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## FOSTERING OF PROFESSIONAL GROUP LEADERS AT PRIMARY SCHOOLS USING COMPETENCY-BASED APPROACH

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**The problem and the aim of the study:** Since the 2020-2021 school year, the reformed general education program has been put into practice, focusing on the inclusive development of students' competencies and qualities. The reformed general education program has also opened opportunities and posed challenges to teachers and administrators in general and professional group leaders in particular, at schools, requiring them to renovate not only their methods and forms of teaching, but also organization methods as well as to pay much attention to students' daily learning activities. In other words, professional group leaders are compulsory to meet the requirements of both expertise - profession and leadership and management skills to play their own "dual" role. The theoretical aspects about professional group leaders at primary schools (position, role, functions and duties of them at primary schools, features of pedagogical practice - management) and requirements for competences and qualities of professional group leaders at primary schools, etc., however, have not been put into exhaustive and methodological investigations.

### **Research methods**

The method of document analysis and synthesis has been adopted for analyzing and

synthesizing documents associated with professional group leaders at primary schools and fostering of the same.

The interview method has been employed to further delve into the issues about the current situation of fostering professional group leaders at primary schools according to competency-based approach.

The method of educational experience summarization has been used to collect practical information on the team of professional group leaders at primary schools and their experience.

The testing method has got involved to both examine and instruct the team of professional group leaders according to their competency-based approach in some primary schools.

Locations of the experiment: Primary schools in Vinh city, Thai Hoa town, Dien Chau district, Tan Ky district (Nghe An province), Soc Son district (Hanoi city) and Nong Cong district (ThanhHoa province). In semester 2 of the 2018-2019 school year: Prequalification survey and implementation of the first phase. In semester 1 of 2019-2020 school year: Implementation of the second phase. Subject sample of the experiment: 217 professional group leaders serving as subject samples were enrolled, including 105 and 112 for experimental and control groups, respectively.

**Conclusion:** Professional Group Leaders serve to fulfill directly the requirements for objectives, contents and methods of innovation in general education. Additionally, they act as “bridges” to assist the principals in directing professional operations and other activities in schools, and assume responsibilities for the teaching quality of teachers and the learning quality of students in classes on their part. The pilot fostering of professional group leaders using competency-based approach (based on the proposed competency framework) produced the positive outcomes to gain the success in improving the quality and professional qualifications of professional group leaders.

**Key words:** professional group leaders, primary schools, competency, competency-based approach, fostering.

## INTRODUCTION

The professional groups at the primary schools assume the responsibilities for implementing the professional duties of schools. Professional groups are involved in organizing the implementation, and check the initial assessment of teaching - learning results, and innovating teaching, testing and assessment methods of teachers. In addition, the professional groups are the bridges between teachers and students and management boards.

Each professional group leader is in charge of making the general action plan of his/her group. The action plan of the professional group requires the concretization on a weekly, monthly and yearly basis to meet the curricula, teaching plans and educational operations of the relevant primary school

which the professional group is in service. The plan is necessary to cover all operations, from teaching and educating students to training expertise and skills, building an educational environment, developing relationships between schools, families and society, etc.

Professional group leaders are responsible for controlling inclusively all members in the groups in their own charge. It means that they not only involve the administrative management against their group members, but the more important one is that they also manage professional operations of group members. Also, depending on the regulation of the school which each professional group serves, the professional group leader also set up the professional training, testing and assessment of the teaching and educational quality and effectiveness, and management for use of books and equipment by group members.

It is each professional group leader's responsibility to participate in assessing and grading teachers in his/her group in accordance with teachers' professional standards at general education institutions. To achieve the comprehensive, fair and democratic assessment and grading of teachers in his/her group, the professional group leader is required to grasp exhaustively the professional standards/criteria at general education institutions.

In primary schools, the professional group leaders directly fulfill the requirements for the objectives, contents and methods of innovation in general education, act as "bridges" to assist the principals in directing professional operations and other activities in schools, and are responsible for the teaching quality of teachers and the learning quality of students in classes on their part.

Every year, following the fostering plans for the team of professional group leaders issued by the Department of Education and Training, schools have nominated and sent professional group leaders to attend professional skill training courses. Although the actual training courses on educational management capacity have been provided, the number of the same is insignificant. On the other hand, in terms of form, content and duration of training and fostering, too much focus has been put on theory, as shown through the fact that few training programs adhere closely to the management reality of educational institutions. The training and fostering contents have failed to adapt to the innovations of general education as well as follow the requirements of building the standardized and modern team to keep up with the trend of integration and of innovation cause. Most of the professional group leaders have not been trained or fostered in term of management skills before such nomination. The nomination is demand-, creditability or qualification-based but not management and leadership capacity-based, and

pays no attention to age, gender and regional characteristics; therefore, the professional group leaders themselves must study and accumulate their own experience to be eligible to undertake and complete the assigned tasks, so personal subjectivity is unavoidable. The performance of tasks is not at the high degree of professionalism while the management process has no the proper guiding principles, resulting in the limited effectiveness.

Competency-based approach is a part of a new trend of modern human resource management, centering on employee management in light of the competency framework for professional operations and positions. Regarding the establishment of the team of professional group leaders at primary schools following the competency-based approach, it is essential to form the necessary competencies of the leaders to satisfy the requirements of the professional group management at primary schools.

