

Adopting EFQM Excellence Model in Educational Institutions for Long-term Quality Management

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Abstract:

This research is motivated by creating a sustainable educational environment aligned with a long-term vision. This study aims to analyze the implementation of the EFQM model in building the quality of sustainable education in schools. The method used is a qualitative approach with a case study design, where data is obtained through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. Data analysis was carried out using an interactive analysis model, including data reduction, presentation, and verification. The study results indicate that implementing the EFQM model in schools strengthens leadership and strategic alignment, which play an important role in setting a long-term vision and sustainability goals. Efficient resource management ensures cost efficiency and operational sustainability. Regular performance measurement and innovative teaching approaches help create a sustainable educational environment and support the achievement of quality education. These findings are expected to provide insight into how performance measurement and innovation in teaching approaches are important in creating an efficient and quality educational environment.

Keywords: *EFQM Model, Leadership, Resource Management, Sustainable Education*

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh kebutuhan untuk menciptakan lingkungan pendidikan yang berkelanjutan dan selaras dengan visi jangka panjang. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah menganalisis penerapan model EFQM dalam membangun mutu pendidikan berkelanjutan di sekolah. Metode yang digunakan adalah pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus, di mana data diperoleh melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Analisis data dilakukan dengan menggunakan model analisis interaktif, yang meliputi reduksi data, penyajian data, dan verifikasi data. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan model EFQM di sekolah memperkuat kepemimpinan dan penyesuaian strategis, yang berperan penting dalam menetapkan visi jangka panjang dan tujuan keberlanjutan. Manajemen sumber daya yang efisien memastikan tercapainya efisiensi biaya dan keberlanjutan operasional. Pengukuran kinerja yang teratur serta pendekatan pengajaran yang inovatif membantu menciptakan lingkungan pendidikan yang berkelanjutan dan mendukung pencapaian pendidikan yang berkualitas. Temuan ini diharapkan dapat memberikan wawasan mengenai bagaimana pengukuran kinerja dan inovasi dalam pendekatan pengajaran berperan penting dalam menciptakan lingkungan pendidikan yang efisien dan berkualitas.

Kata Kunci: *Model EFQM, Kepemimpinan, Manajemen Sumber Daya, Pendidikan Berkelanjutan*

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of sustainable schools in Thailand combines environmental responsibility, quality education, and social justice. The schools aim to balance academic excellence and long-term sustainability goals. They focus on creating a learning environment that encourages resource efficiency, increases environmental awareness, and emphasizes the development of well-rounded individuals. Thailand's education policy is increasingly embracing the idea of sustainable schools in line with the global sustainable development goals (SDGs) to ensure that education contributes to individual growth and community well-being (Mochizuki & Vickers, 2024; Yusof & Ariffin, 2021; Seesai et al., 2024). Sustainable schools in Thailand also prioritize integrating local knowledge and community engagement that fosters a closer connection between students and the surrounding environment. School management often incorporates green spaces, renewable energy, and waste management systems to demonstrate the practical application of sustainability. Moreover, the curriculum is designed to enhance academic skills and foster critical thinking, creativity, and ethical decision-making.

The concept underlies the treatment of long-term quality management models in education, especially in sustainable schools, by emphasizing continuous improvement processes (Bush-Mecenas, 2022; Klein et al., 2022; Rave et al., 2020). Schools that adopt this model focus on quality assurance mechanisms aligned with national education standards and sustainability goals (Janssens et al., 2022; Koh & Askill-Williams, 2021). The European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) model is one such framework that promotes a comprehensive approach to managing educational institutions (Gilouri & Shafiezadeh, 2024; Koh & Askill-Williams, 2021; Alraba'y et al., 2024). The model emphasizes leadership, strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, and data-driven decision-making to ensure long-term success and sustainable outcomes in school settings.

Existing research has mainly focused on general quality assurance systems without specific reference to long-term sustainability frameworks. Previous studies have highlighted the significant impact of quality management models such as EFQM in educational institutions. Studies have emphasized the role of the model in improving process management, stakeholder satisfaction, and organizational effectiveness (Đorđević et al., 2021; Morsali & Ataloo, 2021). Alauddin & Yamada (2022), Fonseca (2022) and Girmanová et al. (2022) align the EFQM 2020 model with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), highlighting its strategic focus on long-term value creation. Sütöová et al. (2022) emphasize process management as critical to improving performance, while Gianni et al. (2024) findings suggest that leadership and human resources are key drivers of satisfaction. However, there is still inconsistency in linking process improvement to overall stakeholder satisfaction. In the global context, especially in Europe, the EFQM model has been widely adopted to foster a culture of continuous improvement. However, research on its application in Southeast Asia, especially Thailand, is still limited.

