

## Developing an outward mindset model for primary school administrators in Northeastern Thailand

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**Abstract:** This research aimed to: (1) study the components and indicators of the Outward Mindset of primary school administrators in the Northeastern region; (2) examine the consistency of the component model and indicators of the Outward Mindset of primary school administrators in the Northeastern region with empirical data; and (3) create and evaluate the Outward Mindset development model for primary school administrators in the Northeastern region. The study consisted of three phases: Phase 1 studied the components and indicators of the Outward Mindset of primary school administrators; Phase 2 examined the consistency of the component model and indicators of the Outward Mindset of primary school administrators in the Northeastern region; and Phase 3 involved the creation and evaluation of the Outward Mindset development model for primary school administrators in the Northeastern region. The study results indicated that: 1) from the qualitative study, there were four components and twelve indicators; 2) from the component analysis, the indicators could be grouped into four components, and from the confirmatory factor analysis, it was found that the developed model of components and indicators of the Outward Mindset of primary school administrators in the Northeast region was consistent with empirical data; and 3) the Outward Mindset Development Model for Primary School Administrators in the Northeastern Region was established.

**Keywords:** *Administrators, CFA, Outward mindset.*

### 1. Introduction

The current BANI World evolved from the VUCA World, a term we only recently defined. However, in reality, the VUCA World emerged around 2000, when the internet began to play a significant role in our lives. That period was characterized by change, ambiguity, complexity, volatility, and uncertainty—which is understandable, as the internet was a novel concept then. People were curious and eager to grasp "the internet." Then came the era of Digital Transformation, where technology became more intelligent and capable of communicating under internet control. Just as people were excited about these new technologies, the COVID-19 pandemic struck, causing undeniable global impact. This accelerated technological development even further. Cascio [1] coined and described this new era as the BANI World, a new definition for a world that is Brittle, Anxious, Non-linear, and Incomprehensible. In such a rapidly changing landscape, a particular mindset or framework of thinking becomes crucial for effectively navigating these shifts. This is especially true for leaders and executives who must guide their organizations through every crisis towards their objectives. Successful leaders are humble enough to look beyond themselves, recognize their subordinates' capabilities, and empower them to become leaders themselves. This fosters collaborative problem-solving and the co-creation of new solutions. Organizational success relies on the success of every team member. Therefore, educational administrators, as organizational leaders, critically need a growth mindset. An Outward Mindset is one such growth mindset that will enable organizations to overcome problems and obstacles in this rapidly changing Digital Transformation and BANI World era [2].

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, educational institutions nationwide have encountered various challenges and limitations in educational development. These include learning loss, students dropping out of the system, and educational inequality. Consequently, contemporary educational administrators urgently need an Outward Mindset to manage both work and people effectively. This mindset emphasizes results, a holistic view, teamwork, open-mindedness, and understanding the needs of others. It enables administrators to build strong relationships, influence, and persuade everyone to cooperate. Only then can they guide their organizations toward their goals in a rapidly changing and unpredictable world. Leaders or educational administrators are therefore crucial in steering the organization. Beyond the need for agile, intelligent, and transformative leaders, possessing an Outward Mindset makes it significantly easier for leaders to guide their organizations toward their objectives. When faced with problems, we typically encounter two types of people: those who see only difficulties, and those who see only opportunities. What differentiates these two types is their mindset. It's evident that in this volatile world, it is absolutely essential for organizational leaders to possess an Outward Mindset [3]. School administrators are a crucial mechanism with the greatest influence on the quality of outcomes from the educational system, the efficiency of administration, and the effectiveness of the educational institution. Many academics agree that the success or failure of education partly depends on the administrators. Therefore, administrators are a key variable in ensuring quality education. Modern school administrators in the 21st century must possess knowledge, abilities, skills, and experience in educational administration to develop their institutions to be current and adaptable to global changes. School administrators in the 21st century need continuous development in essential leadership skills because these are critical for achieving high effectiveness in school management. Particularly important skills, emphasized by leading global institutions and organizations, include team-building skills and conflict management skills. An Outward Mindset in school administrators is thus significant and necessary to lead the organization toward its goals [4]. To guide the educational organization to achieve its objectives, it is essential for school administrators to have a positive mindset to navigate the rapid changes of the current era. As Charles Darwin stated, "It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is most adaptable to change." Therefore, post-COVID-19 school administrators critically need a positive mindset to lead the development of their organizations, and one of the mindsets geared towards sustainable development is the Outward Mindset [5]. In this era of disruptive change and rapid digital advancement, daily life and education increasingly reside in the online and social spheres. Consequently, a specific mindset has become crucial, particularly for organizational leaders and administrators. They need this mindset to effectively guide their organizations through swiftly evolving and turbulent times. For primary school administrators, an Outward Mindset is essential. This involves understanding and empathizing with the feelings of others, treating everyone with equal importance, adopting others' perspectives, prioritizing the common good, and learning how to empower others in their work. It also entails showing respect, acceptance, and appreciation for others' capabilities, and honoring their opinions [6]. This approach aims to reduce conflict within organizations and foster unity. In educational administration, there have been well-publicized cases, both nationally and at the district level via social media, of primary school administrators facing complaints and even expulsion. These issues invariably stem from conflict. If educational administrators possessed an Outward Mindset—encompassing the ability to perceive others' goals and needs, focus on adapting work methods, evaluate the impact of their actions, and demonstrate awareness in caring for others—then conflicts, generational gaps, and other collaborative challenges would significantly diminish or disappear entirely. This is because everyone would share a common goal, working together as true collaborators and supporting one another. Given the aforementioned importance and existing problems, the researcher is interested in studying a development model for the Outward Mindset of primary school administrators in the Northeastern region of Thailand. This model aims to serve as a framework for enhancing educational administrators, ultimately striving for sustainable quality.