To fulfilling their own responsibilities, professional group leaders at primary schools must be competent at both profession and management. This is exactly why building the competency framework of professional group leaders at primary schools and adopting the same in improving the team of professional group leaders at primary schools is of theoretical and practical significance and urgent.

### **Materials and methods**

The experimental results were assessed based on the gradual improvement of the capacity of fulfilling professional group's tasks by the professional group leaders, clearly demonstrated in the knowledge and skills in fulfilling such tasks. The knowledge and skill served as two primary criteria for assessment of the experimental results. The experiment, however, aimed to determine whether the quality of the team of professional group leaders at primary schools was improved after the fostering of the capacity (knowledge and skills) was put in practice.

#### ***Content and method of the experiment***

##### *Content of the experiment*

The experiment “*Fostering the team of professional group leaders using their competency-based approach (based on competency framework)*” was conducted.

The subjects of the experiment were the Heads of Education and Training Division of the districts/cities/towns and the principals of primary schools.

##### *Method of experiment*

The experiment was conducted twice (in the first and the second phase) in

connection with two groups: experimental and control groups. The experimental group was engaged in training according to the competency framework and the content and procedure as proposed by us while the control group was not.

*Assessment of knowledge of professional group leaders*

The experimental subjects' levels of mastery of knowledge about the fostered contents were assessed through answering multiple-choice questions. Each correct answer got 1 point. Assessment results were classified into 4 categories as follows:

- a. Excellent: giving 9 - 10 correct answers.
- b. Good: giving 7 - 8 correct answers.
- c. Average: giving 5 - 6 correct answers.
- d. Weak: giving 4 correct answers or less.

*Assessment of skills of professional group leaders at primary schools*

In the experiment, the following key skills of each professional group leader at a primary school were assessed:

- 1) Formulating action plans of his/her professional group and guiding teachers in his/her group to make their personal plans;
- 2) Testing and assessing the activities of his/her professional group;
- 3) Implementing the educational program by his/her professional group;
- 4) Developing the educational program by his/her professional group;
- 5) Guiding teachers in his/her professional group to prepare before class;
- 6) Guiding lecture attendance and learning from classes of other teachers in his/her professional group.
- 7) Guiding to assess students' learning results for the successful development of their qualities and competencies;
- 8) Organizing the tutoring for weak students and promotion of excellent students;
- 9) Managing documents of his/her professional group;
- 10) Advising the Management Board on the operation of other professional groups.

For each skill, the assessment criteria and scales have been concretized into three levels, namely, good, average and weak levels.

### **Literature review**

Competency-based approach is a concept that has emerged in the United States since the 1970s and been viewed from various perspectives, namely, human resource development, education and management. As a consequence, addressing the above questions is based on perception, consideration and resolution from the perspective of competence.

Around the world, a lot of researches have been conducted with regard to the development of management staff in general and school administrators in particular. These researches have referred to the establishment of the team of school administrators from various perspectives, namely, positions and roles of school administrators, requirements for school administrators in adopting competency-based approach in establishment of the team of school administrators, and solutions to establishing the team.

Tremblay.D has argued that “capacity for action, success and progress is based on the mobilization and effective use of resources to confront life situations” [1].

Boyatzis R.E has stated that a competency is combination of each individual’s knowledge, skills, abilities, motivation, beliefs, values and interests [7].

Michelle R.Ennis has defined a competency as “the capability of applying or using knowledge, skills abilities, behaviors, and personal characteristics to successfully perform critical work tasks, specific functions, or operate in a given role or position” [5], [6]

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has defined a competency as “*the ability* to successfully meet complex demands in a particular context” [3].

The Quebec-Canada High School Education Program 2004 has supported the definition that competency is “an *ability* to act effectively with multiple resource efforts” [2].

McLagan P. A and Suhadoilnik has argued that the establishment of the team of school administrators requires the appropriate solutions to create the favorable environment and conditions for the team’s self-development, which is the longest and most solid development [4].

Joan M.F has asserted that building a program on fostering administrators serve as one of the ways of establishing the team of school administrators. This program must take account of the requirements that school administrators need to achieve in terms of both competence and quality. The author heightened the key competencies which school administrators should possess in the current context, including but not limited to, change management, development of school education programs, school governance, innovation and creation, modern management style among other things.

The author Tran Kiem has emphasized that the competence of a professional group leader is associated with his/her personal ability. Abilities and competences are organically inter-bound like an iceberg with hummock and bummock demonstrating abilities and competences, respectively. In the opinion of the author, professional group leaders at schools should possess three key competencies, namely, pedagogical expertise, management and leadership capacities. The pedagogical expertise is constituted of the following elements, namely, good teaching of subjects in grades/classes, mastery of curricula of subjects in the grades/classes handled by groups, mastery of teaching plans, mastery of scientific thoughts of each subject, updating innovation trends in teaching of subjects in grades/classes, mastery of characteristic teaching methods of each subject in the grades/classes and so on. Management capacity is constituted of the following elements, namely, assigning teaching tasks in accordance with the capability of each teacher, directing teachers to make teaching plans for subjects, following up teachers in implementing teaching plans of subjects, monitoring teaching quality, fostering teachers, and so forth. Leadership capacity includes the following elements, namely, being exemplar, acting as a central point to unify values in each group, supporting and encouraging teachers, creating motivation for teaching and education of teachers, having gumption, taking the lead in innovation of teaching methods, among other things [11].

