



# **The Study of Opinions of Teachers, Parents and School Administrators of Private School towards the Community Concerning Inquiry and Parent Teacher Participation to enhance the Information Literacy of Private School Teachers**

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## **Abstract**

The purposes of this study were: 1) to study opinions of teachers towards the community concerning inquiry with parent-teacher participation and information literacy of private school teachers. 2) To study opinions of parents towards the community of inquiry with parent-teacher participation and the information literacy of parents. 3) To study opinions of school administrators towards the community of inquiry with parent-teacher participation and the information literacy of private school teachers. This study employed a quantitative research method. The sample group included 392 teachers belonging to Office of the Private Education Commission in the Bangkok area, 392 parents of students in private schools, and 253 school administrators belonging to Office of the Private Education Commission in the Bangkok area. Data was collected by 3 questionnaires including the questionnaire for teachers, parents and school administrators. These questionnaires consisted of checklists and open-ended questions. The results showed: 1) Opinions of teachers, parents and school administrators towards the community of inquiry with parent-teacher participation was moderate. 2) The ability of teachers and parents to use technology was high. 3) Opinions of teachers and school administrators towards the information literacy of private school teachers was moderate, and the opinions of parents toward their information literacy were high.

**Key words:** community of inquiry, parent teacher participation, information literacy, private school teacher.

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## Introduction

In the 21st century, data, information and technology were considered important and information technology was the moving power or main factor to create change in the society. It was important for education and living. In terms of education, it influenced educational management format, teaching and learning management, teaching technique, learners, learning source, learning behavior and knowledge acquisition. Digital world emphasized on long life and limitless learning in terms of boundary, limitation, circumstance, venue and time. It caused learning reform that could catch up with different changes and was considered important for child and youth, educational, social and country developments, particularly when we join AEC and the world community.

Information literacy or other Thai translation included information technology skill, information proficiency and principle knowledge of information technology. Information literacy had different meanings namely the ability to enable individuals to have self-awareness when they wanted information and they were able to identify location, evaluate and use that information technology effectively and creatively to solve their problems. Information technology management based on different sources of information along with the application of principle understanding of

ethics and laws of accessing information technology (Association of College and Research Libraries, 2003; The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2003). The objectives of information literacy concept were to encourage successful IT experienced personnel to play role in education and increase numbers of educational organization, schools and libraries. Information literacy was a supportive skill for teaching and learning management in different subjects because current teaching and learning management happened without limitation of place and time. Learners could seek knowledge and information from the internet network. Learners and instructors did not need to attend the class or travel to anywhere at the same time.

Parents' participation with education management was considered the rule to govern schools to promote and support effective education management as mentioned in Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand B.E. 2540, section 43, article 2 that defined educational development policy in the future. Educational development policy required participation by all sectors in the society including family, private sector and organizations who participated with education management. In a school, there must be cooperation among parents and community members to develop educational structure and process so that they could develop learners completely and effectively.



There were many terms similar to participation such as participation, collaboration, involvement, commitment or partnership which students used them with different aims to express degree of participation. These definitions had got the same meaning. The definition of participation in this research was the collaborative process based on cooperation in generating ideas, plans, operations or actions to solve some problem successfully. Participation by parents was important for learning and future advancement of children and was also advantage for teachers and school.

Community of inquiry meant the group of people with the same objective to search knowledge that could solve some problems and create new knowledge with good interaction and sharing ideas with others. Elements of community of inquiry consisted of social, cognitive and teaching presences (Splitter and Sharp, 1995; Garrison and Vaughan, 2008; Akyol, Garrison and Ozden, 2009). Community of inquiry process was the process derived from intelligence development theory by Piaget and constructivist theory. Knowledge search derived from exploration and finding something we wanted to learn that we could observe or explore the nature and do different experiments until we had some questions or inquiries and explored some knowledge to answer the questions or

inquiries. The knowledge would finally make us understand or acquire better knowledge and could apply the knowledge when we faced different problems or situations. Facing these situations consisted of community assemble to solve some problems or create something beneficial for the community. Community role determination was based on members' experience including collaboration in defining problem. Information analysis included group formation, analysis, criticism and interpreting information as guideline to solve the problem, and/or development of new solutions. Alternative searching included finding solution based on information or existing knowledge or collaboration of experts to generate idea and discussion. Performance creation included development of guideline to solve problems or new procedure and evaluation with collaborative feedback and assessment.

