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A construction of indicators, recruitment process, and selection guidelines for teacher students to enhance the quality of remote schools in Thailand

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Abstract

To address educational inequality in community schools in remote areas, the selection criteria for the recruitment of prospective teachers should be revised to target Grade 12 students from families facing financial hardship who are from the same local area as the school where they will be appointed upon graduation under the scholarship program. This study aims to develop indicators of community developer teacher leadership for recruitment, screening processes, and selection. The employed instruments included in-depth interviews with observations, field notes from educational stakeholders, and the open-ended questionnaire. The key informants consisted of four groups: (1) eight policymakers involved with the EEF, (2) ten KRT project staff and experts from the EEF, (3) eleven stakeholders in the recruitment and selection process, comprising five community representatives, three administrators and teachers from destination schools, and three administrators and lecturers from teacher education institutions overseeing the KRT project, and (4) ten lecturers responsible for curriculum management. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The study found that the indicators validated for truth value and consistency included (1) Emotional and Mental Stability, (2) Self-Regulation, (3) Empathy, (4) Social Adjustment, (5) Social Skills, (6) Design Thinking, (7) Curiosity, (8) Cross-Cultural Learning, (9) Work Engagement, (10) Justice and Respecting, and (11) Pride in Local Community Heritage. This set of indicators would be used by teacher education institutions to screen and recruit candidates based on the qualities of teacher leadership and community development.

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Introduction

Teaching and learning management in rural schools in remote areas in many countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development is often associated with educational disadvantages. For example, there are still schools with one classroom and one teacher, where the teacher is responsible for imparting knowledge and supervising students in all grades, which is referred to as multi-grade teaching (MGT). Consequently, MGT leads to unprepared education and expensive costs for families in remote areas, especially in countries with limited education budgets. Therefore, educational equity in community schools in remote areas requires an examination of factors and conditions based on geographical areas and lack of parental employment continuity.

In addition, community schools in remote areas often struggle to recruit and retain teachers who want to stay in the area for as long as possible. This is due to the particular geographical circumstances of such schools. Teachers working in this area need to be prepared for and able to adapt to teaching conditions in rural areas. They also need to be aware of the nature of small schools in small communities (Roberts et al., 2022). In Thailand, the selection and training of teachers in remote schools has long been a challenge. Consequently, teacher turnover is high. Students in such remote areas have a lower quality of life and education than students in mainstream schools. This has led to low teacher morale, frequent transfers and a lack of teaching continuity.

Despite the differences in context, space, and transportation costs, the differences in budget and staff for schools in remote areas remain the same as for schools in urban areas. This resulted in structural problems for the Ministry of Education: (1) the curriculum was incompatible with local realities, (2) the assessment system, which provided the same criteria and standards nationwide, was not compatible with the realities of education management in remote schools, (3) teachers whose qualifications did not match teaching tasks and responsibilities, and (4) frequent transfers of administrators, teachers and education personnel, resulting in inconsistent performance. The solution to these problems is that teacher education institutions and administrative staff development institutions should provide curricula that include content and procedures to develop skills and instill ideology in educational management for schools in remote areas, and establish selection procedures for administrative staff and teachers to attract those who are knowledgeable, competent, aware, and have ideals to fulfill their duties in schools in remote areas.

Thailand's Equitable Education Fund (EEF) has launched an initiative called Kru Rak Thin (KRT) to promote educational opportunities for children in remote areas and improve the quality of schools. Under the KRT initiative, scholarships are provided for teacher students to study content and participate in extracurricular learning activities according to the undergraduate curriculum structure so that they can apply their knowledge to become teachers with potential and community developers. In this context, community developer teacher leadership pertains to deeply committed teachers who are able to integrate theory with practice, address pertinent complex social issues, and demonstrate multicultural understanding. Such teachers contribute and participate in the comprehensive development of the communities within the schools. After graduation, they will be employed as government teachers in their remote communities. When the project is completed, the problem of teacher dislocation in rural schools in remote areas can be alleviated (Equitable Education Fund, 2019). Currently, the Institute's selection process for teacher students is based solely on knowledge, academic performance and academic aptitude tests. However, there should be a selection process for students and teachers who have both the pedagogical spirit and the willingness to work in remote communities. In the selection process, observations of participation in simulations developed by teaching institutions could form the basis for selection procedures that take into account the teachers' spiritual characteristics and their attitude towards school work in rural communities.

Therefore, in order for teacher education institutes to be able to manage the system of selecting students who receive scholarships in order to acquire those who have both the knowledge, skills, awareness and ideology in performing their duties in schools in remote areas, and in response to the National Education Plan 2017 to 2036 on the issue of all populations having access to quality education and universal standards (access) and all learners, all teacher education institutes must ensure that all scholarship recipients have the knowledge, skills, awareness and ideology in performing their duties in schools in remote areas. The present study addresses the following research questions: (1) What are the appropriate indicators for recruiting and selecting scholarship students who exhibit teacher leadership and community development characteristics suited for remote schools? and (2) What recruitment and selection processes should be employed to identify such candidates? These indicators can be used as a screening tool to select scholarship recipients. Guidelines should also be set for the recruitment process guidelines, and teacher students who are teachers and committed to community development should be selected to improve the quality of education of communities in remote areas of the central region.

This will help alleviate the structural problems of the Ministry of Education, specifically the migration of teachers, and the curriculum will be in line with the context of the region, leading to the development of schools in remote areas and the cultivation of quality students.

Literature Review

Practices of Teacher Recruitment and Selection

The principles of selecting teacher students at a teacher education institution should include: (1) establishing the educational institution's policy framework to keep pace with changing socio-economic conditions and teaching and learning in the era of technological change, including the promotion of the school as a learning community; (2) setting selection goals; and (3) implementing an effective selection process. Each element of the selection system at the teacher education institution level must be consistent and coherent, with an emphasis on creating a policy framework that is compatible and aligned with the National Education Policy Framework and the National Education Standards (Casey & Childs, 2007).