The author Vu Thi Mai Huong has discerned what role professional group leaders should play in schools. She has argued that the one of key determinants for professional groups' performance is leadership and management of professional group leaders, contributing significantly to improving the educational quality of schools and the success of educational innovation. Professional group leaders play the roles in developing a general school education program, namely, managing the plan-making for integration-oriented curriculum implementation, promoting students' competencies, managing the realization of curricula, supervising curriculum

implementation, assessing curriculum implementation, and so on [13].

The author Do Van Doat has looked into the leadership and management skills of professional group leaders at schools. From his point of view, professional group leaders at schools should have two skills including leadership and management. The former includes the following sub-skills, namely, educational forecasting, making plans for development and sharing vision, gathering and leading teachers and students to work to prepare for the comprehensive personality development of students, attracting and motivating group members to perform their assigned tasks and so on. The latter includes the sub-skills, namely, preparing operational plans and action programs, organizing plan implementation, monitoring and administering operations, testing, assessing and adjusting, and so on [14].

The author Nguyen Thi Ngoc Lien has delved into teacher motivation skills of the professional group leaders at schools. She has alleged that teacher motivation skill is an indispensable skill of the professional group leaders at primary schools. The effectiveness of motivation is “reliant on how professional group leaders apply and adopt their motivating skills in a flexible and appropriate manner” [10]. The teacher motivation skill includes learning about teachers, making plans and defining motivation strategies, actually motivating, assessing effectiveness of motivation among other things.

The author Huynh Thi Kim Tuyen has delved and figured out solutions to engage the professional group leaders at primary schools in improving their thinking capacity through specialized training. The solutions proposed by the author include designing the specialized training programs, ensuring the suitability of contents for each object, keeping training duration appropriate, diversifying organizational forms, carefully selecting reporters, ensuring suitable organizational spaces and places, among other things [8].

The author Nguyen Thi Le Thuy studied the aspect involving management of professional group leaders at primary schools. She argued that although the current team of professional group leaders at primary schools have met the required or even higher qualification standards and had the recognized expertise and high sense of responsibility at work, but they have the sentiment-based, experience-based and in-a-rut management skills. As a result, she has unraveled solutions to improve the management of the professional group leaders at primary schools, namely, raising awareness of the significance of the team of professional group leaders, planning, selecting and appointing the team of professional group leaders, promoting capacity for the team, improving the effectiveness of implementation of tasks by

professional group leaders, strengthening inspection, examination and assessment of the team, creating management environment for the team to achieve the effective operation. A number of solutions among those proposed by her refer to the establishment of the team using competency-based approach [9].

**Experimental results**

*The experimental results on knowledge of professional group leaders at primary schools are as follows:*

**- In the first phase**

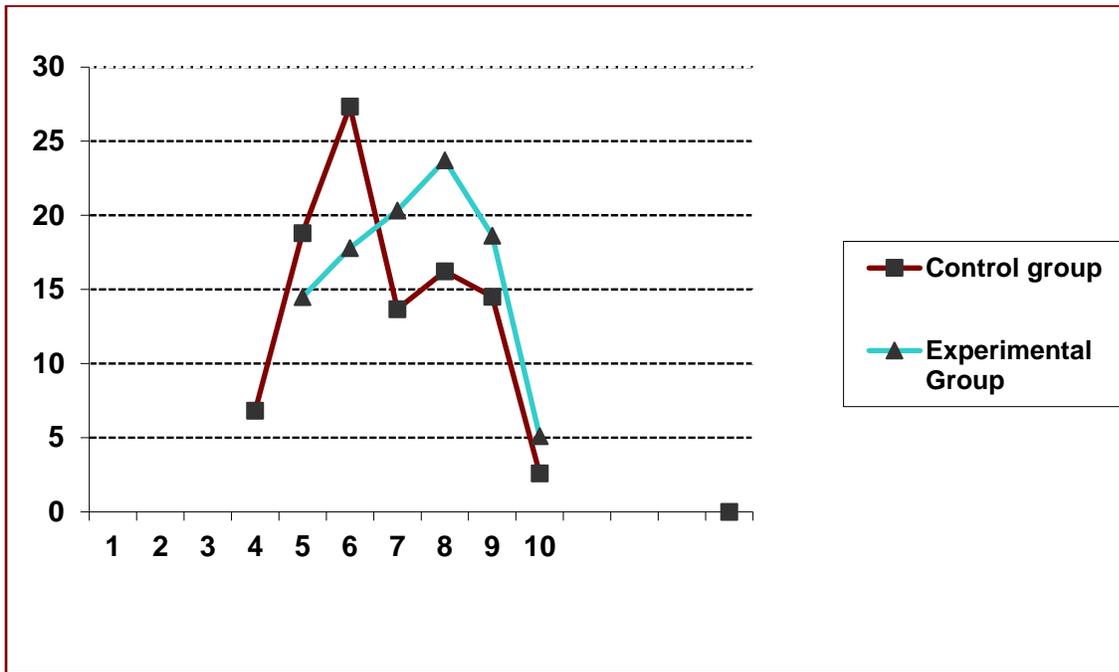
The experimental results on knowledge of professional group leaders in the first phase are demonstrated in Table 3.1.