When technology played more roles in our life and living particularly in education, current teaching and learning had changed a lot. It became learning unlimited in the classroom but learners could learn anywhere and anytime through the internet network. Further to the study of online learning system development, we had found the study by Collison and Preddy (2006) who investigated the development and function of learner centered learning website which was called WebQuest. Its objective was to

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develop inquiry-based learning and it aimed to gather different learning sources on World Wide Web (www). These learning sources were applied with learning experience management that learners could search knowledge from different sources systemically, and they could be applied with different classes. WebQuest was a learner centered teaching and learning system and widely used in the U.S.A. Learning activities in WebQuest included introduction, task, process, evaluation, conclusion and credits and references which were considered success of computer based communicating technology development.

Electronic learning management system was an element of teaching and learning on the internet network with software support to management web-based learning, and it consisted of curriculum management, lesson development, test and evaluation, learning support and management systems. System users included system administrator, instructors and learners. Learning management system would support IT learning to access information and search data from database, public items and database from online libraries and other electronic media. In addition, the learning management system also supported community learning process and parents' participation by reducing time and venue limitation. Since learning management system supported collaborative learning both

synchronously and asynchronously, parents would be able to participate with learning activities from at home and at work.

In this research, the researcher aimed to study opinions of teachers, parents and school administrators towards community of inquiry with parent teacher participation and information literacy of private school teachers.

### Objectives

1. To study opinions of teachers towards community of inquiry with parent teacher participation and information literacy of private school teachers.
2. To study opinions of parents towards community of inquiry with parent teacher participation and information literacy of parents.

### Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research method to study opinions of teachers, parents and school administrators towards community of inquiry with parent teacher participation and information literacy of private school teachers.

### Population and Samples

Population included 20,257 teachers and school administrators at 688 schools belonging to Office of the Private Education Commission in Bangkok.



Sample group included 392 teachers belonging to Office of the Private Education Commission in Bangkok. The size of sample group was determined with Yamane's sample group size determination method with 95% of confident interval, mean average  $\pm 5$  percent and came up with 392 samples. Sample group was recruited with purposive sampling method applied with teachers who cooperated and were able to answer our questionnaire.

Sample size of parents of students in private schools was determined as equal as teacher sample group or 392 parents. These parents who cooperated with answering our questionnaire were recruited with purposive sampling method.

Sample size school administrators included 253 school administrators belong to Office of the Private Education Commission, Bangkok. The size was determined with Yamane's sample size determination method with 95 percent of confident interval, mean average at  $\pm 5$  percent and came up with 253 schools. 253 school administrators from each school were recruited with purposive sampling method and they cooperated with answering the questionnaire.

### Research Instruments

Applied tools in the research included questionnaire designed by the researcher. Its questions deal with parent teacher collaborative community of inquiry concept

and information literacy of private school teachers. Questions in the questionnaire included the followings.

1. Questionnaire for teachers consisted of 57 check lists and open-ended questions including 30 questions asking about their opinion towards community of inquiry with parent teacher participation, 12 questions asking about their ability to apply technology with exploring and creating online knowledge, and 15 questions asking about their opinions towards information literacy of teachers in private school.

2. Questionnaire for parents consisted of 32 check lists and open-ended questions including 15 questions asking about their opinion towards community of inquiry with parent teacher participation, 12 questions asking about their ability to apply technology with exploring and creating online knowledge, and 5 questions asking about their opinions towards information literacy.

3. Questionnaire for school administrators consisted of 35 check lists and open-ended questions including 25 questions asking about their opinion towards community of inquiry with parent teacher participation, 10 questions asking about information literacy.

