

THE CURRENT AND DESIRABLE STATES OF THE EDUCATION MANAGEMENT REFORM FOR QUALITY CITIZENSHIP IN THE KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA

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Abstract: The objectives of this study were 1) To study the conceptual framework of education management reform and quality citizenship; 2) To study the current and desirable states of education management reform for enhancing the quality citizenship in Cambodia. The samples were 710 respondents, consisting of education policymakers, department Directors, school administrators, teachers, School Support Committee, students and stakeholders. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to find out the mean and S.D. The findings of the study revealed that 1) conceptual framework of education management reform consists of four components: administrative management, academic management, education finance management, and personnel management reform, and the conceptual framework of the quality citizenship consists of quality national citizen and global citizen, and 2) the overall current states of the education management reform is at a middle level (M=3.13; S.D =0.66) in all aspects, and desirable states of the education management reform is at the high level (M=4.28; S.D=0.53).

Keywords: Education Management Reform/ Quality Citizenship/ Priority Need Index.

Introduction

Humanity in the 21st century is facing major challenges, ranging from global terrorism and climate change to the backlash against globalization. Moreover, the world is now at the dawn of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, shaped by globalization, the unfolding technological transformation, triggered by the confluence of emerging technology breakthroughs (Schwab, 2016). The skills necessary to get a job today will be different in the future due to automation (Thomson, 2016).

The education reform should provide response to help humanity cope with the above challenges (Woessmann, 2011). To meet future needs of the economy, education reforms should be implemented by both developed and developing countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), notable lifelong learning, with strong emphasis on the 21st century skills. Since 2013, the Cambodian Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) has embarked on education management reform (MoEYS, 2016).

Research Objectives

1. To study the conceptual framework of education management reform and the quality citizenship

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2. To study the current and desirable states of education management reform for enhancing the quality citizenship in Cambodia.

Literature Review

There are different theories of educational management, because it is based on conceptual pluralism (Bolman & Deal, 1984) cited in (Bush & Bell, 2009). The research conceptual framework was developed based on previous national and international research papers and academic articles. The objectives are to establish the link between education management reform and quality citizenship. There is a large body of research related to education management reforms and quality citizenship. Educational management reforms cover wide-ranging issues. Research on systemic educational management reform is well advanced and may be found in Conley (1993); Anson (1994); Fuhrman, Elmore, & Massell (1993); Fullan (2007); Glewwe (2013); Pritchett (2015); Education Commission (2016), among others. The results of the research revealed that successful educational management reforms require two conditions: (i) systemic reform, that ensures (ii) coordination between top-down and bottom-up reforms (Anson, 1994; Fullan, 2007).

A systemic education management reform includes many aspects of education services, such as curriculum, content standards, student assessment, School-Based Management (SBM), the use of technology, accountability system, teacher preparation, professional teacher development, teachers’ performance, governance structure and public support, policy changes to school financing (Anson, 1994; Fuhrman, 1993; Tiongson, 2005; Ouellette, 2000). UNESCO (1989) considers educational management as a multidimensional paradigm, which is composed of four interacting dimensions: the economic, pedagogical, political, and cultural.

