Leading Change in the Asian Context

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Research Problem

This project will build on my prior research on change implementation in Thai primary and secondary schools. Small-scale case studies were conducted in Thai schools in order to identify indigenous conceptions of organizational change and then to compare these with Western theories. The results of the earlier research were used to adapt a computer simulation for use in training school leaders and teachers in how to more effectively manage change in their schools. Currently, the first tranche of personal research funds are being used to further verify and elaborate on the findings from the earlier round of case studies. In the current grant proposal, I wish to extend the research to conduct case studies of change in Vietnamese and Chinese schools. The results will be compared with the results obtained in Thailand.

Objectives

The objectives of this research include the following:

1. What are the key changes being implemented in their schools?

2. What is the pattern of progress in change implementation in their schools? How does that pattern of progress unfold over time?

3. What are the important obstacles and forms of resistance that impede successful change in their context?

4. How do they overcome these obstacles? Which obstacles have they been unable to overcome?

5. What roles do principals and other school leaders play foster change in their schools?

Project Description

1. The project will use qualitative methods, primarily interviews, but also observation to collect data in the schools. We will first conduct several rounds of focus group interviews with school principals. We will use open-ended questions for the interview, focusing on the objectives stated above. Based upon responses from the principals, we will then identify three schools in each country for more in-depth case studies.

2. I will work with my colleagues in the design of a case study methodology focusing on one specific change that is taking place in the schools. We may choose to focus on the same type of policy change in each of the schools. Additional interviews will be conducted with teachers in each of the case study schools in order to obtain their views on the process of change, obstacles and their motivations for responding positively to change.