**Table 1. Frequency table of first-phase experimental results on knowledge of professional group leaders at primary schools**

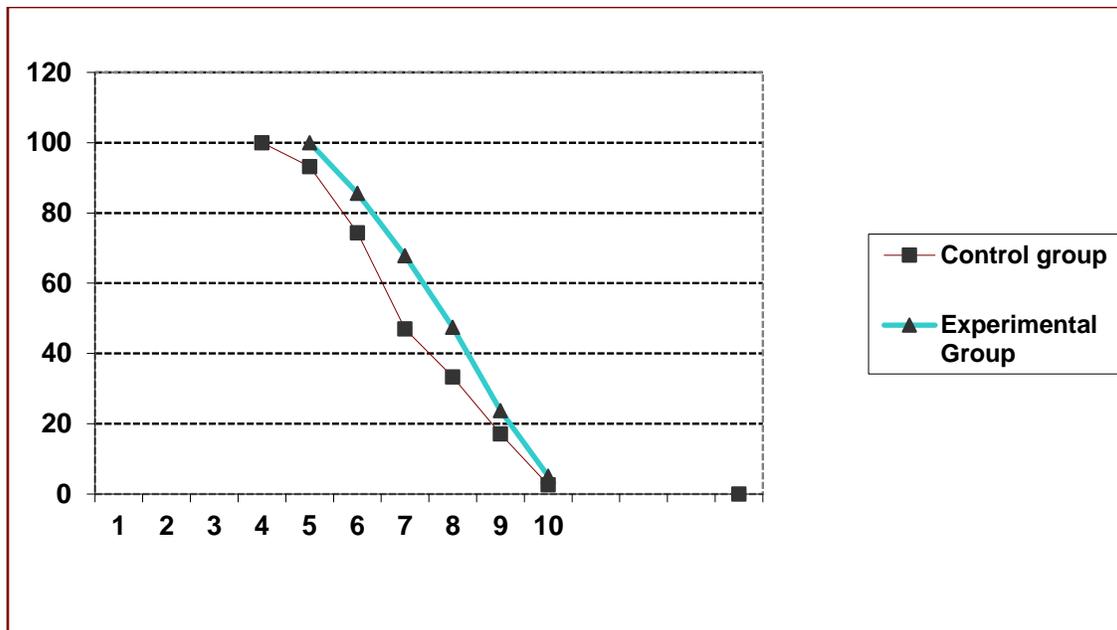
X <sub>i</sub>	Experimental Group (n = 105)			Control group (n = 112)		
	F <sub>i</sub>	f <sub>i</sub>	f <sub>i</sub> ↑	F <sub>i</sub>	f <sub>i</sub>	f <sub>i</sub> ↑
4	0	-	-	8	6,83	100
5	16	14,40	100	22	18,80	93,17
6	19	17,79	85,60	31	27,35	74,37
7	22	20,33	67,81	16	13,67	47,02
8	27	23,72	47,48	18	16,23	33,35
9	21	18,64	23,76	17	14,52	17,12
10	6	5,12	5,12	3	2,60	2,60
<b>Σ</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>100</b>		<b>112</b>	<b>100</b>	

The results included in Table 3.8 served as the basis for elaborating the distribution table of frequency f<sub>i</sub> and cumulative frequency f<sub>i</sub> ↑, lines of cumulative frequency f<sub>i</sub> ↑, and distribution chart of frequency f<sub>i</sub>.

*Table 2. Distribution of frequency  $f_i$  and cumulative frequency  $f_i \uparrow$  in term of knowledge of experimental and control groups*



*Chart1. Distribution of frequency  $f_i$*



*Chart2. Cumulative frequency  $f_i \uparrow$*

*Accordingly, the comments based on the observations are as follows:*

+) Both the mean of the experimental group by each subject location

and the aggregate mean of all after the experiment were both higher than those of the control group:  $7.22 > 6.62$ ;

+) Both the coefficient of variation of the experimental group by each subject location and the aggregate mean of all after the experiment were lower than those of the control group:  $19.44 < 23.31$ ;

+) The lines of frequency and cumulative frequency of the experimental group in terms of knowledge were both higher than and shifted to the right side compared to those of the control group.

The above results evidence that the knowledge level of the experimental group is higher than that of the control group.

**- In the second phase**

The experimental results on knowledge of professional group leaders in the second phase are demonstrated in Table 3.10.

**Table3. Frequency table of second-phase experimental results on knowledge of professional group leaders at primary schools**

Group	Amount	Parameters			
		$\bar{X}$	Variance	standard deviation	Coefficient of variation
Experimental	105	7,94	1,55	1,23	15,57
Control	112	6,78	2,41	1,55	22,86

**Table 3 shows that:**

+) In the second phase, the knowledge level of the experimental group was much higher than that of the control group, as evidenced through the means of the two groups. The mean of the control group was 6.78 while that of the experimental group was 7.94.

+) Even in the experimental group alone, the knowledge level observed in the second phase was also significantly higher than that observed in the first phase:

The mean in the second phase was higher than that in the first phase ( $7.94 > 7.22$ ).

The coefficient of variation (CV%) in the second phase was lower than that in the first phase ( $15.57 < 19.44$ ).

