonstration school administration in public universities, and the feasibility and suitability of the proposed model.

### *User Experience in School Administration Based on the SLC Concept*

The findings on user experience in school administration under the SLC framework, spanning five dimensions—roles, emotions, perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors—revealed key characteristics of SLC-based administration:

- Administration aligned with the policies of governing bodies.
- Collaboration among various stakeholders in designing administrative strategies.
- Inclusivity, where all stakeholders have a voice.
- Classrooms serve as collaborative learning spaces.
- Active listening to diverse perspectives.
- Respect for majority opinions.
- Equal opportunities for expression.
- Learning activities tailored to students' differences.
- Opportunities for self-development according to students' potential.
- Collaboration among teachers in learning management.
- Knowledge-sharing between teachers and students.
- Mutual support among teachers and students.
- Teamwork.
- Building positive professional relationships.
- Developing learning communities.

- Parent and external stakeholder engagement in learning.
- Allowing parents and external stakeholders to co-design classroom practices.

These 17 attributes reflect a holistic approach to school administration, fostering efficiency and meeting stakeholder needs. This aligns with Sato et al. (2015), who emphasized that SLC relies on collaboration among students, teachers, parents, and stakeholders. SLC is built on shared visions and agreements that enhance the quality and efficiency of school administration.

Newer studies also affirm the importance of stakeholder collaboration. Fatimah et al. (2024) highlight that successful modern school administration depends on inclusive approaches incorporating diverse voices. Similarly, Abed Khasawneh et al. (2024) stress that effective administrative communication improves decision-making, further enhancing school performance. Moreover, Veepion et al. (2023) also argued that SLC fosters collaborative activities that adapt to local contexts, leading to better outcomes. These studies confirm that SLC transforms schools into dynamic, cooperative learning environments.

#### *Characteristics of the Developed Model for Promoting Demonstration School Administration*

The SLC-based model for promoting demonstration school administration emphasizes vision, philosophy, and activity systems, as Sato (2018) outlined. Among the 18 prototypes generated in this study, Model 17 was most preferred by stakeholders (19.33%), as it incorporated:

- A stakeholder-driven vision (A2).
- A philosophy of excellence (B3).
- Activity systems fostering collaboration and professional learning communities (C2).

This demonstrates the importance of stakeholder involvement in crafting a unified vision. The model encourages diverse perspectives and fosters a cooperative organizational culture by engaging administrators, teachers, students, parents, alums, community leaders, and others. These findings align with Supising et al. (2024), who stressed that inclusive, vision-driven administrative strategies can drive sustainable development in schools.

As Mesterjon et al. (2023) highlighted, demonstration schools often lead to innovation in educational practices, and the SLC-based model provides a framework for continuous improvement. This model promotes teamwork, trust, and collaboration, essential for fostering a positive school environment. Similarly, Fatimah et al. (2024) emphasized that teamwork and shared leadership are critical for achieving educational goals.

#### *Feasibility and Suitability of the Developed Model*

The feasibility and suitability of the SLC-based model were evaluated across two dimensions: appropriateness and practicality. Both scored above 80%, indicating that the model is well-suited for application in real-world contexts. Experts noted that the model should include:

- The background and context of the school.
- Steps for designing the administrative framework.
- Guidelines for applying the SLC model to specific school contexts.

This aligns with Wattanapanit et al. (2024), who highlighted the need for adaptable administrative models in the digital age. They argued that schools must tailor their strategies to their unique environments while



leveraging innovative frameworks like SLC to promote sustainable development.

Furthermore, the emphasis on flexibility aligns with Rappleye and Komatsu (2024), who suggested that SLC principles are highly adaptable and can address diverse educational challenges. These findings are consistent with Korbuakaew and Korbuakaew (2020), who observed that collaboration and adaptability are key to implementing effective learning models in Thai demonstration schools.

While the proposed model shows promise, stakeholders must remain mindful of potential challenges. As Murase (2018) cautioned, implementing SLC requires shifts in mindset, particularly in how teachers and administrators perceive their roles. Schools must also ensure adequate support systems, as noted by Bunnaen et al. (2022), who found that teacher collaboration plays a central role in improving student outcomes.

## Conclusion

The findings confirm that SLC-based school administration fosters collaboration, inclusivity, and shared responsibility. The developed model, particularly Model 17, aligns with stakeholder preferences and demonstrates high feasibility and suitability for practical implementation. Future efforts should focus on refining the model to address specific school contexts while fostering ongoing stakeholder collaboration. This approach promises to enhance the quality and effectiveness of school administration, contributing to the broader goal of transforming schools into thriving learning communities.

## Recommendations for Applying the Research Findings

The study suggests that developing demonstration schools as "Schools as Learning Communities" (SLC) requires emphasizing the participation of all stakeholders, including administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community representatives such as local leaders, religious leaders, alumni, and business owners. Stakeholder collaboration should extend to areas such as school administration, the design of shared public classrooms, and the creation of collaborative learning activities. This multi-dimensional involvement facilitates resource integration and exchange, ultimately enhancing the quality of the school and learner.

Systematic planning is essential at the macro and micro levels to implement the prototype model for promoting demonstration school administration based on the SLC concept. This involves clearly defining stakeholder roles and preparing the necessary inputs or resources to achieve the school's learning goals. Additionally, building awareness among staff about the importance of SLC-based administration will ensure alignment toward shared objectives and enhance the likelihood of successful implementation.

## Suggestions for Future Research

Future studies should test the developed SLC-based administration model with other demonstration schools with similar contexts. This will help generalize the findings and establish broader administrative principles that can be applied across various schools.

There is a need to design strategies that promote participatory or collaborative administrative behaviors among stakeholders. Since stakeholders generally share a common understanding and behavior toward demonstration school administration, fostering collaboration could improve teamwork and support effective school management.

In-depth studies should be conducted with stakeholders to examine the challenges of demonstration school administration. Exploring diverse perspectives on the current state of school management may lead to innovative solutions that foster cooperation among stakeholders and better address student needs within varying contexts.

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## Ethics Approval and Informed Consent

This study adhered to ethical research guidelines and received approval from the relevant institutional ethics committee. All participants were informed about the study's purpose, procedures, and their rights, including the right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection. Data confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the research process to protect the privacy of all participants.

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