Teacher students are selected according to the following criteria. First of all, it is important to determine the qualifications of the applicants. Applicants must commit to an educational institution that requires them to become a teacher upon graduation and have a cumulative GPA between 2.50 and 3.00. This criterion takes into account applicants who have graduated from different schools, as these applicants are likely to be educationally disadvantaged and consequently have grades below 3.00 (Casey & Childs, 2007). Secondly, the criteria and selection process are defined. Applicants are pre-screened to determine whether their additional documentation demonstrates an interest in education and in the potential students. The written exam is a test of English language proficiency. The written test must represent the applicant's qualities and achievements. The written examination must be able to convey the applicant's motivation to improve performance, his/her perception of the requirements of educational development or school quality improvement. The professional attitude interview, together with the personality assessment and the practical examination, is also conducted during the course of study in the educational institutions, where the professional attitude and personality are continuously assessed. Failure to meet the specified standards may result in possible withdrawal from the course. This encourages the monitoring of professional attitude and personality throughout the program. Once candidates are selected, their position is changed to that of a student, and they can further develop or maintain their professional attitude and personality (Malinen et al., 2012).

Preparing Teachers for Multicultural and Rural Contexts

There are several strategies for preparing teachers to work in rural schools. First, it is important to make teachers aware of the importance of rural schools. Teacher education institutions should focus on equipping teacher students with work experience in rural areas so that future teachers understand students, families, rural communities, and the unique characteristics of the region. Secondly, education institutions should prepare new teachers to familiarise themselves with the environment in which they will teach, as teaching resources in rural areas are limited. Teachers must be able to find sufficient resources to support teaching and learning. Therefore, community-based surveys or learning activities are a learning strategy that connects new teachers to the community. Teacher education institutions can use community learning activities to train teachers and help new teachers discover the benefits of using community resources for lesson planning.

Third, educational institutions should train new teachers to acquire local knowledge and skills. All teachers should practise teaching based on a careful collection of information about the rural school environment in which the new teachers will be practicing; for example, a single teacher is responsible for teaching and supervising students in multiple grade levels.

Therefore, it has to be taught in multi-grade teaching. As a teacher in a community school in a remote area, it is essential to possess the characteristics of a multicultural teacher. Multicultural education is an education in which the school environment is organized with a focus on educational equity and for all learners, regardless of cultural groups such as gender, ethnicity, social class, regional group, etc., where schools can facilitate and manage learning to ensure educational equity.

In a multicultural context, teachers need to have multicultural competence to solve problems with multilingual students, learning styles, behaviors, ways of thinking, beliefs, perspectives, and academic backgrounds that may differ from those in a regular classroom (Van der Zee et al., 2013; Van Oudenhoven & Van der Zee, 2002). Gay (1994) defines four components of multicultural education: ethnic and cultural awareness, self-improvement, attitudes and beliefs, and multicultural socioeconomic competence. First, ethnic and cultural awareness concerns how students learn about their own

language, other languages, cultures, regions, important people and their history, and about majority and minority ethnic groups. Students learn respect for others and self-confidence. Secondly, self-improvement is related to students' increased potential to develop self-awareness, self-esteem and ethnic pride. Because of this, students will be motivated to learn. Third, students' attitudes and beliefs motivate them to value cultural diversity. Students are encouraged to show mutual respect. They must recognize that cultural differences are neither a deficiency nor an inferiority. Fourth, multicultural socioeconomic competence is the acquisition by students of communication strategies for interacting with people of different backgrounds. Learners are encouraged to develop cross-cultural communication skills and interpersonal relationships.

Policy for Developing New-Generation Teachers to Improve the Quality of Community Schools

The EEF is a fund established to support financially disadvantaged individuals, reduce educational inequality, and enhance the quality and effectiveness of teachers (Equitable Education Fund, 2019). The concept of educational inequality refers to disparities in education resulting from differences in the quality or standards of educational institutions, the quality or effectiveness of teachers, or the economic and social status of students. Under the concepts of educational equity and educational inequality, the EEF launched the KRT Project with two key principles: (1) To promote and support financially disadvantaged students who have potential and a spirit of teaching to complete their bachelor's degree in education with quality, and to return as teachers in remote schools within their own communities. The project emphasizes education management that genuinely meets the needs of the community. The success of this initiative aims to create systemic change in the country's education system. The production and development of KRT teachers are planned across five cohorts, with 300 students per cohort, totaling 1,500 students. Selected candidates must possess attributes that align with development strategies and meet the teacher staffing needs of schools in remote communities; and (2) To reform the teacher production and development system to be aligned with the specific contexts of schools and communities in remote areas.

The review of the literature identified that the systems of selecting teachers differ from one country to another based on national policies of education and the status accorded to the teaching profession. Generally effective systems are responsive to policy frameworks, explicit goals, and efficient processes. Teacher leadership and multicultural competencies are regarded as important, and although selection practices today focus on scholarly qualifications mostly, it creates a mismatch between what is evaluated and what is needed—especially in relation to the remote community school teacher preparation. There is a growing awareness of this problem, but there is still very little empirical evidence that outlines strong measurable criteria that would allow for the selection of students into teacher education who have clearly demonstrated community leadership and commitment to community development. In filling this gap, this study aims to suggest the development of such indicators in an attempt to enhance the processes of selecting teachers for scholarships to serve in the disadvantaged areas of central Thailand.

Methodology

The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of Ramkhamhaeng University for research involving human subjects (RU-HRE 64/0123). In this study, a qualitative research design based on phenomenological research was employed. The researcher attempted to understand the experiences of the stakeholders involved in the KRT project through thematic analysis based on the conceptual framework and comparative analysis of event data collected from teacher education institutions, namely, University A and University B (pseudonyms), and other pertinent information, including: (1) EEF policy as part of the KRT project and (2) project proposal for application as a teacher education institution.