Although the EFQM model has been proven effective in improving quality management in educational institutions globally, its application in the Thai school system still needs to be explored. Although a general quality management

framework has been applied, more specific studies need to focus on the EFQM model integrating into the cultural, environmental, and socio-economic contexts of the unique region of Thailand. This study seeks to fill this gap by examining the application of the EFQM model, specifically in the Thai school system, focusing on how the model contributes to long-term sustainability.

This study aims to explore the application of the EFQM Excellence Model in Thai schools with a specific focus on Darulbahar Al-Islammee Witthaya School, located in Sai Buri District, Pattani Province. The main objectives are to assess how the EFQM model contributes to long-term sustainable quality management in schools, evaluate its impact on leadership resource management, and improve school performance by integrating the EFQM framework in the context of a Thai Islamic educational institution. Thus, this study is expected to provide new insights into how sustainable schools can benefit from a structured quality management approach that encourages continuous improvement and aligns with Thailand's sustainable educational development goals.

RESEARCH METHOD

The selection of Darulbahar Al-Islammee Witthaya School in Sai Buri District, Pattani Province, Thailand, as the subject of the study, is rooted in its unique educational environment that blends traditional Islamic teachings with modern educational practices. The school is an ideal example for studying the implementation of the EFQM model due to its ongoing efforts towards educational excellence and sustainability. On the other hand, its cultural and geographical context provides valuable insights into how the quality management model can be adapted and implemented in the diverse educational landscape of southern Thailand. To achieve this, this study adopted a qualitative approach using a phenomenological method suitable for exploring the lived experiences of educators and administrators at school. The phenomenological approach allows for an in-depth understanding of how the EFQM model is perceived, implemented, and experienced by the school community (Köhler, 2024). By focusing on participants' lived experiences, this method provides rich descriptive insights into the impact of quality management on educational practices within the school's specific cultural and institutional context.

Data collection for this study was conducted through direct observation to ensure a comprehensive understanding of implementing the EFQM model at Darulbahar Al-Islammee Witthaya School. In-depth interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, including principals, teachers, and staff, to gather their perspectives on quality management practices. In addition, observations of school processes and activities were conducted to capture firsthand implementation of the model. Supporting documents, including school reports and policy documents, were also used to complement the interviews and observation data (Williams, 2021).

Data collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman approach to identify key patterns and themes related to implementing the EFQM model, which includes three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and data verification. The data were

organized, coded, and categorized based on recurring topics such as leadership, process management, and stakeholder engagement (Ezer & Aksüt, 2021). This approach allowed for an in-depth exploration of how the EFQM model impacted school operations and how it was adapted to the school's local context. The findings were then compared to existing principles of the EFQM framework and to other researchers' findings. The concept was to ensure the research findings' validity through several strategies. Triangulation analysis was used by comparing data from multiple sources, such as interviews, observations, and documents, to verify the consistency of the findings. These techniques contributed to the data's credibility, transferability, and reliability.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Enhanced Leadership and Strategy Alignment

The European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) model is a practical framework for continuous quality management in education that emphasizes continuous improvement and long-term excellence. By focusing on leadership, management and planning as well as strategy, processes, outcomes, and continuous evaluation, the model helps educational institutions align their operations with sustainable goals. The model promotes a comprehensive approach to quality management, integrating stakeholder needs and fostering a culture of continuous assessment and improvement. The concept ensures that schools meet immediate educational goals and maintain high standards over time, adapting to evolving educational challenges. The EFQM model integrates seamlessly with modern quality education by focusing on continuous improvement, adaptability, and stakeholder engagement.