### Data Collection

The researcher had distributed 450 questionnaires for teachers, 450 questionnaires for parents and 300 questionnaires for school directors to collect their opinions towards

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community of inquiry with parent teacher participation to enhance information literacy of private school by oneself and by post. The researcher had received 405 questionnaires or 90% from teachers, 420 questionnaires or 93.33 % from parents and 255 questionnaires or 85% from school directors, and chose 392, 392 and 253 complete questionnaires from teachers, parents and school administrators respectively.

### Data Analysis

Data from complete answered questionnaires was analyzed with descriptive statistics. Findings were presented as percentage, mean, and standard deviations.

### Research Results

The results were presented in three parts in line with the research objectives as following.

**Part 1: Teachers' opinion towards community of inquiry with parent teacher participation and information literacy of private school teachers.**

#### 1.1 Background Information of the Respondents

There were 392 respondents in this study, 356 of which were female (90.8%), and 36 were male (9.2%). Their age range was between 31-40 years old (40.1%) and most respondents graduated Bachelor Degree (87.0 %). Most of them had 6-10 year working

experience (41.8%), and were mathematics teachers (19.7%).

#### 1.2 Teachers' Opinion towards Community of Inquiry with Parent Teacher Participation

Sample group had moderate opinion towards community of inquiry with parent teacher participation ( $\bar{x}=3.4868$ , S.D.= 0.585). Consideration of each aspect showed that new knowledge acquisition and working skill enhancement by interacting with their group members had got the highest mean average ( $\bar{x}=3.64$ , S.D.= 0.755) followed by creating good relationship with the peer by persistent sharing data, knowledge and interest with high mean average ( $\bar{x}=3.62$ , S.D.= 0.758) and the least mean average was participation with community problem discussion at moderate level ( $\bar{x}=3.31$ , S.D.= 0.796).

#### 1.3 The ability to use technology of Teachers

Sample group had overall and high information literacy as the tool to explore and create online knowledge ( $\bar{x}= 3.5421$ , S.D.= 0.692). Each aspect consideration showed that searching data with search engine was high ( $\bar{x}= 3.77$ , S.D.= 0.865) followed by website content management at high level ( $\bar{x}= 3.56$ , S.D.= .781), and the least mean average was online lesson at moderate level ( $\bar{x}= 3.40$ , S.D.= 0.794).

Sample group could apply technology as a communication and online collaborative working tools with overall and highest mean



average ( $\bar{x} = 3.3744$ , S.D. = 0.735). Each aspect consideration showed that social network had got the highest mean average at high level ( $\bar{x} = 3.71$ , S.D. = 0.911) followed by instant messaging with high mean average ( $\bar{x} = 3.52$ , S.D. = 0.885) and the least mean average was video conferencing was moderate ( $\bar{x} = 3.07$ , S.D. = 0.848).

#### 1.4 Information literacy of private school teachers

We had found that overall opinions towards information literacy of private school teachers was moderate ( $\bar{x} = 3.42$ , S.D. = 0.6177). Each aspect consideration showed that the ability to search data from different sources as needed had got highest mean average at high level ( $\bar{x} = 3.51$ , S.D. = 0.785) followed by the ability to search data from internet network and the ability to link with other sources at high level ( $\bar{x} = 3.50$ , S.D. = 0.784) and the ability to manage information system so that individuals could retrieve data from the same source at the same time was moderate ( $\bar{x} = 3.31$ , S.D. = 0.735).

**Part 2: Parents' Opinion** towards community of inquiry with parent teacher participation and information literacy of private school teachers.