Based on data collected over two months through in-person in-depth interviews, classroom and community observations, and structured small group discussions with teacher educators and stakeholders, specific conclusions were drawn about the selection process, teacher attributes, and contextual challenges in preparing teachers for remote community schools. Based on the research framework for defining key informant groups, the researcher conducted an informal in-depth interview with a series of questions, and additional questions were asked to ensure information completeness during interviews. If the data were insufficient, the researcher returned to gather more information until the data were saturated, brought the analytic summary back to the informant for review, and conducted small group discussions with stakeholders including administrators and lecturers in teacher education institutions, administrators and teachers in community schools in remote areas where teacher students will fill positions after graduation, and individuals from the community. Information from these individuals plays an important role in better explaining the phenomenon. The researcher requested permission to conduct

activities with each informant and use the time to interview, gather information, and observe.

Participants

The group of key informants, selected through purposive sampling, included: (1) eight individuals involved in policymaking and planning for the EEF, (2) ten individuals responsible for the KRT project and experts from the EEF, (3) stakeholders in the recruitment and selection process, comprising five community representatives, three administrators and teachers from destination schools, and three administrators and lecturers from teacher education institutions overseeing the KRT project, and (4) ten lecturers responsible for curriculum management.

Research Instruments

The research instruments used in this study are in Table 1. In order to test the reliability of the research instruments, a pilot test of the interview form was conducted with four teachers and school administrators from remote schools. From their feedback, some questions were modified to improve their clarity, contextual relevance, and alignment with the goals of the study.

During the qualitative data collection, the trustworthiness of the qualitative findings was ensured by applying the criteria put forth by Guba and Lincoln (1988) which are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. To establish rigor and consistency throughout the research process, the researcher employed multiple strategies, including triangulation of data sources (e.g., document analysis, interviews, participant and non-participant observations), member checking with key informants, and maintaining an audit trail. The consistency and stability of data were verified across different times, settings, and participant groups to confirm the authenticity and reliability of the information collected through various methods.

Data Analysis

Since this study employed qualitative research design, the researcher conducted data analysis concurrently with data collection. The data used for analysis included interview transcripts (fully transcribed), observation notes, field notes, and the researcher's personal memos. The researcher carefully read through the data and performed coding using an inductive approach, identifying key themes directly from the data without pre-determined codes. Subsequently, thematic analysis (TA) follows the phases outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), starting from data familiarization, coding, developing themes, thematic review, defining the themes, and report writing. In addition to the literature drawing from literature on personal and professional teacher attributes, multicultural teacher competencies, cultural responsiveness, and community engagement, professional literature concerning those domains also guided interpretation and coding to derive meanings and interpret the codes within each analytical theme, leading to the formulation of thematic conclusions.

Table 1 Research Instruments

Instruments	Details
Developing the framework of indicators for teacher leadership and community developer teachers	(1) a document analysis record form for reviewing related documents, (2) an interview and (3) open-ended questions for focus group discussions to allow experts to evaluate the accuracy, appropriateness, and feasibility of the indicators.
Synthesizing the recruitment and selection processes	(1) a document analysis record form for reviewing best practices in publicity, search, application, screening, and selection procedures, and (2) observation forms, with both participant and non-participant observation techniques employed.
Proposing the recruitment and selection process	(1) open-ended questions for gathering opinions and suggestions from experts, project administrators of the KRT Project, and project coordinators from both participating teacher education institutions.

Results

Indicators of Teacher Leadership and Community Developer

Indicator 1: Emotional and Mental Stability (EMS)

In the TA, the participants stated that if scholarship students can recognize potential obstacles, they are more likely to succeed throughout their course of study. One participant said that:

"When choosing to become a teacher in one's hometown, no matter what obstacles arise, they must be overcome because the children are waiting. [I] will develop the children to become good people in society and contribute to the development of their own local community." (Participant, Interview, August 4, 2022)

The researchers understood the meaning individuals assigned to experiences and interpreted this meaning, along with synthesizing relevant literature, to reflect the sub-indicators as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Definition and Sub-indicators of EMS

Definition	Sub-indicators
EMS refers to a state characterized by the ability to perceive impact, adapt thought processes toward positivity, calm the emotional state, and be prepared in times of crisis without suffering rapid emotional changes. When facing dissatisfaction and disappointment, a person can still manage these emotions effectively.	(1) Recognizing and understanding the feelings of others, (2) Recognizing opposing perspectives and reacting to them with understanding, (3) Consistently optimistic mental processes, (4) Controlling anger in circumstances when expectations are not met by managing emotional shifts swiftly, (5) Accepting one's own actions being flawed, (6) Accepting feedback, (7) Confronting and resolving difficulties, (8) Personal care and development, (9) Dealing with difficulties in a constructive manner, and (10) Receiving and enhancing your own morale.

Indicator 2: Self-Regulation (SR)

In the TA, participants indicated that those who can perceive themselves both positively and negatively, are able to evaluate themselves, and can use the evaluation results to regulate their own behavior become good teachers. One participant said that:

"A teacher must be a role model for children in every aspect. For example, in financial discipline, before we teach them, we must first demonstrate it to them." (Participant, Interview, August 8, 2022)

The researchers understood the meaning individuals assigned to experiences and interpreted this meaning, along with synthesizing relevant literature, to reflect the sub-indicators as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Definition and Sub-indicators of SR

Definition	Sub-indicators
SR refers to self-control through a process in which individuals consider, plan, regulate, and direct their own behavior by relying on introspection, decision making, and continuous evaluation of their own reactions as positive or negative. The goal is to align one's own behavior with the desired target behavior.	(1) Recognizing one's limits, (2) Self-awareness, which serves as a reminder of what you are doing to lead yourself toward a predetermined objective, (3) Review of performance, which is a comparison of performance against predetermined objectives, and (4) Self-evaluation that views one's actions as competent and within control.

