

Enhancing Teacher Competency: Strategies and Patterns at Siritham Wittaya School

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ABSTRACT

Enhancing teacher competence is essential for improving educational quality. This study investigates effective planning, implementation, and evaluation patterns for teacher competency development at Sirithamwittaya School, a junior secondary school in Southern Thailand. A qualitative phenomenological approach was employed to explore the experiences of principals and teachers. Data were collected through observations, interviews, and document analysis to identify key patterns in teacher development. Three major patterns emerged. Planning involves structured collaboration through meetings among principals, teachers, and education staff, fostering a shared vision. Implementation utilizes diverse professional development methods, including training seminars, workshops, material writing training, and ICT training, to enhance teachers' skills. Evaluation is systematic, incorporating activity monitoring, collaborative problem-solving, and teacher recognition to maintain motivation and commitment. Findings underscore the significance of a collaborative approach and systematic evaluation in teacher development. Effective planning ensures alignment with educational goals, diverse implementation strategies enhance professional growth, and structured evaluation reinforces continuous improvement. This study suggests that the identified patterns can serve as a model for other schools seeking to enhance teacher competence and improve educational outcomes. Further research could explore their application in different educational contexts.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Improving teacher competence is one of the most important aspects of achieving quality education (Muttaqin, 2022; Sabara, 2022). Highly competent teachers can significantly influence education outcomes, especially in shaping the quality of a nation's human resources (Cholid, 2021; Nadhirah et al., 2024; Sukmara et al., 2023; Solehwonsakul et al., 2023). Improving teacher competencies in conflict-affected areas, such as in Southern Thailand, requires a comprehensive approach that includes targeted training and education reform (Fadla et al., 2022). One effective strategy is soft skills training, as conducted through the soft skills teacher camp of adventure training program in Pattani, Southern Thailand. The

program involved 30 teachers from six schools and focused on improving motivation, stress management, creativity, teamwork, communication, and, which significantly increased teacher commitment-an important factor in dealing with leadership challenges in conflict areas (Suyono & Buenae, 2020). In addition, the implementation of conflict-sensitive education through curriculum and pedagogy reform is crucial to promoting social justice and peace by addressing inequality and cultural repression in education. This approach aims to transform conflict-affected communities and ensure equal access to quality education (A, 2018; Pherali, 2021). Hasan (2019) the effectiveness of such initiatives can be evaluated through commitment assessments, such as those conducted in the Soft Skills Teacher Camp, which showed significant improvements in affective, normative and continuance commitments among participants (Kittipan et al., 2019). Overall, this strategy emphasizes the importance of equipping teachers with the necessary skills and frameworks to deal with the complexities of teaching in conflict-affected environments, ultimately contributing to stable and equitable educational outcomes (Nadiyah, 2022).

The quality of education is the provision of quality education in accordance with the objectives of using services that meet educational standards and are consistent with the needs of service recipients by using a quality education administration process (Safitri at all., 2019). In the strategy that can be taken includes efforts to improve educational welfare, which can be done through coaching conducted by the principal for teachers (Sufyerny, 2021). The purpose of quality education is to provide education so that students can develop until their characteristics meet educational standards in accordance with curriculum objectives and consistent with the needs of service recipients (Angnoi, 2020). Teacher competencies must exist in every aspect to be complete and successful in their careers and bring sustainability to the teacher professional organization (Minardi & Akbar, 2020). In this case, the role of teachers is very important in achieving educational goals during the education process both in formal, informal, and non-formal institutions, no matter how good the learning materials designed and provided to students with the support of various books, learning media, and infrastructure available at school, without qualified teachers and the learning process will not go well (Monoarfa & Haling, 2021).

Sirithamwittaya School is located in Narathiwat province, a region on Thailand's southern border that has been plagued by conflict for many years (Azzumar & Rohim, 2023). In this province, it was found that only about 15% of school-aged children have basic reading skills, far below the national average of 47% (National Bureau of Statistics, 2023). This indicates significant educational inequalities, especially when compared to other provinces in Thailand (Munawir, 2022; National Institute of Educational Testing Service, 2023). Teachers at Sirithamwittaya School face significant challenges such as lack of access to competency training, limited utilization of information and communication technology (ICT) and low digital literacy skills. Despite government intervention through policy and budget allocation, the growth of teacher training in computer use slowed after COVID-19, indicating that access to training remains limited (Rawal, 2024). Furthermore, there is a positive correlation between training in computer use and the availability of digital facilities in schools, confirming the importance of digital infrastructure in improving the utilization of digital resources for educational equity (Sudarajat, 2020). The low digital literacy skills of teachers also indicates the need to improve digital competencies through adequate infrastructure and learning organization support to motivate stakeholders in digital internalization (Pinim, 2020). Therefore, addressing these challenges requires continuous collaboration, improved digital infrastructure, systematic training and monitoring of professional development programs to strengthen teachers' readiness to face the demands of digital-based education (Bagou, 2020). All these challenges reinforce the urgency of research on improving teacher competencies in this area.