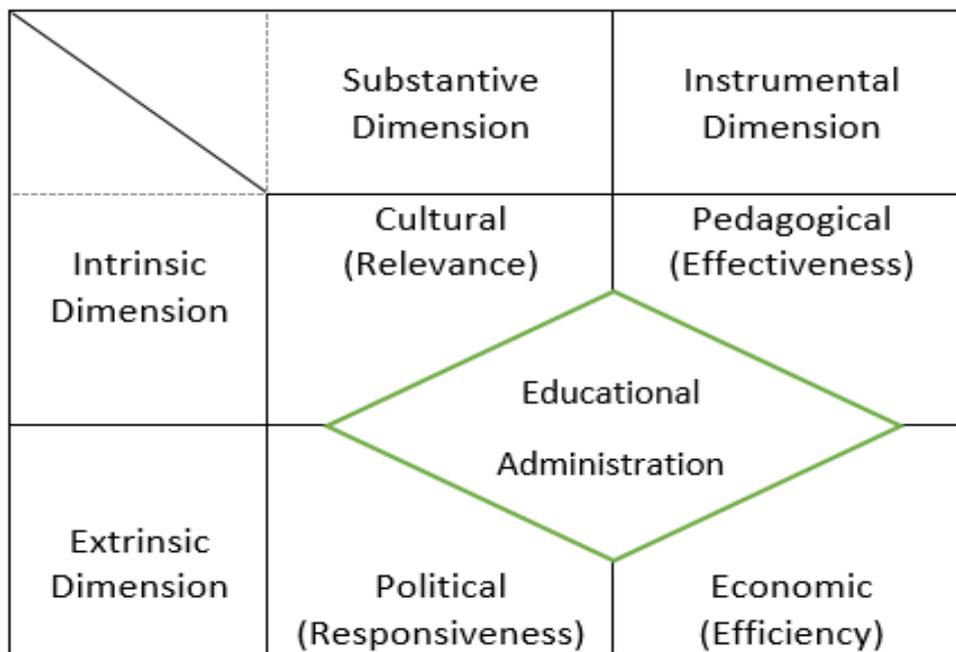


Figure 1: A Multidimensional Paradigm of Educational Management (UNESCO, 1989).

Education concepts developed in Hoy and Miskel (2008), MoEYS (2017) and UNESCO (1989) consider that a systemic education management consists of four main components: (1) Administrative and General Management Reform: implementation of policies and the Education Strategic Plan (ESP), School-Based Management and community involvement in school activities; (2) Academic Management Reform: integration of quality citizenship into national curriculum and textbooks, learning assessment and teaching and learning process, especially teaching methods (Anson, 1994); (3) Education Financial Management Reform: linking budget to education policies, school budget audit and financial autonomy and accountability (Tiongson, 2005; Hang-Chuon, 2016b); (4) Human Resource Management Reform: teacher qualifications, continued professional development, capacity building and teacher’s performance assessment (Levin, 2010). The aims of education are to develop a

well-rounded person and engaged citizen to transform the society for the future (Siribanpitak, 2009) and to solve the world's problems (Ki-Moon, 2012). The concept of quality citizenship incorporates many dimensions of education, such as knowledge skills, attitude and engagement, participation in political activities, obedience to law, patriotism, social justice, participation in community affairs, tolerance for diversity, as well as global citizenship. In this research, the concept of quality citizenship consists of the following (OXFAM, 2015; UNESCO, 2014): (i) Quality national citizenship, which includes: (1) Economic component: (a) knowledge and hard skills; (b) soft and core life skills; and (2) Socio-political component: (a) obey the law and order; (b) commitment to sustainable and community development; (c) conventional political activities; and (ii) Quality global citizenship: (1) Economic component: (a) awareness of the wider world and act as a world citizen; (b) respect and value diversity; and (2) Socio-political component: (a) willingness to act to make the world a better place; (b) responsibility for their actions.

Conceptual Framework

The study applies theoretical concept of four components of education management reform (Hoy & Miskel, 2008; MoEYS, 2017; UNESCO, 1989) to achieve quality citizenship (OXFAM, 2015; UNESCO, 2014, 2015a) as research conceptual framework as shown Figure 1