Indicator 3: Empathy (EM)

In the TA, participants indicated that understanding others is an important factor that helps scholarship students respond appropriately to social situations. It serves as a mechanism to help students and colleagues navigate stressful situations. One participant said that:

"If a teacher can reach into the hearts of the children and understand their personalities, it will help redirect their attention and encourage them to engage in what they are passionate about, which will help pull them away from various problems." (Participant, Interview, August 8, 2022)

The researchers understood the meaning individuals assigned to experiences and interpreted this meaning, along with synthesizing relevant literature, to reflect the sub-indicators as shown in Table 4.

Table 4 Definition and Sub-indicators of EM

Definition	Sub-indicators
EM refers to the ability to perceive, understand, and connect with the emotions of others, as well as to respect the emotions and perspectives of others based on their own experiences, to be a good listener who actively listens, to understand what motivates each individual's actions despite differing costs of living, and to focus attentively on perceived concerns. If a person has had negative experiences in the past and has an awareness of disadvantaged or stratified groups, they are more likely to recognize feelings of empathy.	(1) Understanding others, (2) Appropriate response to the needs of others, (3) Supporting others, (4) Providing opportunities to others, (5) Providing assistance to others regardless of advantages or disadvantages, and (6) Sharing to help those in need by contributing strengths or body of knowledge.

Indicator 4: Social Adjustment (SA)

In the TA, participants explained that in order to teach effectively, scholarship students must balance themselves with the social environment and be able to adapt to overcome that environment and compensate for their own shortcomings. One participant said that:

> *"Religious differences and sharing stories to promote coexistence based on diversity — this is an essential foundation they must have, because teachers must be able to live in any environment and in every community."* (Participant, Interview, August 8, 2022)

The researchers understood the meaning individuals assigned to experiences and interpreted this meaning, along with synthesizing relevant literature, to reflect the sub-indicators as shown in Table 5.

Indicator 5: Social Skills (SS)

In the TA, participants indicated that positive interactions with others and avoiding negative interactions can help resolve issues peacefully when conflicts arise. One participant said that:

> *"The more successfully scholarship students work with the community, the better it is. Teachers are not just responsible for teaching; they must also be able to work together with people in the local area."* (Participant, Interview, August 4, 2022)

The researchers understood the meaning individuals assigned to experiences and interpreted this meaning, along with synthesizing relevant literature, to reflect the sub-indicators as shown in Table 6.

Table 5 Definition and Sub-indicators of SA

Definition	Sub-indicators
SA refers to the process of establishing a continuous balance between a person's emotions, personality and needs and their social environment, with conditions affecting life satisfaction, feelings and acceptance of societal responsibility. It is an expression of a harmonious relationship between the person and his or her social environment. It reflects the individual's efforts to adapt to the social values and requirements of society in order to be accepted, and the attempt to adhere to social norms in order to successfully adapt and relate to others.	(1) Emotional expressions and body language interpretation, (2) Accepting the views of others for the sake of the common good, (3) Tranquility of intense emotions, (4) Adaptation with others, including both acquaintances and strangers, and (5) Interacting with people through offering and receiving.

Table 6 Definition and Sub-indicators of SS

Definition	Sub-indicators
SS refers to a set of abilities that enable individuals to establish and maintain positive social relationships with peers and others, leading to peer acceptance and fulfilling social adjustment, and to deal effectively with complex social environments.	(1) The ability to influence others' beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviors through one's own efforts, (2) Communicating roles as an easily-understood and emotionally expressive speaker and a listener who motivates the speaker to talk continually, (3) The ability to motivate and steer individuals and groups in a desired direction, (4) The ability to inspire an individual or group to initiate something new, (5) The ability to develop new connections by bringing back together those with conflicts to address difficulties, (6) Support for the maintenance of relationships among group members, (7) Assisting and cooperating with others to achieve shared objectives, and (8) Leadership in collaborative synergy for action with a single goal.

Indicator 6: Design Thinking (DT)

In the TA, participants stated that teachers who have a culture of analytical thinking, creative thinking and the ability to develop innovations in target schools can develop mindsets and create educational innovations that are appropriate for

remote schools and community contexts. One participant said that:

"Learning from the community and students, and then applying and further developing it to create curricula or lessons — teachers must synthesize these based on real situations and the actual context of each area." (Participant, Interview, August 4, 2022)

The researchers understood the meaning individuals assigned to experiences and interpreted this meaning, along with synthesizing relevant literature, to reflect the sub-indicators as shown in Table 7.

Table 7 Definition and Sub-indicators of DT

Definition	Sub-indicators
DT refers to a creative operational process that emphasizes practical application and collaboration with the users of the innovation to build a shared understanding. This process is driven by specific problems and individual characteristics. It involves the application of analytical thinking and the development of thinking frameworks to develop improved, innovative and challenging approaches. These approaches are characterized by being unique, systematic and connected to the community's way of life. This process leads to meaningful results.	(1) Openness to the vagueness of the circumstance at the onset of the issue; (2) Comprehending and assessing innovators by recognizing issues and recording arguments and constraints, (3) Taking action through practicing problem-solving rather than only contemplating problem-solving, (4) Transforming lessons from failures into opportunities for continual growth, (5) Working with others who have different views and experiences, and (6) Continuously monitoring work processes to reduce innovative mistakes.

Indicator 7: Curiosity (CR)

In the TA, participants stated that when scholarship students are open to knowledge and apply it to improve themselves and their work, that they enjoy learning new things, and that they develop a foundation for becoming lifelong learners. One participant said that:

"By observing the teacher while teaching, I later became inspired by teachers who taught well and explained clearly. I wanted to communicate clearly too, so I committed to studying and practicing speaking like the teacher." (Participant, Interview, August 4, 2022)

The researchers understood the meaning individuals assigned to experiences and interpreted this meaning, along with synthesizing relevant literature, to reflect the sub-indicators as shown in Table 8.

