

Conceptual Framework for Transferring Lessons Learned from Work For The Development of Best Practices

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Abstract

The study on St Theresa International College's Conceptual framework for transferring lessons learned from work for the development of best practices is a qualitative research. The 69 respondents for this study consisted of 3 groups of people, 1) administrators and the Knowledge Management Committee 2) Lecturers and staff implementing the work instructions 3) the stakeholders of the implementation of the college's work instructions. The research methods used were documentation review, observation, and in-depth interviews. The research findings show that the conceptual framework for transferring lessons learned from work for the development of best practices consists of 3 steps which are 1) transferring lessons learned from work to create a learning organization, 2) developing lessons learned from work into good practices, and 3) developing good practices into best practices. The success factors in creating best practices are 1) collaboration of all personnel to continuously improve work routines, work results that have been well developed, and a regular collaborative sharing of knowledge, lessons learned, and knowledge exchange, 2) the clarity in setting best practices both in the characteristics of the best practices and the guidelines for writing best practices.

Keywords: Learning Organization, Good Practices, Best Practices

Background

Best practices are the assessments of something that shows the impact of success that can specify a pattern or simulate a pattern (USAID, 2015). The 4 important characteristics of best practices are that it is innovative, it creates a difference from the initial practice, it has a sustainable impact, and it has the potential to be modeled and used as a model for other initiatives (UNESCO 2015). The specific practices created can be an effective tool or an out-of-the-box concept that can be put into practice with continuous improvement, to become the standard of the organization (SERC, 2015).

The implementation of best practices in the organization will instill the personnel with knowledge, skills, work expertise, performance review processes, and collaborative knowledge sharing with other personnel in the organization, until they can independently discover high standards of performance. This results in the successful implementation of the organization's mission with efficiency and effectiveness (Kanter, 2003). It creates organizational culture with success driven management (Peter and Watermen, 2015). It can also be applied in educational management, for example, the best practices for the quality improvement of higher education curriculum in engineering institutions (Roa, et al., 2015).

St. Theresa International College aims to develop as a learning organization by establishing channels for internal knowledge transfer along with gaining knowledge through research and external resources with the key objectives of creating opportunities for Best Practices that will lead to knowledge building and a strong core competence to keep up with the rapid changes in our society (Puncreobutr, 2013).

The College has been developing its various work systems according to the guidelines of continuous improvement in education quality and the assessors' suggestions from the 2012 external quality assessment that the college has operated according to many work instructions with good results, and they should be developed into best practices. Therefore, since the academic year 2013, the college has been improving the quality of work according to work instructions, to develop them into best practices, and have created many best practices since. To assess the improvement of work instructions, the researcher believes that a study should be made on St. Theresa International College's conceptual framework for transferring lessons learned from work for the development of best practices, to benefit the workers, the departments, the College, and anyone interested, leading to further wide implementation of the practices.

Objective of the Study

To study St. Theresa International College (Thailand)'s conceptual framework for transferring lessons learned from work for the development of best practices.

Research Methodology

This is a qualitative research with respondents from 3 groups of people, 1) administrators and the Knowledge Management Committee (8 persons), 2) Lecturers and staff responsible for controlling, directing, monitoring, inspecting and improving operations according to work instructions in their own departments (19 persons), 3) the stakeholders of the implementation of the college's work instructions such as students, lecturers, graduates, parents, employers of graduates, and institutions/organizations serviced by St. Theresa International College (42 persons), all together 69 persons. Data collection was carried out during June 2018 to December 2019 with documentation review, observation, and in-depth interviews. The tools used for data analysis were content analysis techniques, observation results, and triangulation of interviews. Results will be analyzed with content analysis techniques and summarized to obtain the research findings.

Research Findings

The research findings are as follows:

1. St. Theresa International College's conceptual framework for transferring lessons learned from work for the development of best practices was implemented as follows:

Conceptual Framework for Transferring Lessons Learned from Work
For The Development of Best Practices

The applied conceptual framework from Channate Wanapirak (2016), Somjai Neamhom (2016) and Thailand Productivity Institute (2016) consists of 3 steps 1) employees working together on Continuous Quality Improvement on routine work systems. The performance with the most improvements is selected for knowledge sharing as well as transferring lessons learned and knowledge exchange, 2) the lessons from knowledge exchange creates good work that will develop into good practices, 3) good practices from knowledge exchange, both internal and external, that create new knowledge for practices and a strong core competence will be upgraded to best practices.