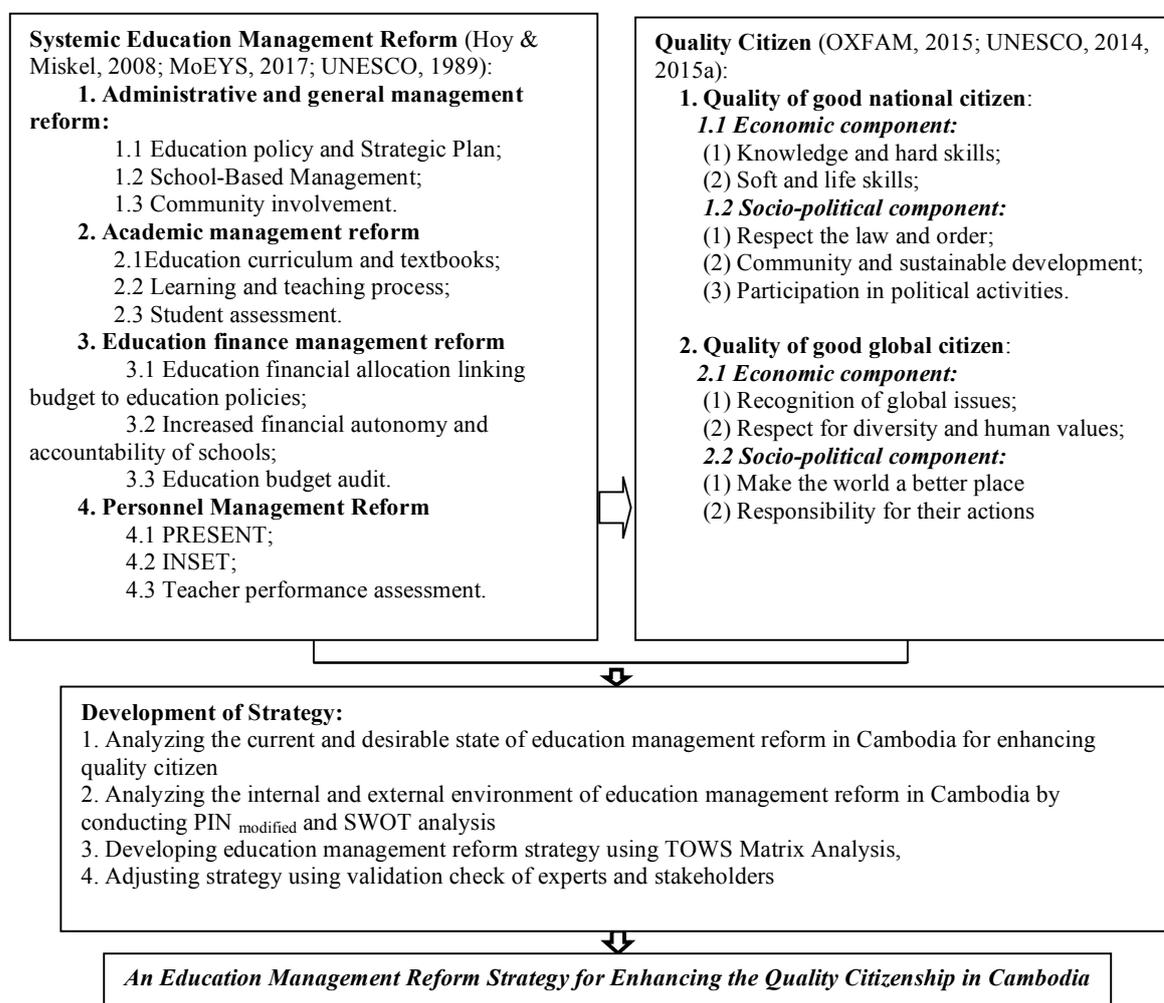


Figure 2. Conceptual framework of this research

Research Procedure

This descriptive research employed PNI modified as suggested by Suwimon and Wiratchai. The research procedure was divided into 4 phases as follows: Phase 1: To study the concept and theories of education management reform and quality citizenship. The researcher reviewed and synthesized the concepts and theories related to education management reform and good citizenship to draft the

conceptual framework. Phase 2: To define the conceptual framework for education management reform strategy for enhancing the quality citizenship. The researcher interviewed five experts and the obtained data were synthesized to formulate the conceptual framework of the research, which was validated by five experts by using a focus group discussion. Phase 3: To study the current and desirable state of the Education Management Reform for quality citizenship in Cambodia (R1&D1). The researcher studied the current and desirable states of the Education Management Reform for quality citizenship in Cambodia (R₁). To obtain the data, the research questionnaires in a form of two-situation columns were distributed to 710 respondents, consisting of 10 education policymakers, 30 Directors of MoEYS departments, 80 school administrators, 150 teachers, 80 School Support Committee members, 300 students and 60 other stakeholders. The researcher selected a sample of students from 80 High Schools by using a simple random sampling, based on 8 strata of schools in 22 provinces. The obtained data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to find out the frequency, percentage, average mean and standard deviations. Phase 4: To analyze the Priority Needs Index (PNI) to Identify the Gaps between the Current and Desirable Needs (R2). The researcher continuously calculated the PNI level range, suggested by Nonglak Wiratchai and Suwimon Wongwanich (1999), to define the gap outcomes between the current and desirable state of education management reform.

Findings

The findings of this study consist of the conceptual framework of education management reform and the quality citizenship, and the current and desirable states of education management reform for enhancing quality citizenship.