Table 8 Definition and Sub-indicators of CR

Definition	Sub-indicators
CR refers to the emotions, positive motivation, and behaviors of individuals who demonstrate enthusiasm and self-regulation in seeking additional knowledge in different areas as well as new and challenging experiences to expand their existing knowledge base. Such individuals are observant, like to ask questions, are curious, seek clarity, are open-minded, have a consistent passion for learning new things and actively experiment with new methods to find better ways of doing things.	(1) Openness to new ideas and a willingness to learn new things; (2) Asking in-depth questions in the pursuit of ambiguous occurrences; (3) Researching new knowledge to investigate challenging information; and (4) Social curiosity.

Indicator 8: Cross-cultural Learning (CL)

In the TA, participants stated that multicultural competence is an important factor in solving problems related to learners and the surrounding community of the target schools where differences in language, learning styles, behaviors, mindsets, values, perceptions, and academic backgrounds exist. One participant said that:

"Due to the complex problems in this area, local dialects help in communicating understanding. Building community developer teachers requires cooperation from the community and joint support, with community leaders serving as a driving force to enable teachers to work effectively." (Participant, Interview, August 8, 2022)

The researchers understood the meaning individuals assigned to experiences and interpreted this meaning, along with synthesizing relevant literature, to reflect the sub-indicators as shown in Table 9.

Table 9 Definition and Sub-indicators of CL

Definition	Sub-indicators
CL refers to a complicated process of behavioral change that enables individuals to navigate a new culture. When exposed to a new culture, they become aware of an unfamiliar social environment, learn,	(1) Building relationships with people from different cultures, (2) Appreciating, respecting, and understanding individuals of diverse cultures, (3) Generating knowledge by receiving, listening, and observing, as well as

Table 9 (Continued)

Definition	Sub-indicators
understand the realities of that context, adjust their attitudes and develop strategies for working with other people from different cultural backgrounds until they can adapt to the new culture.	interpreting ambiguous or unexpected circumstances, (4) Interpreting information into various languages, which may be verbal or nonverbal, and (5) The ability to manage the tension that emerges in complex learning situations.

Indicator 9: Work Engagement (WE)

In the TA, participants indicated that scholarship students are able to apply their energy and commitment to their work by showing interest in their tasks and careers and by demonstrating a positive attitude toward their work. One participant said that:

"Being a community developer while also being a local person naturally leads to an understanding of the context, language, and culture, which is an important factor in helping to reduce the problem of teacher relocation in remote areas." (Participant, Interview, August 4, 2022)

The researchers understood the meaning individuals assigned to experiences and interpreted this meaning, along with synthesizing relevant literature, to reflect the sub-indicators as shown in Table 10.

Table 10 Definition and Sub-indicators of WE

Definition	Sub-indicators
WE refers to a positive psychological state of the individual in relation to their work, reflecting the intention to remain committed to their tasks, accompanied by positive emotions and inspiration for their work. This state results in the individual bringing this inspiration to their work with energy and enthusiasm and maintaining initiative throughout their work activity.	(1) Working willingly and persistently despite barriers, (2) Being content at work till time seems to pass quickly, (3) Not quitting your work when others convince you to, (4) Using personal time for urgent issues, and (5) Taking pride in and recognizing the difficulty of one's work.

Indicator 10: Justice and Respecting (JR)

In the TA, participants stated that scholarship students must be able to treat everyone and everything with care and treat others as they would like to be treated. One participant said that:

"One day, when students from the area return as teachers, they will pass on this opportunity to other children, helping them gain skills and knowledge, and taking care of every child so that no one feels overlooked." (Participant, Interview, August 9, 2022)

The researchers understood the meaning individuals assigned to experiences and interpreted this meaning, along with synthesizing relevant literature, to reflect the sub-indicators as shown in Table 11.

Table 11 Definition and Sub-indicators of JR

Definition	Sub-indicators
JR refers to the outcomes associated with causes based on the distribution of advantage, acceptance and understanding of people who differ in appearance, personality, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, and educational background, respect for the human rights of others, not looking down on others, treating everyone and everything with care, treating others as we would like to be treated, and being able to show appropriate respect in word and deed to classmates, parents, and teachers.	(1) Non-invasion of others' privacy, (2) Prevention of situations that lead to loss of respect from others, (3) Treating everyone equally and cheerfully, (4) Allowing everyone to express their interests fairly, (5) Not alienating individuals from the group, (6) Reasoning for diverse perspectives, (7) Allowing others to express their interests and comments, and (8) Verbal and nonverbal precautions.

Indicator 11: Pride in Local Community Heritage (PLCH)

In the TA, participants stated that scholarship students can express pride in their local communities and create innovations that incorporate local knowledge for the benefit of their own communities when deployed in target schools, i.e. schools in remote areas. One participant said that:

"The community wants the university to help instill a sense of pride in their identity, because nowadays, when children go to study or live elsewhere, they are often ashamed to admit that they are Hmong. But what is truly shameful is forgetting one's own roots — forgetting who we really are." (Participant, Interview, August 9, 2022)

The researchers understood the meaning individuals assigned to experiences and interpreted this meaning, along with synthesizing relevant literature, to reflect the sub-indicators as shown in Table 12.

Table 12 Definition and Sub-indicators of PLCH

Definition	Sub-indicators
PLCH refers to the awareness, appreciation and valuing of local wisdom, customs, traditions, arts and culture. From the data collected, it appears that all sources of information are in agreement: Scholars are able to develop pride in their local communities and create innovations that integrate local wisdom for the benefit of their own communities when implemented in target schools, i.e. schools in remote areas.	(1) Learning about local wisdom, (2) Persuading others to join in learning local wisdom, (3) Learning about customs, traditions, and cultural arts, (4) Participating in traditional and cultural events, (5) Preserving the common interests of the local community, and (6) Spreading local traditions.