## 2. Literature Review

Warner [7] defines the Outward Mindset as a mindset that considers the goals and outcomes of others alongside one's own. It involves recognizing others' needs and problems, understanding how our actions affect them, and working together to achieve shared goals. Key steps include considering others' goals, helping others, and being mindful of their needs.

Alistair [8] emphasizes that the Outward Mindset is essential for leaders, especially CEOs, who should view everything through this lens and help others do the same. The mindset includes understanding others' feelings, changing work methods, evaluating impacts on work, and caring for others.

The Arbinger Institute [9] also describes the Outward Mindset as thinking that balances one's own goals with those of others, focusing on recognizing others' needs and impacts, taking responsibility for one's behavior, and being attentive to others. They highlight three steps: seeing others' needs, evaluating and taking responsibility for impact, and mindfulness.

Wilson [10] adds that the Outward Mindset requires seeing others' needs, adjusting how we work to help them better, evaluating our impact, and showing care. From these scholars, the Outward Mindset's main components are: (1) Seeing and understanding others' needs and goals, (2) Adjusting work to better support others, (3) Evaluating and taking responsibility for impact, and (4) Being mindful and caring.

Lazan [11] describes it as teamwork focused on mutual benefit, knowledge sharing, and collective growth, with key elements being changing work methods, evaluating impact, mindfulness, teamwork, and knowledge exchange.

Tharingsri [12] views the Outward Mindset as a tool helping organizations overcome challenges by looking beyond individual perspectives to understand others' needs. She emphasizes practical steps for leaders to facilitate open dialogue among team members about the impacts of their actions, ways to help each other, and how to measure success, promoting greater mutual understanding.

Lazan [11] highlights how the Outward Mindset involves understanding others' feelings, adjusting work, evaluating impact, and caring — focusing on how we view others in relation to ourselves.

Kongsompong [13] explains two mindsets: Inward and Outward, with the latter consisting of seeing others' goals, adjusting work methods, evaluating impacts, and being attentive.

Karnsiri [5] emphasizes practical application through the SAM framework: seeing others' needs, adjusting work, and evaluating impact.

Good [14] define a model as a pattern or example to imitate or represent concepts, which aligns with the idea of the Outward Mindset as a behavioral model for improving interpersonal and organizational outcomes.

Bush [15] identified four main components as criteria for considering educational organizational models: 1) Goals, 2) Organizational Structure, 3) Environment, and 4) Leadership.

Kanasit [16] defined the components of a model as including: 1) Model Name, 2) Principles and Foundational Concepts of each component, 3) Model Objectives, 4) Characteristics of the Model, and 5) Inputs.

Onuma Thongnak [17] stated that the components of a model consist of: 1) Principles and Concepts, 2) Objectives, 3) Work Systems and Mechanisms, 4) Operational Methods, and 5) Conditions for Success.

Cawell [6] defined an educational administrator as someone with educational leadership capable of driving educational work towards its goals. This involves creating and inspiring operations to proceed smoothly and with maximum efficiency.

## 3. Methodology

Research on Developing an Outward Mindset in Primary School Administrators in Northeastern Thailand. This research, titled "A Development Model for Outward Mindset in Primary School Administrators in Northeastern Thailand," has the following objectives:

1) To study the components and indicators of the Outward Mindset among primary school administrators in Northeastern Thailand. 2) To examine the consistency and coherence of the Outward Mindset component and indicator model for primary school administrators in Northeastern Thailand with empirical data. 3) To construct and evaluate a development model for the Outward Mindset in primary school administrators in Northeastern Thailand, considering its congruence, appropriateness, feasibility, and utility. The researcher employed a Mixed Methods Research approach [18] specifically a Multi-phase Design. This mixed-methods research design involves three distinct phases of operation.