1) Conceptual framework of education management reform and the quality citizenship. Systemic Education Management Reform (Hoy & Miskel, 2008; MoEYS, 2017; UNESCO, 1989):

There are four components of systemic education management reform consisting of administrative and general management reform, academic management reform, education financial management reform, and personnel management reform. The administrative and general management reform focuses on implementing education policies and strategic plan; implementing school-based management; and ensuring community involvement in school management. The academic management reform focuses on 136otmail136ed136 quality citizenship in curriculum and textbooks; learning and teaching process; and conducting student assessment. The education financial management reform focuses on ensuring education financial allocations linking budget to education policies; increasing financial autonomy and accountability of schools; and conducting education budget audit. The personnel management reform focuses on increasing teacher PRESET qualifications; providing INSET training; and conducting teacher performance assessment. For Quality citizenship (OXFAM, 2015; UNESCO, 2014, 2015a), there are two components of quality citizenship consisting of quality national citizenship and quality global citizenship. The quality national citizenship includes economic component and socio-political component. The economic component consists of knowledge and hard skills; and soft and life skills. The socio-political component consists of respect the law and order; community and sustainable development; and participation in political activities. The quality global citizenship includes economic component consisting of recognition of global issues; respect for diversity and human values; and socio-political component consisting of making the world a better place; and responsibility for their actions.

2) The current and desirable states of education management reform for enhancing quality citizenship.

The current states of education management reform for enhancing quality citizenship: 1) The analysis of the current state of the internal environment shows that the overall education management reform for enhancing the quality citizenship in Cambodia is at a middle level (mean = 3.13, S.D = 0.61). Personnel management reform for good citizenship has the highest mean value (mean = 3.19, S.D = 0.66), followed by the academic management reform (mean = 3.16, S.D = 0.65), administrative management reform (mean = 3.12, S.D = 0.61), and Education finance management reform (mean = 3.04, S.D = 0.69), respectively. 2) From the analysis of the external environment, the findings indicate the overall picture of the current states of education management reform for enhancing the quality citizenship in Cambodia is at a middle level (mean = 3.12, S.D = 0.68). When considering each aspect, the politics aspect has the highest mean value (mean = 3.14, S.D = 0.70), then followed by the technology (mean =

3.11, S.D = 0.68), with the economic aspect (mean = 3.11, S.D = 0.67) and socio-cultural (mean = 3.11, S.D = 0.66) having the same mean value. The desirable states of education management reform for enhancing quality citizenship: 1) The findings indicate that the analysis of the internal environment reveals that the desirable state of education management reform for enhancing quality citizenship in Cambodia is at the high level (mean = 4.28, S.D = 0.53). Personnel management reform for good citizenship has the highest mean value (mean = 4.33, S.D = 0.57), followed by the academic management reform (mean = 4.31, S.D = 0.56), administrative management reform (mean = 4.26, S.D = 0.53), and education financial management reform (mean = 4.26, S.D = 0.53), respectively. The current and desirable states of the education management reform for enhancing the quality citizenship in Cambodia identified from the internal environment can be analysed by using graph as follows:

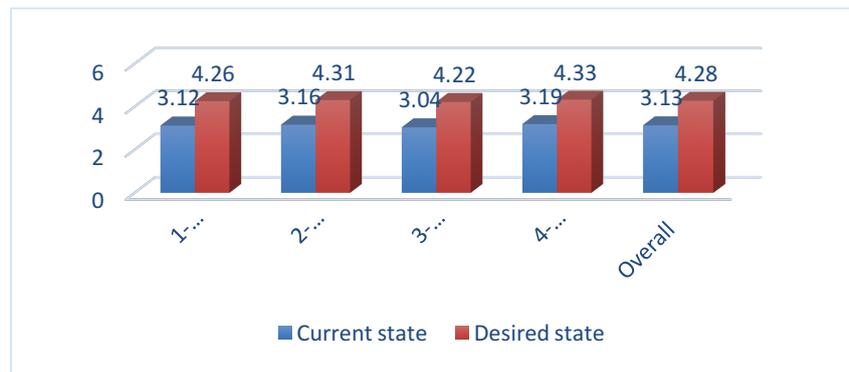


Figure 3. The analysis of the current and desirable states of the education management reform for enhancing the quality citizenship identified from the internal environment.

2) From the analysis of the external environment, the findings show the desirable state of education management reform for enhancing the quality citizenship in Cambodia is at the high level (mean = 4.30, S.D = 0.61). When considering each aspect, the politics and technology aspect have the highest mean value (mean = 4.31, S.D = 0.61) and (mean = 4.31, S.D = 0.60) respectively, followed by the economic aspect (mean = 4.30, S.D = 0.61) and the socio-cultural (mean = 4.29, S.D = 0.60) respectively.