Proposal for a Process of Recruiting and Selecting Teacher Students with Teacher Leadership and Community Development in Remote Schools in Thailand's Central Region

Public relations, search, screening and recruitment

The teacher training institution must conduct public relations according to the principle of "proactive, comprehensive and inclusive communication in the project's target area", which requires the use of a range of public relations methods, including: (1) personalised outreach that is open to information about the target students; (2) distribution of documents to network partners; (3) use of village voices and radio advertisements in the community; and (4) use of the institution's website and social media.

The search, screening and recruitment of potential students is a process that teacher education institutions can undertake simultaneously by identifying target students with the following key qualities: (1) being poor students, (2) having a parent, guardian, or scholarship recipient who has resided in the schools' community university district in remote areas for at least three consecutive years, (3) having a GPAX of at least 2.50 for five consecutive semesters, and (4) having a positive attitude toward teaching in community schools in remote areas. Searching and screening for positive attitudes toward teaching, teacher spirituality, and achievement-specific achievement in remote community schools can be done initially using an interview based on a number of key indicators: *EMS, SR, EM, SA, SS, DT, CR, CL, WE, JR, and PLCH.*

Guidelines for practice

1. Conduct the first phase of public relations by focusing on information dissemination strategies to achieve and create understanding of the KRT project's goals and practices, and on recruitment of two key target groups.

2. Conduct Phase 2 publicity in conjunction with in-depth target area search and recruitment at the target school site.

3. Review the process after the visits. The committee uses all meetings to share information, discuss lessons learned from the field trips, plan together how to improve the screening process, and deal with difficulties when certain areas do not meet their targets.

Preparation for screening and selection

This activity aims to improve academic understanding prior to the selection process and to motivate teachers. It is expected that students in the target group will acquire the academic knowledge and skills required for the qualifying examination, develop a positive attitude toward the teaching profession and, as a direct result of this activity, promote the spirit of the teaching profession for work in schools in remote areas. In addition, the preparation activities for the selection exam have two positive outcomes. First, the institutions use the data from the behavioral observation using behavioral checklists based on a set of key indicators of the target students during the group activities to promote their positive attitudes toward the teaching profession and the will to work as primary school teachers in community schools in remote areas, and continuously monitor them during home visits. Secondly, the results of the behavioral observations during the group activities could be used as part of the assessment for the selection of scholarship candidates in terms of positive attitude toward the teaching profession, attitude towards the teaching profession, and professional competence to work in schools in remote communities, using an assessment form based on a set of key indicators.

Guidelines for practice

1) Design pre-selection preparation activities and conduct activities for target students.

2) Determine the aspects of the selection assessment, the rating scale assessment form, and the judging criteria (Table 13).

3) Judging based on the participation of all stakeholders.

4) Announce the results of the selection of scholarship recipients in public and examination of any objections. In the case of an objection or objection to the selection of an institution, appoint a committee to consider the matter in a fair manner and inform the parties involved (Figure 1).

Table 13 Aspects of the selection assessment

No.	Aspects of the selection assessment	Percentage
1	A portfolio demonstrating teacher leadership and community develop	5
2	An essay expressing positive attitudes toward being a teacher leadership and community developer	20
3	Scores from participation in pre-selection activities and preparation camps for becoming a teacher leadership and community developer	40
4	Interviews focusing on positive attitudes toward teaching, teacher characteristics, and the connection between education and community development	35

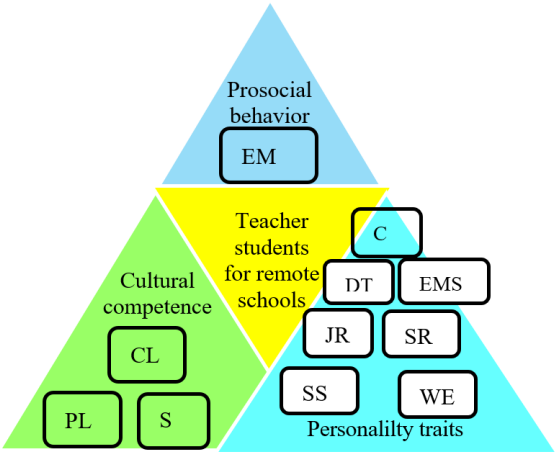


Figure 1 Teacher students recruitment and selection framework in remote schools
Note: EM = empathy, CL = cross-cultural learning, PL = pride in local community heritage, SA =social adjustment, CR = curiosity, DT = design thinking, EMS = emotional and mental stability, JR = justice and respecting, SR = self-regulation, SS = social skills, and WE = work engagement.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to develop indicators that can be used in the recruitment and selection processes for teacher leadership and community development. The results of the study showed that the 11 indicators have significant applicability and should be discussed by grouping them into three broader themes: Personality Traits, Prosocial Behavior, and Cultural Competence. The identified personality traits include *emotional and mental stability, self-regulation, social skills, design thinking, curiosity, work engagement,* and *justice and respecting*. Prosocial behavior was represented by *empathy*. Cultural competence included *social adjustment, cross-cultural learning* and *pride in local community heritage*.

Personality Traits (PT) and Their Relevance to Personnel Selection

The Big Five personality factors (FPF) play an important role in shaping learning experiences and can predict academic success (Lounsbury et al., 2003; Matthews et al., 2006). In terms of job performance, studies have shown that PT has a greater impact on work efficiency than academic ability (Willingham et al., 2002).

Firstly, Emotional and Mental Stability (*EMS*) refers to the ability to perceive external influences and positively influence one's own thought processes in order to be prepared in times of crisis. This trait is associated with low levels of neuroticism, with individuals with lower levels of neuroticism showing greater emotional and mental stability. In addition, EMS has been found to be significantly correlated with academic performance (Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2003) and positively associated with job satisfaction, career self-efficacy, and organizational commitment (Li & Ahlstrom, 2016). Teachers who exhibit strong EMS traits tend to show traits of multicultural educators, as working in education often requires dealing with different demands and expectations from parents and the community (Cruickshank et al., 2003; Van Oudenhoven & van der Zee, 2002).