Improving teachers' competencies at Sirithamwittaya School faces major challenges, such as a lack of ongoing training, limited time for principals to provide support, and government training that is only organized once a year with a limited number of participants. These limitations hamper teachers' professional development efforts in a comprehensive and sustainable manner (Jayanti et al. 2024). As a lesson learned, the school improvement program in Pakistan shows that developing teachers' leadership as internal change agents can be an effective strategy to improve education quality. Through this program, teachers are encouraged to take a leadership role in school improvement efforts, which is proven to

increase their confidence and competence (Suherman et al., (2021). Therefore, to address the challenges at Sirithamwittaya School, a similar approach that prioritizes teacher leadership development and institutional capacity building can be applied. This strategy not only improves teacher competence but also promotes sustainable positive change within the school environment (Daroini, 2019; Prasetyo et al., 2020). Royani (2020) states that teachers have a very important role in developing students into good, talented humans who are up-to-date with the world of teaching and learning. In improving teacher competence, it is necessary to provide higher quality education, because it will directly impact the quality of education provided by educational institutions (Pohan, (2020). Thus, teacher competence is expected to be improved to guarantee quality education.

This research has the potential to make a significant contribution to educational development in conflict areas by providing practical recommendations on how to effectively improve teachers' competencies. The results of this study are expected to not only help Sirithamwittaya School in improving the quality of its education, but also provide insights for other schools in similar areas, as well as for education policy makers. With this research, it is hoped that a pattern can be found that can be applied in planning, implementing and evaluating teacher competency improvement in conflict areas such as Southern Thailand.

2. METHODS

This study uses a phenomenological approach that aims to explore the subjective experiences of educators regarding teacher competency development, especially at Sirithamwittaya School which is located in a conflict area in Southern Thailand. This approach allows researchers to understand the meaning of educators' lived experiences related to the challenges faced and strategies used in developing teacher competencies in areas with complex socio-political conditions (Sugiyono, 2019). Research participants consisted of principals, vice principals, teachers, and administrative staff selected through purposive sampling, based on their important roles in planning, implementing, and evaluating teacher competency development (Sugiyono, 2019). Data were collected through direct observation of teacher training activities, in-depth interviews with participants to explore their experiences and views, and analysis of school documents, including performance reports and training policies (Miles, M.B, Huberman, A.M, & Saldana, 2014)

Data validity was ensured through triangulation of sources and techniques by comparing interviews, observations, and school documents to ensure the reliability and consistency of findings (Sugiyono, 2020). Data analysis was conducted using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, & Saldana (2014), which includes data condensation, data presentation in main themes, and conclusion drawing through re-verification. Data from various sources were then processed into thematic narratives that made it easier to see patterns and relationships between variables that emerged. The results of this study are expected to provide a comprehensive picture of teacher competency development at Sirithamwittaya School and can provide practical guidance for school managers and policy makers in similar areas, especially those in conflict areas (Sugiyono, 2022).

The implementation of this research experienced several limitations, which were caused by several factors (Greswell, 2014). The information obtained from the documents related to information obtained from documents related to improving teachers' competencies was limited, because most of the documents were inaccessible or confidential, there were limitations in obtaining information from observations of school activities and interactions with principals, as not all activities could be observed or conducted during all activities could be observed or conducted during the research took place, and the author sincerely hopes that this simple research can provide meaningful input for many people this simple research can provide meaningful input for many parties related to the development and improvement of parties related to coaching and improving the competence of educators.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Findings

This study identified key findings related to the teacher competency development process at Sirithamwittaya School, which is divided into three main stages: planning, implementation, and evaluation. Each stage is explained in detail to provide a clearer understanding of how teacher competency development is carried out at this school.