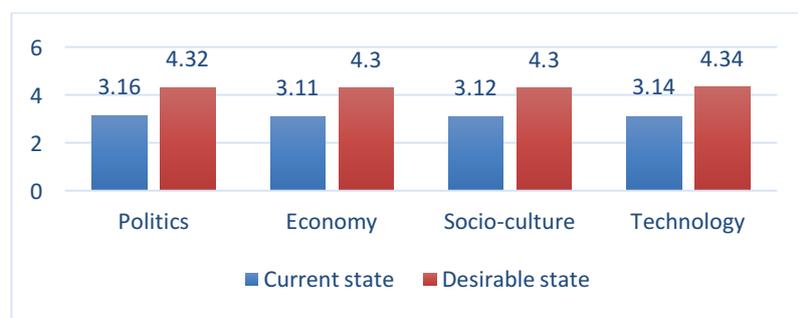


Figure 4. The comparison of current and desirable states of education management reform for enhancing the quality citizenship in Cambodia obtained from the external environment on the Personnel Management Reform

The findings on the analysis of each aspect of the external environment of the education management reform for enhancing the quality citizenship in Cambodia show that the technology aspect has the highest PNI modified of 0.386, followed by the socio-cultural aspect reaching the PNI modified of 0.381, and then the economic aspect achieving the PNI modified of 0.380 respectively are identified as the threats to the education management reform for enhancing the quality citizenship in Cambodia. The aspect gaining low PNI modified was the political aspect, with PNI modified of 0.374 and is identified as the opportunity of the education management reform for enhancing the quality citizenship in Cambodia.

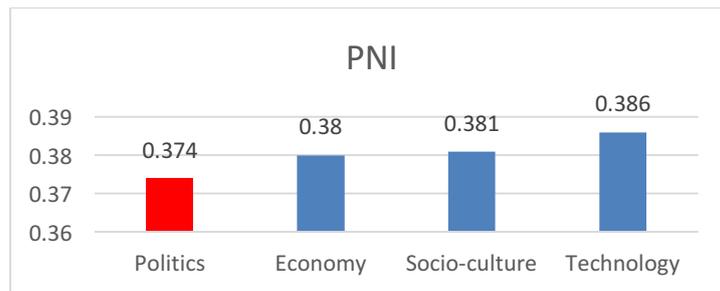


Figure 5. The comparison of PNI modified of the overall education management reform for enhancing the quality citizenship in Cambodia from the external environment

Discussion and Recommendation

The objectives of the current study were to investigate the current and desirable states of education management reforms for enhancing quality citizenship in Cambodia. Therefore, the findings were examined and discussed in relation to two main aspects: the current and desirable states of education management reforms for enhancing quality citizenship.

1) Current states of education management reform for enhancing the quality citizenship in Cambodia.

The analysis of the internal environment indicates that the current states of the overall education management reform for enhancing quality citizenship (mean = 3.13, S.D = 0.61) and each aspect of the four components of education management reform (administrative and general management, academic management, financial management and personnel management reforms) is at a middle level. The findings indicate that top-down education reforms are insufficient. Fullan (2007) concludes that top-down change doesn't work, while bottom-up initiatives either fail to result in much or often fail to connect to the authority structure. He pointed out that the main reason that change fails to occur is that a teacher cannot sustain change if he or she is working in a negative school culture.

Therefore, there is a need for whole-system, sustainable reform at all levels: at local school and community level; at the district level and at the national level (Fullan, 2007). Fullan (2007) went further to elaborate that the implementation of educational management reform requires change in practice: (1) the use of new or revised materials (instructional resources such as curriculum materials and technologies), (2) the possible use of new teaching approaches (i.e., new teaching strategies or activities), and (3) the possible alteration of beliefs (e.g., pedagogical assumptions and theories underlying particular new policies or programs).

The analysis of each aspect of the education management reform reveals that personnel management reform has the highest mean value (mean = 3.19, S.D = 0.66), while education financial management reform has the lowest mean value (mean = 3.04, S.D = 0.69). This can be explained that it is easier to introduce education reforms at the national level using a top-down approach, while it is more difficult to make reforms sustain in more than 10,000 Cambodian schools without proper coordination of education reform implementation.