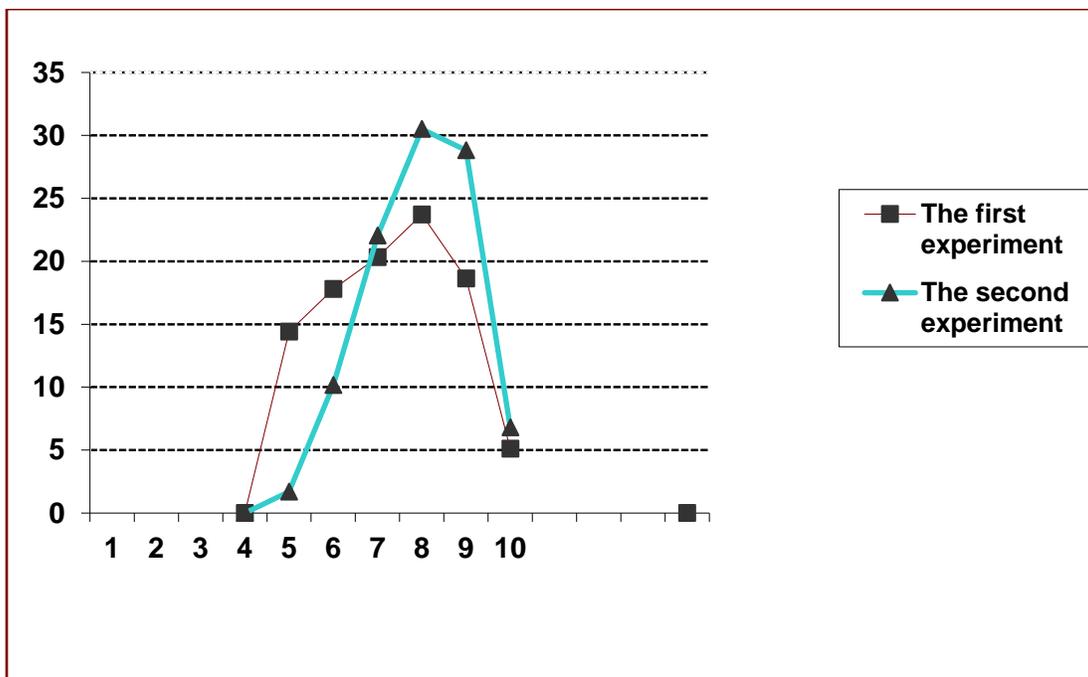
The distribution table of frequency  $f_i$  and cumulative frequency  $f_i \uparrow$  and lines of cumulative frequency  $f_i \uparrow$ , and distribution chart of frequency  $f_i$  are

shown concretely in the following tables.

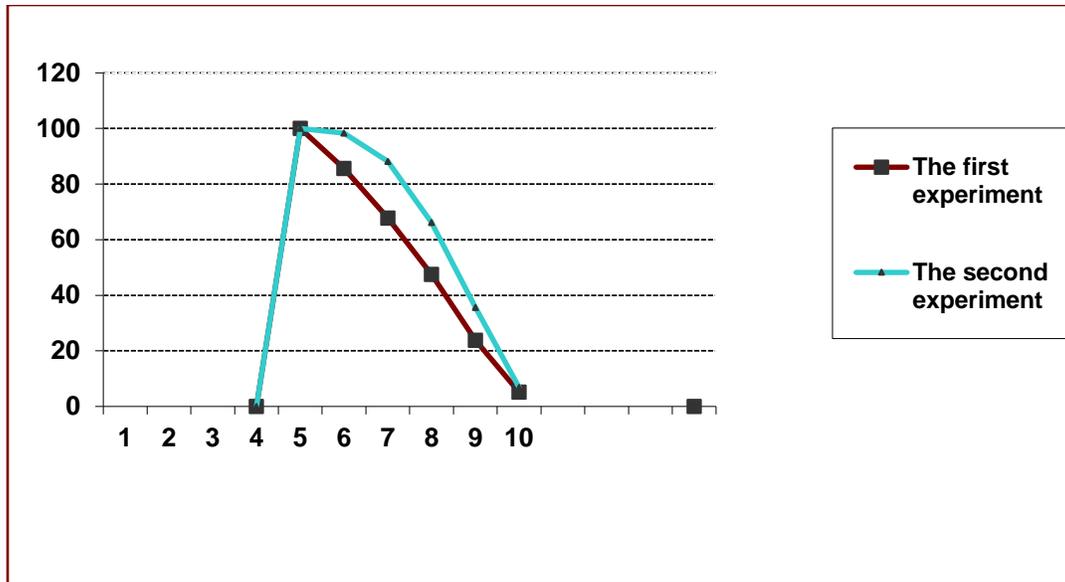
**Table 4. Distribution of frequency  $f_i$  and cumulative frequency  $f_i \uparrow$  in term of knowledge of experimental and control groups in the first and second phase**

$X_i$	<i>Experimental</i> (The first)			<i>Experimental</i> (the second)		
	$F_i$	$f_i$	$f_i \uparrow$	$F_i$	$f_i$	$f_i \uparrow$
4	0	-	-	0	-	-
5	16	14,40	100	2	1,69	100
6	19	17,79	85,60	10	10,16	98,31
7	22	20,33	67,81	21	22,03	88,15
8	27	23,72	47,48	36	30,50	66,12
9	21	18,64	23,76	34	28,81	35,62
10	6	5,12	5,12	8	6,81	6,81
$\Sigma$	<b>105</b>	<b>100</b>		<b>105</b>	<b>100</b>	

**Chart3. Distribution of frequency  $f_i$**



**Chart4. Cumulative frequency  $f_i \uparrow$**



The Charts 3 and 4 show that the lines of frequency and cumulative frequency in the second phase were higher than and shifted to the right side compared to those of the first phase. It is evidenced that the result of the second phase is higher than that of the first phase.