Secondly, Self-Regulation (*SR*) is the process by which individuals think about, plan, control and regulate their own behavior in order to direct it toward desirable target behaviors. This trait is associated with the personality trait of conscientiousness. People with a high level of conscientiousness tend to be organized, responsible and diligent when it comes to completing tasks. Klusmann et al. (2008) investigated the teaching quality of math teachers with high self-regulation and found that their students showed higher achievement motivation, felt more engaged in class and experienced greater autonomy. It is likely that teachers with high self-regulation continuously strive to improve their teaching and consistently provide feedback to students.

Thirdly, Social skills (*SS*) are a set of abilities that enable individuals to enter into and maintain positive social relationships with others. This trait is associated with openness to experience. Individuals with high levels of openness are more receptive to sharing social, political and religious values.

Agran et al. (2016) found that SS is critical for secondary school teachers' employment, as these skills come into play in school-related tasks such as asking for unclear instructions, showing up to work on time, refraining from inappropriate physical contact with others, performing tasks that require immediate attention, notifying supervisors when help is needed, responding appropriately to critical feedback, and interacting effectively with students.

Fourthly, Design Thinking (*DT*) involves the application of analytical thinking processes and the construction of thinking frameworks to develop improved, more sophisticated and unique ways of working. DT is associated with the personality trait of openness to experience. Individuals with a high openness tend to be imaginative and try new things. DT plays an important role in the development of professional knowledge for classroom practice and serves as a learning tool for professional teachers, as pedagogical problems are often complex and multifaceted — from curriculum design to motivating students to communicating effectively with parents. There are usually no clear and definitive solutions to these problems (Koh et al., 2015).

Fifthly, Curiosity (*CR*) refers to the enthusiasm and self-regulation in seeking additional knowledge in different areas and experimenting with new methods to achieve better results. CR is associated with the personality trait of extraversion. Individuals with high levels of extraversion tend to enjoy activities and are energetic and enthusiastic. Cruickshank et al (2003) have shown that CR is a key trait of good teachers who are lifelong learners — they are constantly striving to learn new things, expand their knowledge base and experiment with new teaching methods to improve their practice.

Sixthly, Work engagement (*WE*) refers to the intention to engage in work, which promotes positive inspiration for tasks and leads to energetic and enthusiastic performance. WE is associated with the personality trait of conscientiousness. Individuals with high conscientiousness strive to achieve their goals and place importance on completing the tasks assigned to them. Teachers with high conscientiousness are considered a crucial factor in students' academic success and prepare them for future achievement (Siddique & Rana, 2021). This is especially important as the teaching profession is very demanding and is often characterized by excessive workload, inappropriate student behavior or underachievement, poor relationships with colleagues, lack of appropriate resources, constant changes within the profession, and difficult interactions with students' parents.

Finally, Justice and Respecting (*JR*) refers to the fair distribution of benefits, acceptance and understanding of people with differences, and treating others as one would like to be treated. JR is related to the personality trait Openness to Experience. People who have a high level of openness are willing to consider and exchange different values in social, political and religious areas. Resh and Sabbagh (2009) emphasized that justice is an important component of students' school experience that has far-reaching effects on their actual educational opportunities, motivation, attitudes, feelings, and behaviors. Respect for students is essential for increasing teacher effectiveness, and all educators should show respect to their students at all times, even in tense moments of conflict (Meador, 2016).

Prosocial Behavior and Its Relevance to Personnel Selection

Prosocial behavior (PB) refers to positive actions aimed at improving interpersonal and group relationships in order to promote social harmony. It involves intentional actions to improve the situation of those receiving help. The theory that explains prosocial behavior is Bandura's (1991) social cognitive theory, which describes interpersonal relationships as a dynamic interaction between personal factors, behaviors and environmental influences. These three factors are constantly interconnected through mutual influence. Hoffman (2008) was among the theorists who argued that empathy is closely related to PB, identifying empathy as an important motivating factor for prosocial behavior.

In terms of Empathy (*EM*), it is the ability to perceive, understand and connect with the emotions of others who are individually different, while respecting their feelings and perspectives. When a school has teachers with strong teachers' empathy, it helps to create a positive school climate. This positive atmosphere results from the integration of personal factors, community dynamics, prosocial behavior (PB) and the reduction of problematic behaviors (Zych et al., 2019). Empathetic teachers provide feedback on student learning, listen attentively to parents' opinions and expectations, and cultivate open-minded collaboration with colleagues in problem-solving and decision-making processes related to student learning (Martinsone & Žydžiūnaite, 2023).

Cultural Competence (CC) and Its Relevance to Personnel Selection

Cultural competence (CC) refers to cross-cultural awareness and sensitivity to specific cultural contexts, both on an individual and interpersonal level. It is described as a set of behaviors, attitudes and strategies that are aligned within a group of practitioners to enable effective collaboration in cross-

cultural situations. Building CC in educational institutions should begin with the creation of consistent values through the following processes: (1) respecting the specific cultural needs of different student groups, (2) recognizing that culture shapes behaviors and values, (3) viewing family systems, communities, and religions as key mechanisms for supporting cultural diversity, (4) acknowledging that concepts of family and community differ across cultures, and (5) understanding that students from diverse cultural backgrounds often benefit most from services provided by individuals from similar cultural backgrounds (Moule, 2012).

Firstly, Social adaptation (*SA*) is the ongoing process of maintaining a balance between a person's emotions, personality and needs with their social environment. It involves the effort to cope with societal values and demands and to conform to social norms in order to relate effectively to others. Van Oudenhoven and van der Zee (2002) stated that individuals with multicultural personalities must have the personal competence to adapt to the demands of life, especially when faced with social disadvantages, obstacles or stressful situations. Bochner (2003) further suggested that adaptive behavior includes effective communication, building interactions and networks as cultural representatives, and adjusting to unfamiliar environments.