#### 2.1 Background Information of the Respondents

There were 392 respondents in this study, 272 of which were female (69.4%), and 120 were male (30.6%). Their age range was

between 31-40 years old (51%) and most respondents graduated Bachelor Degree (62.8%). Most of them had 6-10 year working experience (41.8%), and worked as employees (34.7%), business owners at 32.4% and housewives at 15.6%

#### 2.2 Parents' Opinion towards Community Inquiry with Parent Teacher Participation

Research findings showed that sample group had overall opinion towards community inquiry with parent teacher participation at moderate level ( $\bar{x} = 2.8471$ , S.D. = 0.6947). Each aspect consideration showed that support for data from various sources to solve community problems had got the highest mean average at moderate lever ( $\bar{x} = 3.14$ , S.D. = 0.916) followed by the realization, acceptance and understanding about community problems at moderate level ( $\bar{x} = 3.01$ , S.D. = 0.887) and the least mean average was participation with community problems discussion at moderate level ( $\bar{x} = 2.54$ , S.D. = 0.892).

#### 2.3 The ability to use technology parents.

We had found that the sample group had overall information literacy as the tool to explore and create online knowledge with high mean average ( $\bar{x} = 3.516$ , S.D. = 0.827). Each aspect consideration showed that searching information with search engine had got highest mean average at high level ( $\bar{x} = 3.83$ , S.D. = 0.959) followed by open learning



sources at high level ( $\bar{x} = 3.57$ , S.D. = 0.991) and the least mean average was website content management at moderate level ( $\bar{x} = 3.31$ , S.D. = 0.928).

We had found that the sample group had overall information literacy as online communicating and collaborative working tools with high mean average ( $\bar{x} = 3.293$ , S.D. = 0.836). Each aspect consideration showed that social network had got the highest mean average at high level ( $\bar{x} = 3.77$ , S.D. = 1.050) followed by instant messaging at moderate level ( $\bar{x} = 3.47$ , S.D. = 1.011) and the least mean average was video conference at moderate level ( $\bar{x} = 2.92$ , S.D. = 0.978).

#### 2.4 Parents' Information Literacy

We had found that overall opinion of the sample group towards information literacy had got high mean average ( $\bar{x} = 3.40$ , S.D. = 0.871). Each aspect consideration showed that support and assistance to develop information for teachers had got the highest mean average at high level ( $\bar{x} = 3.79$ , S.D. = 0.850) followed by the recognition of the importance of information literacy at moderate level ( $\bar{x} = 3.78$ , S.D. = 0.877), the ability to apply information from different sources at high level ( $\bar{x} = 3.64$ , S.D. = 0.894), the ability to search data from different sources as needed at high level ( $\bar{x} = 3.58$ , S.D. = 0.878) and the ability to define needed sources of information at moderate level ( $\bar{x} = 3.40$ , S.D. = 0.871).

**Part 3: School Administrators' Opinion**  
towards community of inquiry with parent teacher participation and information literacy of private school teachers.

#### 3.1 Background Information of the Respondents

There were 392 respondents in this study, 142 of which were female (56.1%), and 111 were male (43.9%). Their age range was 50 years and above (45.1%) and most respondents graduated Bachelor Degree (66.0%). Most of them worked as other positions including the manager, section chief and others (26.5%) followed by director (26.1%), deputy director (25.3%) and assistant director at (22.1%) respectively. Most sample groups had more than 15 years working experience as school director (45.1%) and 11-15 years working experience at (34.4%).

#### 3.2 School Administrators' Opinion towards Community of Inquiry with Parent Teacher Participation

We had found that sample groups had moderate mean average of overall opinion towards community of inquiry with parent teacher participation ( $\bar{x} = 3.4027$ , S.D. = 0.824). Each aspect consideration showed that highest mean average was new knowledge acquisition of teachers and high chance to improve their working skill by interacting with their peers ( $\bar{x} = 3.76$ , S.D. = 0.662) followed by high teachers' communication and parents' participation with community activity ( $\bar{x} = 3.61$ , S.D. = 0.980), and the least mean average was

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teachers' reconsideration of guideline to solve unconcluded problem with the community member at moderate level ( $\bar{x}=3.16$ , S.D.= 0.908).