*ii) Experimental result on skills of professional group leaders at primary schools*

**- In the first phase**

The experimental results on skill level of professional group leaders at primary schools in the first phase are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4. Experimental results on skill level of professional group leaders at primary schools in the first phase**

Group	Level	Skills (%)										$\bar{X}$	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
experim ental (105)	Quite	41,9 (44)	38,1 (40)	40,9 (43)	30,5 (32)	38,1 (40)	40,9 (43)	33,3 (35)	39,1 (41)	39,1 (41)	37,8 (42)	<b>37,5</b>	
	medi um	49,5 (52)	50,4 (53)	51,4 (54)	52,3 (55)	52,3 (55)	51,4 (54)	53,3 (56)	53,3 (56)	50,4 (53)	50,5 (56)		<b>50,8</b>
	poor	8,6 (9)	11,5 (12)	7,7 (8)	17,1 (18)	9,6 (10)	7,7 (8)	13,4 (14)	8,6 (8)	10,5 (11)	11,7 (13)		
Control (112)	Quite	30,4 (34)	27,7 (31)	31,2 (35)	23,2 (26)	28,6 (32)	31,3 (35)	25,0 (28)	30,4 (34)	27,7 (31)	28,6 (32)	<b>28,4</b>	
	medi um	54,5 (61)	58,0 (65)	54,5 (61)	56,3 (63)	54,5 (61)	53,6 (60)	55,4 (62)	52,7 (59)	58,0 (65)	57,3 (64)		<b>55,5</b>

	poor	15,1 (17)	14,3 (16)	14,3 (16)	20,5 (23)	16,9 (19)	15,1 (17)	19,6 (22)	16,9 (19)	15,1 (17)	16,1 (18)	<b>16,1</b>
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Table 4 shows that the skill level of the experimental group was higher than that of the control group, specifically:

+) The rate of staffs at good level belonging to experimental group was higher than that belonging to the control group (37.5% against 28.4%).

+) The rate of staffs at weak level belonging to experimental group was lower than that belonging to the control group (11.7% against 16.1%).

**- In the second phase**

The experimental results on skill level of professional group leaders at primary schools in the first phase are shown in Table 5.

**Table 5. Experimental results on skill level of professional group leaders at primary schools in the second phase**

Group	Level	Skills (%)										$\bar{X}$
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
experimental (105)	Quite	56,2 (59)	50,4 (53)	54,2 (57)	51,34 (54)	53,3 (56)	50,4 (53)	49,6 (52)	53,3 (56)	50,4 (53)	52,3 (55)	<b>52,2</b>
	medium	43,8 (46)	49,6 (52)	45,8 (48)	48,6 (51)	46,7 (49)	49,6 (52)	50,4 (53)	46,2 (49)	49,6 (52)	47,7 (50)	<b>47,8</b>
	poor	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	<b>0,0</b>
Control (112)	Quite	33,0 (37)	29,6 (33)	33,9 (38)	28,7 (32)	33,0 (37)	34,8 (39)	29,6 (33)	33,9 (38)	28,7 (32)	27,8 (31)	<b>31,3</b>
	medium	53,0 (60)	54,7 (62)	53,9 (61)	54,7 (62)	53,9 (61)	53,9 (61)	54,7 (62)	53,9 (61)	54,7 (62)	56,5 (64)	<b>54,1</b>
	poor	14,0 (15)	15,7 (17)	12,2 (13)	16,6 (18)	13,1 (14)	11,3 (12)	15,7 (17)	12,2 (13)	16,6 (18)	15,7 (17)	<b>14,6</b>

Table 5 shows that the skill level of the experimental group was higher than that of the control group, specifically:

+) The rate of staffs at good level belonging to experimental group was higher than that belonging to the control group (52.2% against 31.3%).

+) There were no staffs at weak level in the experimental group while the same still occurred in the control group (14.6%).

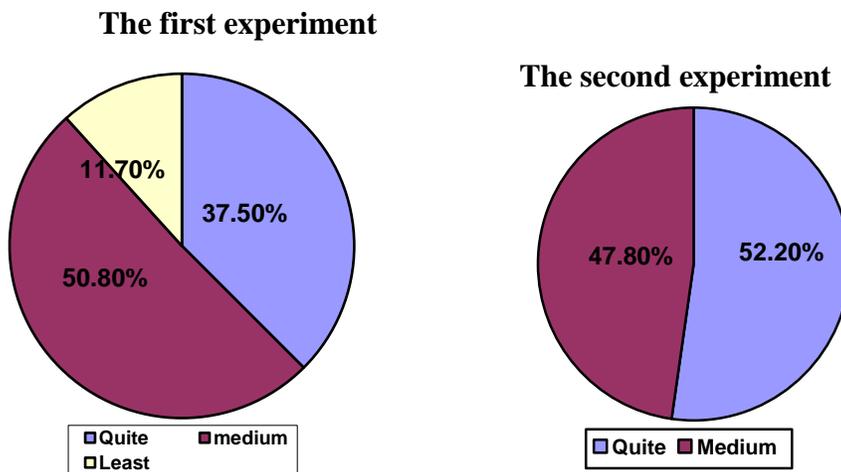
Based on Tables 4, 5 and 6 is elaborated to compare the results on skill level of professional group leaders at primary schools between the first and second phase.