Secondly, Cross-Cultural Learning (*CL*) refers to the complex behavioral change that enables individuals to function effectively in the context of a new culture. When confronted with an unfamiliar culture, individuals must study and understand the context, adjust their attitudes, and develop strategies for working with people from different cultural backgrounds. Nieto (1992) discussed Multicultural Service Learning (MSL) as a way for pre-service teachers to learn from culturally diverse communities, especially by understanding local needs and tapping into local wisdom. MSL allows pre-service teachers to identify multicultural resources in the community, gain cultural knowledge about different groups, and learn through service experiences in the community. In addition, Moule (2012) emphasized the importance of supporting culturally diverse students by providing open and inclusive learning opportunities. Teachers should not expect students to conform only to the dominant school culture, but should also build partnerships with parents and actively promote and preserve students' ethnic identity in positive ways to support cultural diversity at the local level.

Lastly, Pride in Local Community Heritage (*PLCH*) refers to the awareness, appreciation, and valuing of local wisdom, customs, traditions, and arts and culture. Cruickshank et al. (2003) noted that a key characteristic of good teachers is the ability to connect knowledge to students' immediate environment and incorporate local perspectives into the learning process. Similarly, Boyle-Baise (2005) emphasized the importance of preparing teachers to engage effectively in communities. The preparation process includes: 1) foundational knowledge of their students' cultural, personal identities, and local contexts; 2) identifying the unique characteristics of the local community; 3) studying historical relationships; 4) learning local history through community wisdom; 5) building trust in the community; and 6) accessing community members through active learning and engagement with them.

Therefore, it is assumed that the criteria-based evaluation framework ought to be utilized by teacher education institutions for revising their recruitment and selection policies. The framework can be applied during pre-selection processes involving interactions and informal assessment sessions with the relevant student populations prior to formal selection processes. Moreover, the criteria should be used for monitoring the developmental milestones of the scholarship awardees and tracking their progress during their education. There needs to be a joint guiding network that includes the teacher education institutions and the remote schools to which the graduates will be posted to ensure that the development of scholarship students is tailored to the real needs and expectations of the schools in outlying regions.

Furthermore, although the indicators assist in pinpointing possible teacher candidates, the long-term effectiveness of teaching and residing in remote schools hinges on more than personal attributes. Working in these contexts necessitates the cultivation of social capital that is local in origin. Community engagement, as Leach and Bradbury (2024) underline, is critical for enabling prospective teachers to participate constructively with schools and meaningfully and impactfully sustain their work in remote regions

Conclusion

Based on the research on the application of teacher leadership and community developer indicators in the recruitment and selection of scholarship-funded teacher candidates assigned to schools in remote communities — geared with promoting educational equity — key findings indicate that the indicators developed are specifically tailored to the evaluation and selection of teacher candidates in three dimensions: personality traits (emotional and mental stability, self-regulation, social skills, design thinking, curiosity, work engagement, and justice and respecting); prosocial behavior (empathy); and cultural competence (social adjustment, cross-cultural learning, and pride in local community heritage). These indicators serve as an important framework for identifying

individuals who are most likely to engage successfully in classroom practice and contribute to the development of schools in remote areas. The application of these indicators provides a conceptual framework for the development of screening, recruitment and selection tools as part of the scholarship application process and offers a more structured and effective assessment approach compared to previous methods.

While the developed indicators offer practical value for education policymakers—particularly in promoting educational equity and improving teacher retention in remote schools—it is important to acknowledge several limitations. The indicators were specifically designed for use in the recruitment and selection of candidates for remote and underprivileged schools in central Thailand. As such, their applicability may be limited in other regions, such as the North, Northeast, or South, where cultural diversity and institutional environments may differ significantly. Furthermore, these indicators may not fully address the broader needs of general schools outside the scholarship framework. Future research should critically examine how these indicators perform across diverse contexts and explore whether adaptations are needed to ensure relevance and effectiveness in different educational, cultural, or policy settings.

The need for ongoing validation of the predictive ability of the indicator set as well as validation through exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and construct validity testing are important. The indicators can be grouped into three main dimensions: Personality traits, prosocial behavior and cultural competence. Future research could focus on validation through exploratory factor analysis in conjunction with the examination of construct validity to assess the consistency and agreement of the indicator set with empirical data on these three main dimensions: personality traits, prosocial behavior, and cultural competence. In addition, future studies could examine the predictive validity of the indicator set in predicting teacher qualities and characteristics of teachers working as community developers among scholarship graduates assigned to teach in remote and underprivileged schools.

It can be concluded that the strategic use of this set of indicators in the recruitment and selection of teacher students for scholarships is a promising approach to promoting educational equity in remote areas. By focusing on identifying individuals with intrinsic motivation and a background conducive to teaching in community schools in remote and underprivileged areas, this strategy provides a pathway to developing an effective teaching workforce that is attuned to the local context and helps reduce the problem of teacher relocation.

This research underlines the necessity of a context-driven approach to the proactive recruitment and professional development systems for teachers working in remote schools. Through an evidence-based set of indicators such as personality traits, prosocial behavior, and cultural competence, educator preparation programs are able to work in partnership with local school communities and other relevant stakeholders to recruit dedicated ‘with-serve’ candidates for remote communities. To enhance retention and long-term effectiveness, teacher preparation programs need to adjust their curricula to address the realities of rural teaching, incorporating the local culture, language, socio-economic constraints, and providing remote school practicum placements to build familiarity and resilience. The insights gained from this study reaffirm that producing teachers for underserved communities goes beyond selection; it is a purposeful endeavor rooted in collective responsibility, cultural appreciation, and institutional stewardship. This framework holds potential for alleviating educational inequities and could shape policy reforms for teacher education and scholarship initiatives in comparable settings.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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