Modern quality education emphasizes academic excellence and the development of critical thinking skills, problem-solving, and innovation, which prepare students for the dynamic challenges of the future. The structured approach of the EFQM model supports continuous quality by fostering leadership and process optimization, ensuring that educational institutions can maintain relevance, adapt to new educational trends, and sustain high performance in an ever-evolving educational landscape. Integrating the EFQM model at Darulbahar Al-Islammee Witthaya School supports its efforts to modernize its educational approach while maintaining its cultural and religious values. By emphasizing leadership, critical thinking, and innovation, the school aligns with the principles of modern quality education. The EFQM model's structured focus on process optimization helps the school adapt to new trends, ensuring that students achieve academic success and develop critical problem-solving skills for future challenges in a rapidly changing world.

The results of the interview with the head of the school stated that "The EFQM model has had a significant impact on our leadership approach. It has helped us focus on creating a long-term vision that aligns with sustainability goals. Leadership is now more collaborative, with clear roles and responsibilities, enabling better decision-making. The model encourages us to continuously assess and align our strategies with evolving educational needs, ensuring we remain relevant and future-ready," which, of course, cannot be separated from the concept

of effective leadership. The interview argument is based on the statement of the representative of the curriculum sector, who said, "The model has helped us align our curriculum with the school's long-term vision of sustainability. By focusing on leadership and strategic planning, we ensure that the curriculum not only addresses current educational standards but also prepares students for future challenges. Critical thinking, problem-solving, and adaptability are now integral to our approach, allowing the curriculum to support sustainable education and lifelong learning". The argument interview results show that the EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management) model has significantly impacted the leadership approach in schools.

Head school said, "By focusing on long-term goals, we ensure that our strategies are not only about academic achievement but also about preparing students for future challenges. This involves fostering critical thinking, adaptability, and social responsibility, all key elements of sustainable education". The principal explained that the model helps create a long-term vision that aligns with sustainability goals and promotes more collaborative leadership. With more apparent roles and responsibilities, better decisions can be made, and there is a drive to assess and align strategies to evolving educational needs continually. The concept ensures that the school remains relevant and future-ready.



Figure 1. Model Cycle Development in School

The Excellence Model in schools, in Figure 1, emphasizes a structured cycle for sustainable quality management. Leadership is key, where school leaders define a vision and strategies aligned with long-term quality goals. The head of the school said, "The model has transformed our leadership approach by helping us clearly define our vision and align it with sustainable quality goals. We now have a long-term strategy that focuses on both educational excellence and sustainability, ensuring that our leadership is proactive rather than reactive". Through careful planning and strategy deployment, schools develop policies reflecting stakeholder needs and sustainability objectives. Teachers and staff are actively involved in process management and innovation, while performance is measured through key performance indicators (KPIs). Continuous improvement is ensured through feedback, where results are analyzed to drive further enhancements, maintaining excellence over time.

Efficient Resource Management

Educational resource management is a strategic effort to optimize the use of various resources available in an educational institution to achieve educational goals effectively and efficiently. These resources include various aspects, namely teaching staff, facilities and infrastructure, time, funds, and technology. Good management involves planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating in a targeted manner so that each component can support each other in creating a conducive and sustainable learning environment. Educational resource management also emphasizes the importance of developing teaching staff and staff through training and providing adequate facilities to support the teaching and learning process. With effective management, educational institutions can improve the quality of education, meet curriculum standards, and prepare students to face future challenges.

Educational resource management at Darulbahar Al-Islammee Witthaya School plays an important role in achieving the school's vision, which focuses on the sustainability and quality of education. The school has implemented structured management principles in managing teaching staff, facilities, and curriculum aligned with long-term goals. With the support of the EFQM model, the school has succeeded in maximizing resources through collaboration between staff and a clear division of responsibilities. Adequate facilities, such as infrastructure with competent educators and education personnel, as well as the use of renewable energy and green learning spaces, are concrete examples of how resource management supports a better learning environment. In addition, good teacher competence can ensure that students receive relevant and quality learning and align with modern education needs and future challenges.

The head of the quality section said, "the school focuses on the optimal use of available resources, be it teaching staff, facilities, or funds. The school applies the principles of mature and sustainable planning to ensure that each component works synergistically in supporting the teaching and learning process". The interview results explained that the school applies the principles of mature and sustainable planning, where each component is carefully managed to support an effective learning process. Resource optimization is done so that all elements, from teaching staff to infrastructure, work synergistically, creating a learning environment that supports educational success.