The weaknesses of education financial management reform can be explained by the weak linkage between education budget and education policies, the lack of financial autonomy and accountability at school level and limited capacity in financial audit. The findings corroborated with a study by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), which emphasized that education sector assessments are insufficiently results-oriented (Andersen, et al., 2008). To better link education budget to policies, it is important to improve the coordination and monitoring of education-related indicators. Bruns et al. (2011) proposes that education reform focuses on three aspects of reforms, namely: (1) Information for accountability; (2) School-based management; and

(3) Teacher incentives.

The analysis of the current states of the external environment indicates that the education management reform for enhancing quality citizenship (mean = 3.19, S.D = 0.66), and each aspect of the education management is at a middle level. The findings imply that the education management reform require

more detailed policies and wide dissemination of the reform measures to all levels of education management systems, additional budgetary resources to implement the ambitious reform programs, the participation of parents and communities in school management, and the increasing use of technology to improve teaching and learning. The findings also concur with the mainstream education literature. Participation of parents, students and communities in school reforms have also been identified as key to the success of reform program (Fullan, 2007). Elmore (2004) identifies five principles that lay the foundation for large-scale school improvements: (1) improvement in instructional practice and performance; (2) a system that value continuous learning; (3) leading by modeling the values and behavior; (4) cooperation among people in diverse roles; and (5) the exercise of reciprocity of accountability and capacity.

The analysis of each aspect of the external environment for the education management reform reveals that the politics aspect has the highest mean value (mean = 3.14, S.D = 0.70). This is caused by the fact that education management reform was initiated by the MoEYS and supported by the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) and has become the highlights of the overall reform programs. Elmore (2004) pointed out that politics is not about the instructional core but the about the logic of confidence between the schools and the community. Thus, policy can set targets for practice and performance (Elmore, 2004). Fullan (2007) considers that many major education reforms are initiated through government policy making. Economy, socio-culture and technology aspects all have the same low mean values. Schools need more financial resources to improve teaching and learning, especially effectively use ICT, such as education materials, e-books, and computers.

2) Desirable states of education management reform for enhancing the quality citizenship in Cambodia.

The analysis of the internal environment indicates that the desirable states of the overall education management reform for enhancing the quality citizenship (mean = 4.28, S.D = 0.53), and each aspect of the education management is at a high level. The findings confirm that all key stakeholders want Cambodian learners to possess both quality national and quality global citizenship. The concepts of quality citizenship involve knowledge, skills both hard and soft, attitude, commitment and actions to secure an equitable and better world. The quality citizenship also concurs with the SDG.

Education theories posit that the “technical core” of education lies in the individual classroom (Elmore, 2004). It means that the teachers should be at the core of education management reform to enhance the quality citizenship. Moreover, school reform requires reshaping the school culture (Elmore, 2004). More importantly, how to teach soft skills continues to dominate professional debates among educators (Research, 2014).

The analysis of the external environment indicates that the desirable states of education management reform for enhancing quality citizenship (mean = 4.30, S.D = 0.61), and each aspect of the education management reform is at a high level. The findings confirm that enhancing quality citizenship in Cambodia requires stronger support from all key stakeholders, the increase in school operating budget (SOB), active participation of parents and community in school management and the use of technology in teaching and learning.

The analysis of each aspect of the education management reform indicates that the politics (mean = 4.31, S.D = 0.61) and technology (mean = 4.31, S.D = 0.60) aspects has the highest mean value. The research findings imply that the education sector and Cambodian schools need to build more trust and confidence relationships between schools and community, require more active involvement of parents and local authorities in the oversight of schools, as well as use of technology to improve teaching and learning. The implication of these findings points out to the fact that successful school reforms require a system of evaluation and selection of school principals, teachers and school inspectors, based on their necessary personal qualities for the work (Elmore, 2004). Fullan (2007) founded that more highly educated community groups generally put pressure on their schools to adopt high-quality, academic-oriented changes, while less well-educated communities are not likely to initiate changes.

The current study focused on the study of the conceptual framework of education management reform and the quality citizenship, and the current and desirable states of education management reform for enhancing the quality citizenship in Cambodia. Future research could be undertaken according to the following recommendations: Firstly, the future research should further study how education reform should be implemented to achieve the ambitious SDG-4 and Education 2030 agenda. Secondly, the future research should also incorporate qualitative methods to further explore the role of technologies

in promoting Education 4.0. There is a need to conduct research on new teaching methods, such as the use of digital tools to solve a myriad of social and economic problems or create new business models for job creation. Thirdly, future research should focus on the assessment of Transversal Competencies (TVCs) and quality national and global citizenship, including the GCED

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