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A case study in Nongkungsriwittayakarn school for guidelines in decreasing student violence in school through mediation

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Abstract

This study identifies the current situation and problems of violence among students, and thus proposes guidelines for decreasing student violence through mediation in Nongkungsriwittayakarn School, under the Office of Secondary Educational Service Area 24. Conflict in Thai society is increasing due to the rapid change in human behavior in society caused by the change in social rules. Emergent techniques of conflict management are needed to overcome these serious security problems. This study was carried out in two phases. The researchers utilized a qualitative method case study design. Descriptive analysis was also applied in this study. Findings showed that physical violence occurred most frequently, followed by mental abuse. After implementing the process of decreasing student violence through mediation, via focus group sessions, results from the study are able to provide administrators and teachers with guidelines for decreasing violence in school.

Keywords: Student violence, mediation, guidelines, security problem

1. Introduction

Conflict in Thai society has increased while people’s behavior has rapidly changed according to the changes in social rules. There were many different problems in managing resources, nature and environment. Consequently, mistrust of the public sector, changes in the global situation and conflict in the country took place while the government implemented various large projects. It was clear from this that Thai society needed to urgently review and develop its techniques of conflict management, as current techniques were insufficient in order to restore calm to society. The current use of violence would have a high social cost leading to hostility. Thus, it was a serious problem for security (Wattanasap, 1999).

School administrators had a hand on educational management and played a vital role in creating a successful school that produced quality students. They are trusted by parents, the community and society. Decreasing student violence is a priority and school administrators need to take responsibility for educating students, their

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families, the community and society in general, in order to be diligent and persistent in their self-development, to be honest, disciplined, attentive to their environment, have an appreciation for knowledge, know how to search for knowledge correctly, as well as apply it effectively for themselves, their community, society and the global society.

According to Namwongsa's case study of Ban-kam-kan School (2010), the guidelines for reducing student violence in school through mediation, under the jurisdiction of the Office of Khon Kaen Educational Service Area 2, found that students had the process skills to effectively use mediation to successfully resolve any problems for all concerned. Problems were solved in school because they accepted their own faults without being forced. Students were thus given the opportunity to consider what they had done in addition to viewing evidence and having witnesses.

Watanasap (2005) stated that the process of mediation would allow students to have a place to sit down and discuss what had happened, and know how to deal with problems in the future. Additionally, there was the opportunity to get to know and understand students a lot better. Furthermore, there was a mechanism put in place to manage contributing factors which were the cause of student violence. Every school had to introduce a student support system and classify students according to risk so they could be monitored closely.

2. Statement of the problem

Society was in a high risk situation. The responsibility for solving problems of student conflict was that of the Ministry of Education and the National Police Office. The major task of these two organizations was to fully commit to controlling the problem of student violence. They believed they would be successful if the two mechanisms, education and the use of police troops, were employed. However, incidents which happened and developed appeared to be out of control. Even school administrators had to accept that student fighting was a chronic problem (Laksanawisit, 2010).

A policy and Planning Group at Nongkungsriwittayakarn School (2009) aimed at bringing about an end to the violence, advised students to behave themselves and respect school rules. The curriculum for being good a citizen and a proud Thai was established.). Much of the conflict was due to a lot of adolescents ganging together, and this mainly happened in school. Therefore, school was considered as the source of growing violence. Stories appeared in the media detailing the violence in schools (Institute for Dispute Resolution, Khon Kaen University and Khon Kaen Justice, 2009).

According to the findings, as a result of the implementation of the student support system to monitor troublesome students in Nongkungsriwittayakarn School; in the 2009 school year, they indicated that attempts at solving conflict among students were not successful, as turmoil still occurred either inside or outside the classroom, despite the best efforts of teachers, students and parents. If these kinds of conflict could not be resolved peacefully, it might expand into cases of serious violence.

This study is more specifically aimed at answering the following questions:

a. What is the current situation and problems of student violence in Nongkungsriwittayakarn School?
b. What guidelines have been proposed and recommended to reduce student violence in Nongkungsriwittayakarn School by using mediation?

3. Research objectives

a. To study the current situation and problems of student violence in Nongkungsriwittayakarn school.
b. To find guidelines for reducing student violence in Nongkungsriwittayakarn school by using mediation.
4. Scope of the study

The four types of violence include physical violence, sexual violence, mental abuse and violence causing loss or neglecting or desertion was the scope of the students' violence. Guidelines for decreasing student violence by using mediation based on a synthesized model from document applying into school context, consisted of six steps as follows: (i) selection of student representatives; (ii) training to provide knowledge; (iii) training mediators; (iv) field trip studies for mediators; (v) practice for a real situation in school, and (vi) conclusion and evaluation.

5. Methodology

3.1. Population and samples

The first phase of the study employed a survey method to investigate the current situation and problems of student violence in Nongkungsriwittayakarn School. The target group consisted of five school administrators, seven teachers from the student affairs division and 250 parents of students by using purposive sampling. Meanwhile, a total of 310 students were selected from the population of 1,600. The total sample size for this survey was 572.