3.1.1 Teacher Competency Development Planning

The planning process for improving teacher competence at Sirithamwittaya School is characterized by collaborative efforts, needs assessments, and structured activities aimed at addressing specific educational needs. The planning phase is crucial for establishing a solid foundation for teacher competency improvement. At Sirithamwittaya School, the principal plays a pivotal role in orchestrating this process. The first step involves forming a dedicated team comprising teachers and educational staff. This team is responsible for identifying the specific competencies that require enhancement, ensuring that the planning process is inclusive and reflective of the actual needs within the school.

A comprehensive needs assessment is conducted to gather data on the current competencies of teachers and the areas that require development. This assessment includes surveys, interviews, and discussions with teachers to understand their perspectives on professional development needs. By engaging teachers in this process, the principal fosters a sense of ownership and collaboration, which is essential for the success of the planned activities. Once the needs are identified, the planning team organizes various activities tailored to address these needs. These activities include seminars, workshops, and training sessions focused on specific skills such as lesson planning, classroom management, and the integration of technology in teaching. The planning process also involves setting clear objectives for each activity, ensuring that they align with the overall goal of improving educational quality.

Budget considerations are an integral part of the planning phase. The principal, along with the planning team, evaluates the financial resources available and allocates funds accordingly to support the planned activities. This careful budgeting ensures that the school can effectively implement the training programs without financial constraints. Regular meetings are held to discuss the progress of the planning process, allowing for adjustments based on feedback and emerging needs. These meetings serve as a platform for sharing insights and refining strategies, further enhancing the collaborative nature of the planning phase. The principal's leadership in these meetings is vital, as it encourages open communication and collective problem-solving among staff.

In summary, the planning process at Sirithamwittaya School is a structured and collaborative effort that involves forming a team, conducting needs assessments, and organizing targeted activities. This approach not only addresses the specific competencies that need improvement but also fosters a sense of community and shared responsibility among teachers.

3.1.2 Implementation of Training Program

Implementing teacher competence improvement initiatives at Sirithamwittaya School involves various training activities, both within the school and externally, aimed at enhancing teachers' skills and knowledge. The implementation phase is where the plans developed during the planning stage come to fruition. At Sirithamwittaya School, the principal oversees the execution of the planned activities, ensuring that they are carried out effectively and align with the identified needs of the teachers. The implementation process is divided into two main categories: activities conducted within the school and those that take place externally. Various training workshops and seminars are organized at the school (Zega, 2016). These sessions focus on critical areas such as pedagogical strategies,

classroom management techniques, and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in teaching. By providing these training opportunities, the school aims to equip teachers with the necessary skills to enhance their teaching practices.

In addition to internal training, the school also facilitates external learning opportunities for teachers. This includes sending teachers to attend seminars and workshops hosted by educational organizations or government bodies. These external activities expose teachers to new ideas, methodologies, and best practices from other educational institutions, enriching their professional development experience. A unique aspect of the implementation phase at Sirithamwittaya School is the establishment of regular weekly and monthly meetings. These meetings serve as a platform for teachers to share insights gained from training sessions and discuss their application in the classroom. This practice not only reinforces the learning from the training but also fosters a culture of continuous improvement and collaboration among staff. Teachers are encouraged to reflect on their experiences and provide feedback on the training activities, which helps in refining future programs. The principal plays a crucial role in monitoring the implementation process, ensuring that the activities are conducted as planned and that they meet the established objectives. Regular evaluations during this phase allow for timely adjustments to be made, addressing any challenges that may arise. This proactive approach ensures that the training remains relevant and effective in meeting the needs of the teachers.

In conclusion, the implementation of teacher competence improvement initiatives at Sirithamwittaya School is characterized by a diverse range of training activities, both internal and external. The principal's oversight, combined with regular meetings for sharing insights, contributes to a dynamic and responsive implementation process that effectively enhances teachers' skills and knowledge.

3.1.3 Evaluation of Competency Development Program

The evaluation process at Sirithamwittaya School assesses the effectiveness of teacher competence improvement initiatives, providing insights for future planning and implementation. Evaluation is a critical component of the teacher competence improvement process, as it allows the school to assess the effectiveness of the initiatives undertaken. At Sirithamwittaya School, the evaluation process is systematic and involves several key steps. The principal and the planning team establish predetermined standards against which the activities are measured. These standards are based on the objectives set during the planning phase and serve as benchmarks for evaluating the success of the training initiatives. The evaluation process includes collecting data on the outcomes of the training activities, such as teacher performance, student engagement, and overall educational quality.