### 3.3 School Administrators' Opinion towards Information Literacy of private school teachers.

We had found that sample groups had moderate level of overall opinion towards information literacy of teacher in private school ( $\bar{x} =3.47$ , S.D.= 0.704). Each aspect consideration showed that support for teachers to acquire IT skill by the school had got highest mean average at high level ( $\bar{x} =3.80$ , S.D.= 0.905) followed by school's policy to promote IT skill among teachers at high level ( $\bar{x}=3.73$ , S.D.= 1.051), and the least mean average was teacher's ability to evaluate source of information at moderate level ( $\bar{x}=3.16$ , S.D.= 0.808).

## Conclusion and Discussion

The study of opinion of teachers, parents and school administrators towards community of inquiry with parent teacher participation and information literacy of private school teachers revealed the followings.

1. Findings about opinion towards community of inquiry with parent teacher participation

The study about teachers, parents and school administrators' opinion towards community of inquiry with parent teacher participation showed moderate overall opinions. Teachers agreed that they had acquired new knowledge and improved their working skills by interacting with members in parent teacher community of inquiry followed by good relationships with members by sharing knowledge and information persistently. And the least one was participation with discussion about parent teacher community inquiry problems. Parents agreed that they had participated with support from different sources of information to solve community problems and they had realized, acknowledge and understood community problems. The least participation among them included participation with discussion about community problems which corresponded to opinions of teachers. In school administrators' point of view, they agreed that teachers in their school had acquired new knowledge and improved their working skill by interacting with member of parent teacher community of inquiry. They also agreed that teacher had communicated and allowed for parents to participate with parent teacher community of inquiry. The least participation in their point of view was consideration of guideline to solve unconcluded problem among community members. The study about parents and



teachers' information literacy as the tool to explore and create knowledge, communicate and work collaboratively had showed that their overall literacy was high. Most of them applied search engine to search data and they applied online social network, instant messaging to communicate and work together. The least applied technology included online lessons and video conferencing in which the study by Aleksic-Maslac et al (2009) about the role of web boards towards community of inquiry had found that the interaction among learners based on the principles of social intelligence and knowledge development happened by sharing knowledge among learners. In addition, the study about the development of community of inquiry by Patrick (2010) had found that the creation of community of inquiry through integrating websites had an important role for knowledge development and improved learners' learning achievement.

2. Finding about Opinion towards Information literacy of private school teachers and Parents

The study about teachers and school administrators' opinion towards information literacy of private school teachers showed moderate overall picture. Teachers agreed that they had acquired information literacy including exploring data through internet network and the ability to access other sources of information. The least opinion

included the ability to manage information so that many individuals could retrieve data from the same source of information at the same time. School administrators were aware that their schools were ready to support teachers' information literacy and had launched policies to promote teachers' information literacy. They also agreed that teachers need to improve their ability to evaluate source of information in which the study by Diekema, A.r. & Olsen, M.W. (2012) had found that teachers had searched sources of information which were corresponding to their need and had more chance or channels to search data and information. Teachers had also searched good sources of information by sharing their experience and information with their colleagues. They usually decided to use some sources of information which were essential for their teaching and learning management and in accordance with the curriculum. Evidences to assure that the selection of that source of information complied with teachers' relevance included storing behavior, storage, maintenance and retrieve of the information for their usage in the future. Finding about overall parents' opinion towards their information literacy was high. We had found that parents appreciated the importance of information literacy and were ready to support the development of teachers' information literacy. They agreed that they were able to



search data from different sources of information which complied to their need and ability to apply that data and refer the sources of information accordingly.

### Recommendations

This research was the study about teachers, parents and school administrators' opinion towards community of inquiry with parent teacher participation and information literacy of private school teachers and findings revealed the followings.

1. The development of community of inquiry with parent teacher participation did not focus on searching information, exchanging information among members, but also focused on community problems needed to be discussed and reconsidered so that they could conclude guidelines to solve the problems persistently.

2. There should be training of search engine usage so that individuals could retrieve needed and reliable data and arrangement of social online media to share the information among teachers and parents.

3. The study about teachers, parents and school administrators' opinion provided us information and data for the development of community of inquiry with parent teacher participation model to enhance information literacy of private school teachers and further investigation of the model application.

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