The conceptual framework for knowledge transfer comprises of 3 steps which are 1) transferring lessons learned from work to create a learning organization, 2) the development of lessons learned from work into good practices, 3) the development of good practices into best practices.

1.1 Transferring lessons learned from work to create a learning organization

The college recognizes the importance of learning at an individual level, group level, and organizational level, whether from adaptation, prediction, learning for the sake of learning, or from work experience. The college also promotes learning skills such as Personal Mastery, Mental Model, Shared Vision, Team Learning, System Thinking, and Dialogue to create a quality organizational culture namely the search for knowledge, the creation of knowledge, the retention of knowledge, and the transfer of knowledge by creating activities for transferring lessons learned from collaboration.

Guideline for organizing activities for transferring lessons learned from collaboration is illustrated in Figure 1

Me / My friends	What my friends know	What my friends don't know
What I know	1 Review the knowledge and develop into best practices ←	2 Collaborative sharing and knowledge development
What I don't know	3 Open-mindedness to learn and upgrade knowledge	4 Search for external knowledge

Figure 1 Guideline for organizing activities for transferring lessons learned from collaboration

The results of organizing activities for transferring lessons learned from work is learning from the lessons learned from work and from different work systems concerning learning management for students, assessments, learners' development activities, and other developmental work.

The lessons learned from work that have been reviewed and developed continuously (cell 1) both from the collaborative sharing and development of knowledge (cell 2), or from open-mindedness to learn and upgrade knowledge (cell 3) and the people in the organization are instilled with

knowledge as well as recognized by those involved within the organization will be developed into good practices in the future.

1.2 The development of lessons learned from work into good practices.

The development of lessons learned from work into good practices employs the concept with essential characteristics that a learning organization must have which are 1) Systematic Problem Solving through scientific methods such as the Deming Cycle (PDCA), 2) experimentation or implementation that are beneficial for the organization, 3) learning from their own experiences, previous success and failures 4) learning from others, both from the exchange of knowledge and experiences of organizational members, 5) the transfer of knowledge to others through reports or training and education by creating activities to transfer the lessons learned from work into good practices.

Steps to organize activities to transfer the lessons learned from work into good practices are as follows:

- 1) Share experiences in a new work system following the plans
- 2) Compare the actual procedures with the planned procedures
- 3) Define the operation outcome (from the trial run) in both quantity and quality
- 4) Define the success factors (Learning from their own experience)
- 5) Define the obstacles or causes preventing the implementation from achieving the objectives and the remedial measures already taken (Systematic Problem Solving)
- 6) Propose better procedures (Transfer of Knowledge)
- 7) Exchange of knowledge (Learning from Others)
- 8) Distill the lessons learned into good practices (being able to state how it's done)

The results of the activities to transfer the lessons learned from work, which created cooperative learning in the organization as well as unanimous acceptance of collaborative practices from those within the work system of the organization, are good practices in different work systems. The newly emerged good practices are practices concerning learning management for students, assessments, learners' development activities, and other developmental work.

Good practices in different work systems will be developed into best practices when they have been tested, and the results are found to meet the organization's objectives and will continually benefit the organization. The key factors of success include the use of organizational capabilities and simple processes that people can implement. In addition, these practices create new knowledge during work and become the organization's core competencies.

1.3 The development of good practices into best practices

The development of good practices into best practices employs the Knowledge Management for Excellence concept with 4 key characteristics including 1) being an important part in continuously producing excellent organizational results, 2) is a new process or innovation originating from the use of organizational resources, 3) is accepted by experts or reputable organizations, 4) widely accepted by customers or suppliers.

A good practice that has been assessed as a best practice must have all four characteristics below:

Conceptual Framework for Transferring Lessons Learned from Work For The Development of Best Practices

- 1) Be an important part in continuously producing excellent organizational results, as determined by the results meeting the organization's objectives and will continually benefit the organization.
- 2) Is a new process or innovation originating from the use of organizational resources, as determined by the emergence of new knowledge in practice and becoming the organization's core competencies.
- 3) Is accepted by experts or reputable organizations, as determined by internal experts in areas such as the simple processes that people can implement. Also, determined by the assessments by external experts on criteria such as the results of internal quality assessment and the exchange of knowledge with external organizations.
- 4) It is widely accepted by customers and suppliers, as determined by the results of the assessment by stakeholders, internal customers or from external customers according to the related practices.