Feedback from teachers is an essential part of the evaluation process. After each training session, teachers are encouraged to provide their insights and reflections on the effectiveness of the training. This feedback is invaluable, as it highlights areas of success and identifies aspects that may need improvement. The principal facilitates discussions during evaluation meetings, allowing teachers to voice their opinions and contribute to the evaluation process actively. In cases where the evaluation reveals deviations from the established standards, the principal takes corrective actions to address these issues. This may involve modifying training content, adjusting the delivery methods, or providing additional support to teachers. The goal is to ensure that the teacher competence improvement program remains aligned with the school's objectives and continues to provide maximum benefits. The evaluation findings are also used to inform future planning efforts. By analyzing the data collected during the evaluation process, the principal and the planning team can identify trends, strengths, and weaknesses in the current program. This information is crucial for making informed decisions about future training initiatives and ensuring that they are responsive to the evolving needs of the teachers and the school.

In summary, the evaluation process at Sirithamwittaya School is a comprehensive and reflective practice that assesses the effectiveness of teacher competence improvement initiatives. By establishing

standards, collecting feedback, and making necessary adjustments, the school ensures that its programs are effective and aligned with its educational goals.

3.2 Discussion

The results of this study show how teacher competency development in Sirithamwittaya School, especially in the context of a conflict area, can be done through careful planning, implementation of ongoing training programs, and comprehensive evaluation. In this section, the main findings of the study will be further analyzed to understand the practical and theoretical implications of the teacher competency development program in the school. In addition, the challenges faced and recommendations for future program improvement will be discussed.

3.2.1 Teacher Competency Development Planning

The planning patterns identified in this study highlight the critical role of structured and collaborative planning in enhancing teacher competence at Sirithamwittaya School. The principal's approach to organizing special meetings with teachers and educational staff is a strategic move that aligns with contemporary educational leadership theories. According to Handoko (2003), effective planning involves setting clear objectives, developing strategies, and allocating resources to achieve desired outcomes. This study's findings support this notion, as the principal's planning process included a thorough needs analysis to identify the specific competencies that required enhancement among teachers. Figure 1.

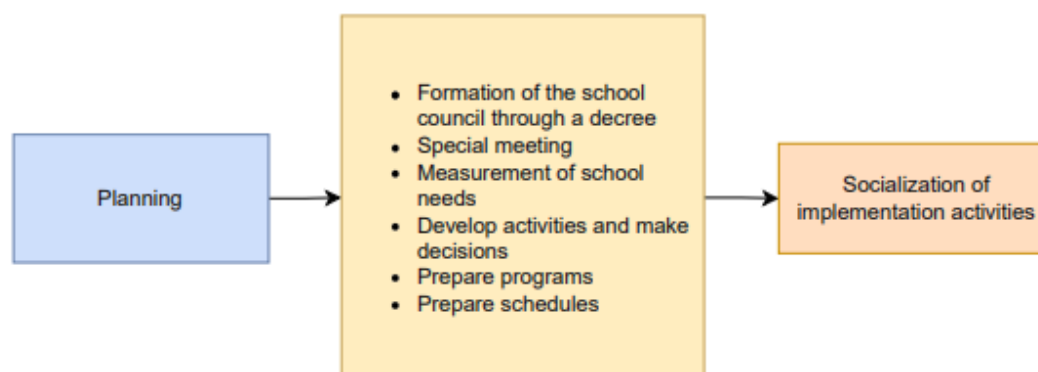


Figure1. Planning pattern for improving teacher competencies at Siritham Wittaya School.

The collaborative nature of the planning process is particularly noteworthy. By involving teachers in discussions about their professional development needs, the principal fosters a sense of ownership and accountability among staff. This participatory approach is consistent with the findings of Rahman (2022), who emphasizes that engaging educators in the planning process leads to more relevant and effective professional development initiatives. Furthermore, the establishment of school councils to facilitate these discussions demonstrates a commitment to shared leadership, which is essential for creating a positive school culture and improving educational outcomes.

However, the study also revealed challenges associated with the planning process. Time constraints and varying levels of teacher engagement can hinder the effectiveness of planning initiatives. For instance, some teachers may feel overwhelmed by their existing responsibilities, making it difficult for them to actively participate in planning meetings. To address these challenges, it is essential for school leaders to create a supportive environment that prioritizes professional development. This could involve scheduling planning sessions during less busy periods or providing incentives for teachers to engage in the planning process.