**Table 6. Comparing the results on skill level of professional group leaders between the first and second phase**

Group	Level	Skills (%)										$\bar{X}$
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
experimental (105)	Quite	41,9 (44)	38,1 (40)	40,9 (43)	30,5 (32)	38,1 (40)	40,9 (43)	33,3 (35)	39,1 (41)	39,1 (41)	37,8 (42)	<b>37,5</b>
	medium	49,5 (52)	50,4 (53)	51,4 (54)	52,3 (55)	52,3 (55)	51,4 (54)	53,3 (56)	53,3 (56)	50,4 (53)	50,5 (56)	<b>50,8</b>
	poor	8,6 (9)	11,5 (12)	7,7 (8)	17,1 (18)	9,6 (10)	7,7 (8)	13,4 (14)	8,6 (8)	10,5 (11)	11,7 (13)	<b>11,7</b>
Control (112)	Quite	56,2 (59)	50,4 (53)	54,2 (57)	51,4 (54)	53,3 (56)	50,4 (53)	49,6 (52)	53,3 (56)	50,4 (53)	52,3 (55)	<b>52,2</b>
	medium	43,8 (46)	49,6 (52)	45,8 (48)	48,6 (51)	46,7 (49)	49,6 (52)	50,4 (53)	46,2 (49)	49,6 (52)	47,7 (50)	<b>47,8</b>
	poor	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	<b>0,0</b>

The chart below shows visually the results of skill level of professional group leaders at primary schools in the first and second phase:

**Table 5. Comparing the results on skill level of professional group leaders at primary schools between the first and second phase**



**DISCUSSION**

The competency framework serves as the output standard of the training and fostering process for teachers and administrators in general and the team of professional group leaders at primary schools in particular following the competency-based approach. The competency framework is adopted to elaborate the contents and programs on training and fostering the team of

professional group leaders at primary schools. Only then will the training and fostering of the professional group leaders be realized transparently and effectively. The professional group leaders at primary schools themselves must understand clearly what kinds and level of training and fostering they need to facilitate their promotion roadmap.

The competency framework applicable to the professional group leaders includes:

+ **Management of professional group:** The management competency of each professional group leader at a primary school includes: - Systematizing the formulation of the professional group's development plans (innovating and creating plans, guiding implementation organization, and supervising and assessing the realization of development plans by the professional group); - Managing teaching and educating students by grades/classes (innovating effectively management of teaching and educating students by grades/classes, ensuring that teachers adopt the teaching and educating methods in accordance with learning styles, needs, interests and readiness level of each student, and improving the results of students' learning and training); - Managing teachers (assigning teachers to their tasks in accordance with their expertise, assessing the qualifications of teachers, keeping teachers motivated to improve their professional capacities). - Managing the educational quality of the professional group (directing the formulation and implementation of quality improvement plans, eliminating weaknesses according to the assessment results of the school).

+ **Building an educational environment:** This competency of each professional group leader at a primary school is constituted of: - Shaping the positive school culture (recommending measures to follow the internal rules and codes of conduct of the school, directing to handle timely and effective the violations of the internal rules and codes of conduct in relevant grades/classes); - Realizing grassroots democracy in the professional group (encouraging all members of the professional group to engage in realization of the grassroots democracy regulations, detecting, preventing and promptly handling violations of the democracy regulations by the professional group); - Building a safe school and preventing school violence (encouraging the professional group members to participate in building a safe school and preventing school violence, detecting, preventing and handling in a timely manner violations of the school' regulations on building a safe school and preventing school violence).

+ **Building the relationship between schools, families, and society:** The competency of each professional group leader at a primary school is

constituted of: - Acting in coordination with the school, families and the society to jointly conduct the teaching activities for students (coordinating with students' parents and stakeholders to put curricula and teaching plans in practice in the relevant grades/classes, keeping information about implementation results of the curricula and teaching plans in the grades/classes public and transparent); - Acting in coordination with the school, families and society to undertake the ethical and lifestyle education for students (coordinating with students' parents and stakeholders in implementation of the ethical and lifestyle education for students in the relevant grades/classes); - Acting in coordination with the school, families and society in pooling and utilizing resources to develop the professional groups (coordinating with students' parents and stakeholders in pooling and utilizing resources for building of the professional group as prescribed).

+ **Supporting by each professional group leader:** The capacity plays the complementary role in the professional operations and management of each professional group leader at a primary school, constituted of: - Pedagogical communication, demonstrated through the ability to communicate effectively with superiors, teachers, students and stakeholders. - Proficiency in foreign languages (using foreign languages in improving personal qualifications and skills, directing building and implementation of plans for foreign language capacity improvement of teachers and students in grades/classes); - Applying information technology (using software to support teaching and management of the professional group). Accordingly, the competency framework of each professional group leader at a primary school has 5 elements, each of which is constituted of certain systems of knowledge, skills and attitudes, etc. The contents and occupational characteristics of each professional group leader at a primary school, requiring fundamental and comprehensive innovation of education and training, shall be the basis for determining the corresponding structure and criteria of each element.