Guidelines for writing best practices for publication

- 1) A subject that reflects the value of best practices (being an important part in continuously producing excellent organizational results) with the focus of answering the question "How good?"
- 2) The steps for onsite implementation (is a new process or innovation originating from the use of organizational resources) with the focus of answering the question "How is it good?"
- 3) The organization's strengths that are contributing factors of success can be adopted by other projects or organizations (acceptance from an expert or from reputable organizations) with the focus of answering the question "Why is it good?"
- 4) The results of implementing the practices (wide acceptance from customers or suppliers) with the focus of answering the question "Who is it good for?"

2. The success factors for best practices

The success factors for best practices are the collaboration of all personnel to continuously improve work routines, work results that have been well-developed, and a regular collaborative sharing of knowledge, lessons learned, and knowledge exchange, as well as the clarity in setting best practices both in the characteristics of the best practices and the guidelines for writing best practices (Fig.2).

The development of best practices is carried out as follows:

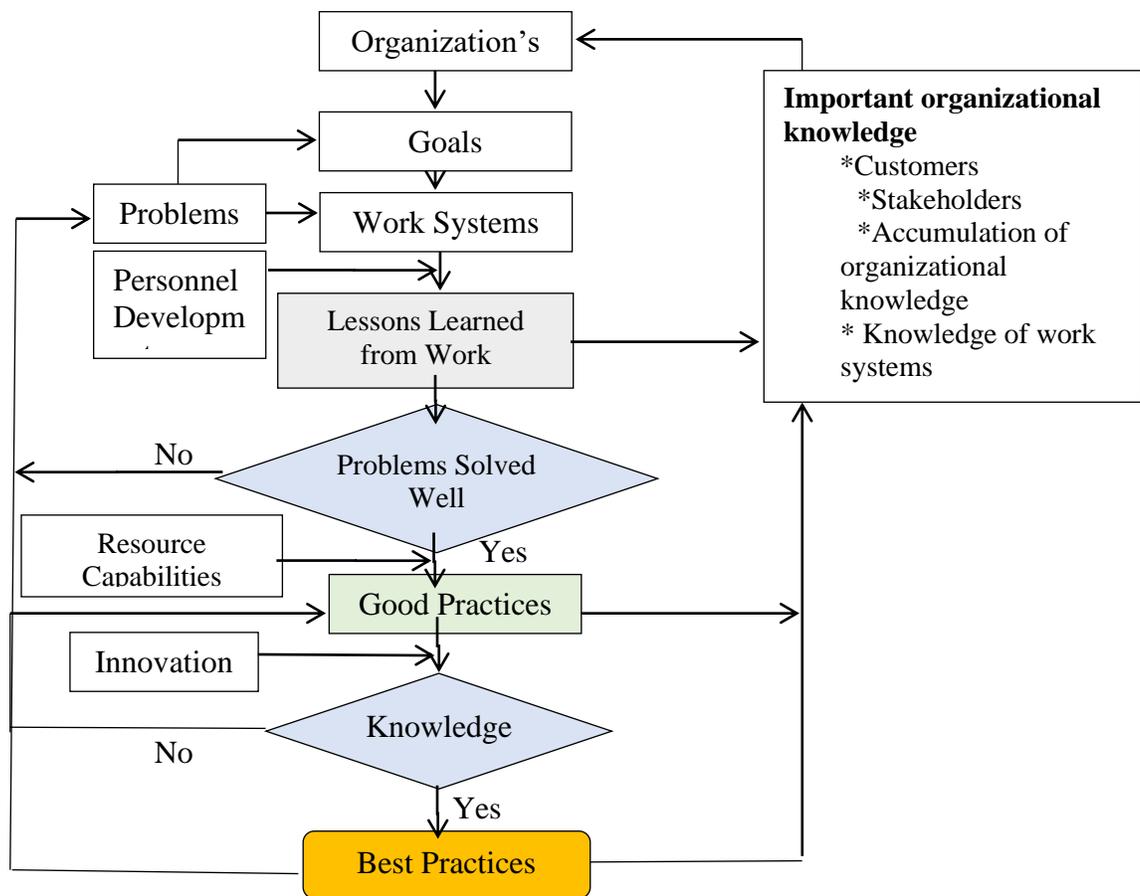


Figure: 2. The best practice development process

3. Best practices that the organization has successfully developed

St. Theresa International College has created and organized best practices into groups according to the mission of Thai higher education management. Therefore, best practices can be classified into 5 groups as follows:

Conceptual Framework for Transferring Lessons Learned from Work
For The Development of Best Practices

3.1 Best practices in administration, such as operations to reflect identity beneath the core mission of higher education institutions, responding to local and national demands on the basis of mission and location, implementing the institutional development plan which connects to the educational development goals of the nation, applying the Sufficiency economy philosophy in administration according to the perspective of balanced scorecard, and applying the principles of good governance to manage throughout the entire organization.