Moreover, the need for ongoing professional development is critical in a rapidly changing educational landscape. As highlighted by Yuliana et al. (2019), continuous learning is essential for teachers to adapt to new teaching methodologies and technologies. Therefore, the planning process should not be a one-time event but rather an ongoing cycle of assessment, reflection, and adjustment. Future research could explore the effectiveness of various planning models and their impact on teacher competence, particularly in diverse educational contexts.

In summary, the planning patterns observed at Sirithamwittaya School underscore the importance of collaborative and strategic planning in enhancing teacher competence. By involving teachers in the planning process and addressing the challenges associated with engagement, school leaders can create a more effective framework for professional development. This approach not only improves teacher skills but also contributes to a positive school culture that values continuous improvement and shared responsibility.

3.2.2 Implementation of Training Program

The implementation patterns identified in this study reveal a comprehensive approach to professional development that encompasses both in-school and out-of-school activities. The principal's commitment to providing a variety of training opportunities, including workshops, seminars, and comparative studies, reflects a deep understanding of the diverse needs of teachers (Yin et al., 2019). This multifaceted approach is supported by the literature, which emphasizes the importance of varied professional development experiences in fostering teacher growth. Figure 2.

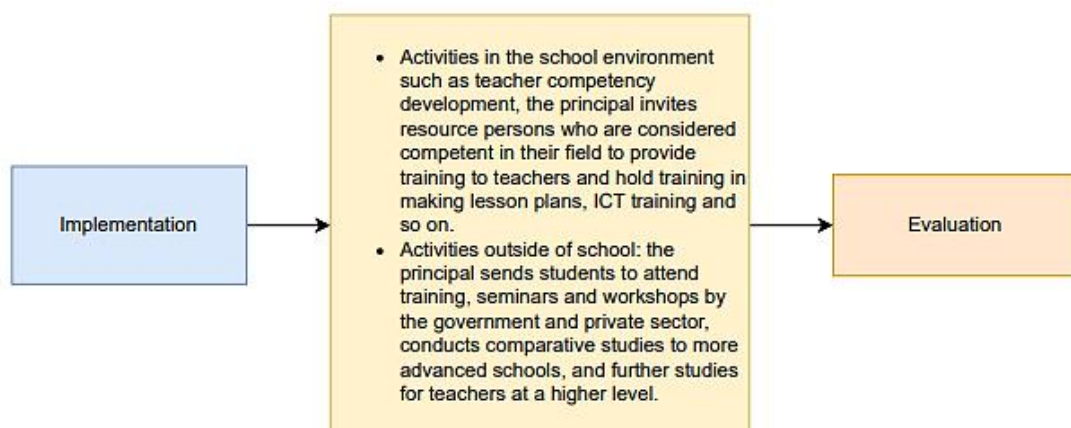


Figure 2. Implementation of improving teacher competence at Sirithamwittaya School.

In-school training activities, such as workshops on teaching materials and ICT training, are particularly significant in enhancing teachers' practical skills. These hands-on experiences allow educators to apply new knowledge in real-time, thereby increasing the likelihood of successful implementation in the classroom. The emphasis on ICT training is especially relevant in today's digital age, where technology plays a crucial role in education. By equipping teachers with the necessary skills to integrate technology into their teaching practices, the principal is not only enhancing their competence but also preparing them to meet the demands of modern education.

Out-of-school activities, such as sending teachers to external seminars and conducting comparative studies with more advanced schools, further enrich the professional development experience. These opportunities expose teachers to new ideas and best practices, fostering a culture of continuous learning and innovation. However, the study also identified challenges related to the implementation of these activities. For instance, logistical issues, such as transportation and funding,

can limit teachers' ability to participate in external training. Additionally, the sporadic nature of training sessions may lead to gaps in knowledge and skills.

To address these challenges, it is essential for school leaders to establish strong partnerships with external organizations and educational institutions. Collaborating with universities and professional development providers can help secure resources and support for teachers' training needs. Furthermore, creating a structured schedule for professional development activities can ensure that teachers have consistent opportunities to engage in learning. In conclusion, the implementation patterns observed at Sirithamwittaya School demonstrate a commitment to providing teachers with diverse and meaningful professional development experiences. By addressing the challenges associated with implementation and fostering a culture of continuous learning, school leaders can enhance teacher competence and ultimately improve student outcomes. Future research should focus on evaluating the long-term impact of these professional development initiatives on teacher performance and student achievement.