School development certainly does not run smoothly and faces several challenges. The principal said, "Our biggest challenge is to ensure that every resource is managed in a balanced manner amidst budget constraints. However, we continue to strive to be innovative and find creative solutions". The argument also reflects that budget constraints are one of the school's challenges but are minor obstacles to continuing to improve the quality of education. The head school said, "We as managers hope to continue to improve the efficiency of resource management with a more data-based and technology-based approach, so that every decision taken can be more targeted" continued. The school also has an indicator table that serves as a guideline in implementing the progress of developing the quality of education.

Table 1. Resource Management Aspect

Resource Aspects	Indicator	Information
Educators	Number of teachers according to student needs	Ensure the teacher-to-student ratio is adequate for the quality of teaching
	Teacher qualifications and certification	Measure the level of professional qualifications of teachers
	Professional development programs for teachers	Evaluate the quantity and quality of teacher training on a regular basis
	Teacher attendance and engagement levels	Monitoring of teacher attendance and participation in school activities
Educational Facilities	Availability of decent classrooms	Ensure the availability and quality of physical facilities such as classrooms and laboratories
	Technological and infrastructure facilities	Availability of technology devices to support digital learning
	Sustainability-based facility management (energy, water, and green space)	Evaluation of the use of renewable energy, water management, and green space
Funds/Finance	Budget transparency and accountability	Transparent financial reporting to ensure effective fund management
	Budget allocation for the development of teacher facilities and training	Percentage of budget allocated for priority needs
	Efficiency in the use of funds in daily operations	Economical and effective use of funds for school operations
Curriculum	Curriculum adaptation with long-term goals and sustainability	Curriculum evaluation to ensure the integration of sustainability principles
	Involvement of educators in the preparation and evaluation of the curriculum	Teacher participation in curriculum development
	Teaching method innovation	Development of creative and adaptive teaching methods to change

Table 1 identifies key aspects that significantly improve school effectiveness, including teaching staff, facilities, funding, and curriculum. In teaching staff, indicators such as the appropriate number of teachers, qualifications, and professional training are essential to ensure the quality of teaching. Educational facilities are evaluated through the availability of adequate classrooms, the use of technology, and sustainable management, such as renewable energy. In managing funds, budget transparency, appropriate allocation for development, and efficient use of funds are top priorities. The curriculum is also assessed for its suitability to long-term goals and sustainability, teacher involvement in planning, and innovation in teaching methods. These indicators ensure optimal resource management to support quality and sustainable education.

Performance Measurement

Performance measurement is a systematic process used to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of various aspects of an organization, including education. Performance measurement in schools involves assessing student learning outcomes, the performance of educators, and the use of existing resources. Schools can identify strengths and weaknesses in the learning and teaching process by implementing various relevant metrics and indicators.

Performance measurement also provides a strong basis for decision-making, allowing management to formulate appropriate improvement strategies. The process encourages accountability and transparency and ensures that all parties are involved in improving education quality. Thus, performance measurement is an evaluation tool and a driver of innovation and continuous improvement in the educational environment.

Performance measurement can be done through supervision, which is a practical approach to ensure that educational standards are met and that the professional development of educators is going well. School leaders can directly monitor the learning process, provide constructive feedback, and identify areas for improvement through supervision. Development-focused supervision is an evaluation tool that encourages collaboration and sharing of best practices among teachers. By integrating performance measurement into the supervision process, schools can create an environment that supports teacher professional growth, which will positively impact the quality of education received by students. This approach helps ensure that every individual on the education team has the opportunity to grow, thus creating a better and more sustainable learning atmosphere.

Educational management at Darulbahar Al-Islamnee Witthaya School is crucial in creating a quality and sustainable learning environment. The school monitors and evaluates the learning process through a systematic supervision approach, allowing supervisors to provide constructive feedback to teachers. By integrating supervision results into educational management, the school can identify areas for improvement and design appropriate professional development programs. This research site highlights the importance of collaboration between management and supervisors in encouraging teaching innovation and efficient resource management. This improves educators' performance and positively impacts student learning outcomes, which aligns with the school's vision of achieving high and sustainable educational standards. Thus, supervision and educational management support each other in realizing the broader educational goals at Darulbahar Al-Islamnee Witthaya School.