3.2 Best practices graduate production such as the improvement of bachelor's degree graduate quality for employment, further education, or self-employment, improving the level of employer satisfaction of graduates in line with the National Professional Qualifications Standard for Higher Education, developing student quality to possess the essential skills for living in the 21st century, utilizing the EIP system to prepare students' English proficiency before proceeding to their major curriculum, using Moodle outside of class hours to improve students' English skills, testing students' English proficiency level before their internship, producing high quality master's degree graduates in terms of applying knowledge and skills to work or organization development that will raise the level of self-development, organizational development, industrial development, or national development, and an assessment form for English language proficiency from employers of the graduates.

3.3 Best practices in research such as the improvement of research quality to align with the institutional context or country development, improving the quality of research findings and creative works to attract citation in the academic journals published, writing research proposals or preparing research outlines to offer for grants from national agencies or enterprises, applying findings from applied research and innovations to form new creative ideas or products, applying findings from applied research and innovations to register work from relevant agencies, and organizing PLC or e-PLC for teaching profession.

3.4 Best practices in academic services, such as academic services for the public that recipients can use to develop or adapt for use in their daily lives, the academic services for the public that create value for the service recipients and are able to apply knowledge for materialistic benefits, the academic services for the public that the recipients can innovate the use of social media to meet development needs and to support the community to build a quality society, the specialized academic services that can be beneficial to the requesting organizations, the specialized academic services that creates value for the service recipient in accordance with the expectations of the requester, evaluation of the institutional performance in providing academic services to the public or offering specialized services.

3.5 Best practices in educational quality management, such as the development of quality work systems to be included in work routines, raising the level of internal quality assurance with regard to the curriculum, faculty, and institutional levels, internal quality assurance management to create quality culture in the organization, bringing the results from the educational quality assessment to improve and continuously develop the quality of the curriculum, quality management at a faculty level and institutional level, building confidence in the quality of the curriculum for accreditation from the professional council.

Summary of findings

The findings are as follows:

1. The conceptual framework for transferring lessons learned from work for the development of best practices consists of 3 steps which are 1) transferring lessons learned from work to create a learning organization, 2) developing lessons learned from work into good practices, 3) developing good practices into best practices by the drive, support and promotion of the Knowledge Management Committee allowing knowledge exchange, both internal and external. The main goals are to create new knowledge in work, upgrade the lessons learned from work to good practices, and build a strong core competence for the organization which creates strong development, promotes learning and growth from a learning organization to a high reliability organization and a high-performance organization respectively.
2. The success factors for best practices consists of 2 factors: 1) the collaboration of all personnel is the main success factor in which the college personnel collaborate to continuously improve routine work systems, work results that have been well-developed, and a regular collaborative sharing of knowledge, lessons learned, and knowledge exchange 2) the clarity in setting best practices is a supporting factor for both the clarity in defining the characteristics of best practices and the clarity in the guidelines for writing best practices.
3. The college has created and organized the best practices of an organization into 5 groups, according to the mission of Thai higher education management, which are administration, graduate production, research, academic services, and quality management in education.

Recommendations

Recommendation for implementation

This research has found that the conceptual framework for transferring lessons learned from work for the development of best practices which produced several best practices of the college results from 2 important factors. The main factor is the collaboration of all personnel, and the supporting factor is the clarity in defining best practices. Therefore, in bringing it into practice, mutual awareness must be established to create empowerment.

Recommendation for future research

Since this research was a qualitative research, a quantitative research with casual analysis is recommended to additionally confirm the results of the implementation. Also, there should be a study on the sustainability of the implementation and on being a learning organization or a high reliability organization or a high-performance organization.

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Conceptual Framework for Transferring Lessons Learned from Work
For The Development of Best Practices

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