Department for International Development (DFID) and managed by the British Council, Karachi. The overall aim of the programme is to develop head teachers as 'pedagogical leaders'. The programme should contribute towards building leadership and management capacity for improving schools. The programme has the following major objectives for head teacher participants: 1. develop their analytical skills to reflect on their current roles and responsibilities in relation to effective leadership practices; 2. develop their understanding of their role as pedagogical leaders; 3. understand the use of information and communications technology as a tool for school improvement; 4. develop understanding about the dynamics of school effectiveness and improvement and the implications for overall school

development; 5. develop skills and competencies for conducting action research for improving educational processes; 6. understand the notion of mentoring and develop their mentoring skills to work with staff in their respective schools; 7. understand the relevance and dynamics of school-community partnerships for making the school effective; 8. understand the notion of monitoring and develop skills related to performance indicators; and 9. develop a framework for school development plans based on the felt needs and future demands for their improvement of school performance.

The programme comprises 10 modules of 400 contact hours, of which 112 contact hours are assigned to a school-based practicum guided by the faculty during field visits. The programme has a flexible schedule; five modules are covered during the summer and winter vacations and the remaining five modules are offered through weekend sessions. Details of the modules are as follows:

- Reconceptualizing roles and responsibilities.
- Using information and communications technology.
- Conducting action research for school improvement.
- Developing pedagogical leadership.
- Developing effective leadership and management practices.
- Understanding professional development.
- Developing mentoring skills.
- Managing school community relationships.
- Monitoring and evaluating school performance.
- Developing action plans for school improvement [16]

From the standpoint of US Department of Labor's experts, the competency-based approach in human resource development means a method of standardizing and controlling the acts and behaviors of each person to make the distinction (excellence) in performance.

The author Dang Quoc Bao [15] has argued that developing the educational staff following the competency-based approach is the way of integrating the advantages and strengths from the professional operation models of the educators.

From the viewpoint of the author Nguyen Minh Duong, developing the educational staff according to the competency-based approach first requires the analysis and description of requirements of each task and competency to

fulfill each task (in terms of teaching, professional development, research, social activities and management) and level of each competency (way of describing). In consideration of the foregoing, the factors with impacts on the educational staff's development activities are identified [13].

The competency-based approach, applied in fostering the team of professional group leaders at primary schools, is an approach to standardize the system of necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes that the leaders need to possess. This approach, in terms of benefits to education institutions, clarifies the competencies of each leader and team of professional group leaders at primary schools and how to facilitate the development of specific competencies to handle their roles and tasks in the best way.

The trend of development of modernized educational administrator team is become widespread in the substantial number of countries, combining 3 models based on *behavior and work orientation, professional service process and components of competency*, which is called *the competency-based approach*.

Thus, developing the educational staff according to the competency-based approach aims at standardizing and integrating the knowledge, skills and attitudes to form a standard competency system for professional group leaders at primary schools. The requisite for the realization of management and development of the team of professional group leaders at primary schools according to competency-based approach is setting out successfully a professional competency standard, followed by "standardization" of the contents of such management and development including *planning, development plan-making, recruitment, assignment, assessment, training and fostering professional group leaders, and reward, incentive and motivation policies, and so on*, all of which are based on the professional competency standard for professional group leaders.

A pedagogical leader is one who develops the students and teachers to empower and enhance their performance. I must be concerned with the social and academic benefit of my students and the intellectual and professional capacity of the teachers. I must try my level best to inculcate the habit of 'questioning'. We must have a quest for inquiry. To become a true pedagogical leader one needs to travel a long road. (Quote from reflective journal of female head teacher from non-Government school)

The development of more effective middle managers, particularly in their team leadership roles, has been the development target for some head teachers. Some schools have a sharper and more defined approach to school planning. There are signs of the head teachers developing their coaching and

mentoring roles with staff. Production and management of improved learning resources has been a focus for others. For example one participant said: I began to realize how much time I have wasted in operational details which is nothing but a part of administration. I give topmost priority to the planning, organizing, execution, monitoring and evaluation. I feel that, as a pedagogical leader, I need to have vision, mission, commitment and insight into my role. (Quote from reflective journal of female head teacher from Government school)[16]

During the planning, the team of professional group leaders should be divided into groups:

- Group of qualified staffs to meet the work requirements;
- Group of highly potential staffs needing the additional training and fostering on political theory, expertise, and organization and management capacity;
- Group of ineligible staffs in terms of qualities, abilities and level, who should be replaced (including those at old age and with poor health, etc.);
- Group of successors and backup staffs, selected from good teachers with good qualities, abilities, health, enthusiasm and trustworthiness. They should have the suitable working environment and conditions to act and play their roles, then, assess and make the right choices. In addition, it is required to conduct regular public opinion polls to ensure objectivity in selecting and planning a team of professional group leaders.

## CONCLUSION

Fostering and improving moral qualities and capacity for the team of professional group leaders is urgent tasks. Fostering capacity involves: - Fostering political qualities and professional ethics; - Fostering professional capacity and pedagogical skills; - Fostering management capacity. For the maximal effectiveness of fostering and improvement, the fostering and training plans should be elaborated, and the plans should be followed strictly.

Fostering professional group leaders at primary schools according to capacity-based approach is consistent with the development trend of modern education. Educational institutions can, based on the competency framework of professional group leaders, control the outcomes of the training process. In addition, fostering according to competency-based approach facilitates the establishment of criteria to assess the competences and skills of professional group leaders in activities on a case-by-case basis.

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