Figure 2. Supervision Cycle

The supervision cycle, as shown in Figure 2 at Darulbahar Al-Islamnee Witthaya School, consists of several interrelated stages, starting with planning, where objectives and areas of focus for improvement are set, and performance indicators will be evaluated. In the observation stage, supervisors make direct observations of the classroom learning process, recording interactions between teachers and students, teaching methods, and the use of resources. Data is collected from various sources, including student feedback and evaluation results, to provide a comprehensive picture of educational performance. Once the data is

analyzed, constructive feedback is provided to teachers to help them understand strengths and weaknesses and design corrective actions that may include professional development and adjustments to teaching methods. Evaluation is conducted to measure the impact of the corrective actions that have been implemented, followed by reflection to assess the entire cycle and plan the next steps in the ongoing development effort.

Discussion

Implementing the EFQM model at Darulbahar Al-Islamnee Witthaya School has significantly improved school leadership, reflecting broader alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as noted by Fonseca (2022). The school leadership has adopted a collaborative and long-term approach that prioritizes sustainability, similar to findings by Gianni et al. (2024) on the importance of leadership and human resource management in fostering better roles, responsibilities, and decision-making. This shift underscores the model's effectiveness in enhancing educational excellence and adaptability. On the other hand, the analysis is in line with Sütőová et al. (2022) research, which highlights that effective process management is key to improving educational quality, referring to Alaudin's (2022) findings, which show how the EFQM model leads to the achievement of societal goals and institutional sustainability. Thus, these insights confirm the adaptability and success of the model across educational contexts.

Managing to balance limited budget resources with the school's growing needs. One of the main challenges was ensuring that all resources, such as faculty development, infrastructure improvements, and sustainability initiatives, were adequately funded. The principal highlighted that budget constraints sometimes hinder the ability to invest in innovative teaching methods or modern technology. However, despite these limitations, the school focused on finding creative solutions, such as adopting a data-driven and technology-driven approach to improve the efficiency of fund management. Analysis of educational resource management at Sekolah Darulbahar Al-Islamnee Witthaya revealed strategic resource optimization in line with principles outlined by researchers such as Jasti et al. (2022) and Kaplani (2022), who emphasize quality-oriented school management for long-term sustainability. The school's focus on effective resource use, particularly in areas such as faculty, facilities, and budget, mirrors findings, highlighting that internal quality systems are critical to improving student satisfaction and faculty development (Para-González et al., 2021; Menezes et al., 2021). Despite budget constraints, innovative management strategies, supported by the EFQM model, improved the school's ability to meet educational goals (Gilouri & Shafieezadeh, 2024; Jasti et al., 2022; Kaplani & Zafiroopoulos, 2022).

The concept of performance measurement and supervision in educational management, as implemented at Darulbahar Al-Islamnee Witthaya School, aligns with research findings by various experts. Research by Sunder (2022) shows that supervision that focuses on professional development can significantly improve the quality of teaching and student learning outcomes. In addition, research by Houiri and Qole (2021) emphasizes the importance of constructive feedback in the supervision process, which can encourage teachers to implement best practices

and innovations in learning. By integrating performance measurement into the supervision process, as is done at this school, institutions can create an environment that supports teacher professional growth and increases accountability (Romana et al., 2021). This is consistent with the Total Quality Management (TQM) framework proposed by Deming in Puebla and Aros (2024) and Romana et al. (2021), where performance measurement and continuous feedback serve as the foundation for continuous improvement. Thus, the integrated approach at Darulbahar Al-Islammee Witthaya School reflects best practices in educational management and contributes to achieving broader and sustainable educational goals.

CONCLUSION

Implementing the EFQM model at Darulbahar Al-Islammee Witthaya School shows that strengthened leadership and strategic alignment play a significant role in setting long-term vision and sustainability goals. Efficient resource management ensures the school can achieve cost efficiency and maintain operational sustainability. In addition, regular performance measurement and innovative teaching approaches, driven by this model, help create a sustainable educational environment and support the achievement of better quality education.

The findings of the study indicate that implementing the EFQM model in schools can improve leadership and sustainable resource management, thereby strengthening long-term educational strategies. The findings are expected to provide insight into how performance measurement and innovation in teaching approaches play a significant role in creating an efficient and quality educational environment. However, of course, the study has limitations in findings, including the lack of in-depth empirical data related to implementation in various types of schools and specific challenges that may be faced, such as budget constraints that can affect the optimal results of the implementation of the model.

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