3.2.3 Evaluation of Competency Development Program

The evaluation patterns identified in this study are crucial for ensuring the effectiveness of professional development initiatives aimed at improving teacher competence. The principal's systematic approach to evaluating the outcomes of training activities reflects a commitment to evidence-based practice in education. As noted by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), effective evaluation involves collecting and analyzing data to inform decision-making and improve educational practices. Figure 3.

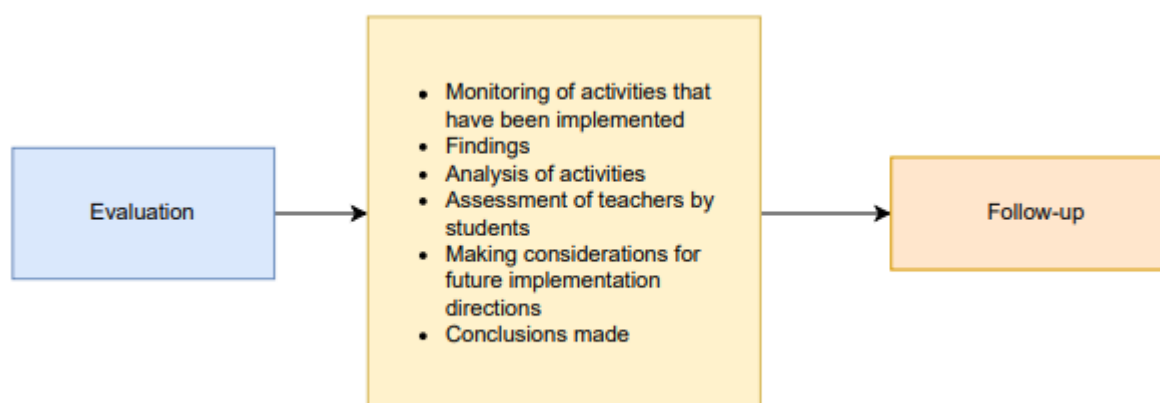


Figure 3. Evaluation pattern for improving teacher competence at Sirithamwittaya School

The study found that the principal employed a variety of evaluation methods, including feedback from teachers, analysis of training outcomes, and alignment with predetermined standards. This comprehensive approach allows for a nuanced understanding of the effectiveness of professional development activities. By involving teachers in the evaluation process, the principal fosters a collaborative environment where educators feel valued and empowered to contribute to the school's development. This aligns with the findings of Widodo (2021), who emphasizes the importance of teacher agency in educational reform.

However, the study also identified challenges related to the evaluation process. For instance, potential bias in self-assessments can skew the results and lead to inaccurate conclusions about the effectiveness of training activities. Additionally, the lack of a structured evaluation framework may result in inconsistent data collection and analysis. To address these challenges, it is essential for school leaders to implement standardized evaluation tools that provide objective insights into teacher performance and development. Furthermore, the evaluation process should not be viewed as a one-time event but rather as an ongoing cycle of assessment and improvement. Continuous feedback and

reflection are essential for ensuring that professional development initiatives remain relevant and effective. Future research could explore innovative evaluation methods, such as peer assessments and student feedback, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of teacher competence and the impact of professional development on student learning.

In summary, the evaluation patterns observed at Sirithamwittaya School highlight the importance of systematic and collaborative evaluation in enhancing teacher competence. By addressing the challenges associated with evaluation and fostering a culture of continuous improvement, school leaders can ensure that professional development initiatives are effective and aligned with the needs of teachers and students. This approach not only enhances teacher skills but also contributes to improved educational outcomes and a positive school culture. Future research should focus on refining evaluation practices and exploring their impact on teacher performance and student achievement.

4. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study shows that teacher competency development at Sirithamwittaya School was carried out through a structured approach, including collaborative planning, diverse training methods, and systematic evaluation. Planning involving the active participation of principals and teachers, followed by the implementation of training programs such as seminars, workshops, and coaching sessions, proved effective in improving teacher competency, especially in the use of ICT. Periodic evaluations, through surveys and observations, provided important feedback for continuous improvement. These findings highlight that the model implemented at Sirithamwittaya School can be an effective framework for other educational institutions to improve teacher competency. However, this study has limitations, especially in terms of potential bias or constraints in data collection, and it has not been able to explore the long-term impact of this training program on teaching quality. Further research is needed to see how this training program contributes to improving the quality of learning in the long term. Ultimately, this approach suggests that active collaboration between principals and teachers is essential in the competency development process, and other schools are encouraged to adopt similar strategies to improve the overall quality of education.

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