The target group for the second phase of the study comprised of 19 respondents, including a teacher and 18 student representatives in order to create the guidelines for alleviating student violence in Nongkungsriwittayakarn School.

The method used for the third phase was focus group discussion to assure the guidelines for reducing violence. The target group involved in this phase comprised of seven participants, namely one school assistant director, three teachers from the student affairs division and three student representatives.

3.2. Research design and Instrument

The research design employed was a case study mixed mode method, which involved three phases of implementation. There were two types of instrument used for the first phase in order to study the current situation and problems of student violence. The aforementioned instruments were a checklist for a target group of students and parents and interview questions for a target group of teachers and school administrators. In addition, observation forms and focus group discussion questions were used as instruments for the second and the third phases.

6. Findings

The study revealed that physical violence was most common in Nongkungsriwittayakarn School. This is perhaps because students were in adolescence and found it hard to control their emotions, thus quarrels were quite frequent. The second most common problem was mental abuse as students came from different backgrounds; in fact, most of them came from broken homes. These students thought that they had been abandoned and were not taken care of. Violence caused by neglect and desertion was not evident in the study. This is perhaps because the school provides students with a “support system”, managed by teachers from the student affairs division. The same was true for sexual violence. The problem of sexual violence was not evident as most of the students stay with their families or relatives.

According to the students' responses, a total of 65.5 percent of them stated that mental abuse was the most serious problem, whereas sexual violence was the least serious problem (5.2%). However, findings from the
school administrators and teachers indicated that physical violence was the most serious problem (13.2%) and violence causing loss or neglecting was the least serious (5.2%).

From the views of the school administrators and teachers, it was found that for physical violence, students never be abused or abused by others. As for sexual violence, most students had never been abused and had never seen their friends being abused. And for mental violence, students were hurt by insults and slander and the like.

7. Discussion

From the findings of the implementation of mediation to reduce student violence, teachers and students developed efficient mediation techniques to alleviate student violence in school. Researchers conducted the research based on six phases. It was found that the problem of student violence has not increased. However, it was likely to decrease with the extension of the students’ target group and word also being spread to their friends. Consequently, awareness of the importance to reduce student violence grew among their friends. After experiencing the process of mediation, the opposing parties who used to quarrel forgave each other and became friends, resolving not to quarrel again. This finding was supported by Thamma's findings (2007), which found that the guidelines for developing the concerting process of conflict management of the Khon Kaen Court include: the introduction, the determination of dispute issues, the needs of the two parties, implementation, surveying and investigating of dispute issues in conference only one side, problem solving in conflict of disputation, establishment of contract for being compromised, in overall was at high level.

In addition, this finding was supported by Chamnanwech's (2007) study on creating guidelines for finding peaceful solutions to violence. Chamnanwech suggested that the solution process should focus on the special care of students as well as on the inculcation for knowing what was right or wrong, social discipline and also on being a role model for teenagers. Furthermore, the guidelines for decreasing violence in school through mediation had been studied by some researchers, like Sangian (2010), Talabkaew (2010), Kedisriyotin (2010) and Namwongsa (2010). All these studies revealed that both parties forgave each other, became friends, helped each other and promised that they would never quarrel again by signing their names in daily record of the command decision. THIS after using the mediation technique.

8. Conclusion

To solve the problem of student violence in school, teachers from every division of the school have to collaborate to search for the problem solving technique. They need to train their students to be patient and understanding. Based on student enrollment, those students who are qualified to be mediators should be mature, being selected since the “credit” is necessary in mediation. Training needs to be conducted in order to provide basic knowledge and practice given in role playing situations (simulations). Furthermore, the other focus that should not be neglected is a topic related to the alleviation of violence, that of the creation of unity in society.

In training situations, students have to be skillful as mediators. Those who participated in role playing should be given more time to prepare themselves, as well as being informed in advance so that they are able to play their roles as if in a real situation. Field trip studies need to be arranged for students to places such as the Justice Court, Provincial Protection Institute and others, in order to compare mediation from each province.

An appropriate and suitable room needs to be prepared for conducting the mediation techniques. This is because the whole negotiation process involving cases of conflict would be conducted privately and confidentially. The implementation of the mediation process needs to be carried out continuously, according to the guidelines in lowering student violence. Therefore, further training and projects should be organized to develop the new cohort of mediators to replace senior mediators.
9. Recommendations

More research is recommended to be carried out in order to study the specific aspect of violence, such as physical, emotional, social and intellectual violence, so that the problem can be solved directly. The duration of study time should be extended in order to compare the information obtained based on the usefulness of the model to reduce student violence in school. The guidelines created for decreasing student violence in school by using mediation should be demonstrated to other schools or educational institutions to lowering the problem of violence on a wider scale. Finally, the findings of the study should be used for establishing a handbook of guidelines for reducing student violence in schools.

References