### *3.1. Phase 1 of Research*

1) In-depth study of Outward Mindset components and indicators among primary school administrators in the Northeastern region. This involves a comprehensive review of concepts, theories, literature, documents, and relevant research, encompassing both domestic and international contexts. The aim is to synthesize the components and indicators of the Outward Mindset for primary school administrators in the Northeastern region.

2) Expert interviews using semi-structured interviews with five experts (Key Informants), selected through purposive sampling based on the following criteria:

1) Three experts who are educational administrators at the policy level, possessing knowledge, ability, at least 10 years of administrative experience, and demonstrable results related to an Outward Mindset.

2) Three experts who are academics or university lecturers with knowledge, ability, and experience in applying an Outward Mindset in organizations to achieve organizational goals.

3) One expert who is an educational institution administrator with knowledge, ability, and experience in applying an Outward Mindset in their organization to achieve organizational goals.

### *3.2. Phase 2 of Research*

This phase involves examining the goodness-of-fit of the researcher-developed Outward Mindset component and indicator model for primary school administrators in Thailand's Northeastern region with empirical data. For the exploratory factor analysis (EFA), the sample size consisted of 370 individuals, comprising primary school administrators and teachers from the Northeastern region. This sample size was determined following the guidelines of Krejcie & Morgan. For the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), a sample of 700 individuals (primary school administrators and teachers from the Northeastern region) was used. The sample size criterion of 20:1, as a function of the number of parameters or variables in factor analysis [19] was applied. This research has 16 parameters. Both samples were selected using a multi-stage sampling method from primary schools under the Office of Primary Educational Service Areas in the Northeastern region.

### *3.3. Phase 3 of Research*

1) Case Study Research: This involves an in-depth case study of two primary schools recognized for their best practices. These schools are Anuban Chaiyaphum School (under the Chaiyaphum Primary Educational Service Area Office, Zone 1) and Khon Kaen University Demonstration School (Modindaeng) (Primary Section). They were selected through purposive sampling based on their established recognition by their parent organizations and the public, evidenced by: Awards from educational service area offices. Distinguished innovation awards in educational administration. National-level awards for innovation in educational leadership, teaching, and student achievement. Other awards related to educational administration and administrators. The administrators exhibiting an Outward Mindset. Being primary schools located in the Northeastern region.

2) Connoisseurship Seminar: This seminar aims to construct and validate the draft model for "The Development Model of Outward Mindset for Primary School Administrators in the Northeastern Region." A total of 11 experts will participate, selected through purposive sampling based on the

following criteria: Three experts who are policy-level educational administrators with knowledge, ability, at least 10 years of administrative experience, and demonstrable results in Outward Mindset. Three experts who are academics or university lecturers with knowledge, ability, and experience in applying an Outward Mindset in organizations to achieve organizational goals. Five experts who are educational institution administrators with knowledge, ability, and experience in applying an Outward Mindset in their organizations to achieve organizational goals.

3) Model Evaluation: This involves evaluating the suitability, feasibility, and utility of the developed Outward Mindset development model for primary school administrators in the Northeastern region. The target group for this evaluation will be 11 qualified experts, selected using purposive sampling. The selection criteria for these key informants emphasize their expertise in educational administration, possessing knowledge, ability, and practical experience in applying an Outward Mindset within organizations to achieve organizational goals.

#### 4. Results

1. Analysis of Opinion Levels and Perceived Behavioral Practices Regarding Outward Mindset among Primary School Administrators in the Northeastern Region. Overall, the level of behavioral practices demonstrating the Outward Mindset among primary school administrators in the Northeastern region was found to be at the highest level. When considering each component individually, the component with the highest mean score was "Awareness of Caring for Others" ( $\bar{X}$  = 4.89, S.D. = 0.32, C.V. = 6.54). This was followed by "Perspective on Evaluating Work Impact" ( $\bar{X}$  = 4.88, S.D. = 0.33, C.V. = 6.76), and "Focusing on Changing Work Methods" ( $\bar{X}$  = 4.86, S.D. = 0.35, C.V. = 7.20). The component with the lowest mean score was "Seeing Others' Goals and Needs" ( $\bar{X}$  = 4.71, S.D. = 0.46, C.V. = 9.76). These findings are summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1.**

Results of the Analysis of Opinions and Perceived Behavioral Practices Regarding Outward Mindset among Primary School Administrators in the Northeastern Region.

Component	Practice behavior level			
	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	C.V.	Interpret result
1. Focusing adjust efforts on work	4.86	0.35	7.20	most
2. Perspective measure impacts on work	4.88	0.33	6.76	most
3. Be aware of caring for others	4.89	0.32	6.54	most
4. See the goals and needs of others	4.71	0.46	9.76	most
Total	<b>4.84</b>	<b>0.37</b>	7.64	most

#### 2. Factor Analysis of Outward Mindset Among Primary School Administrators in the Northeast

The confirmatory factor analysis of the Outward Mindset among primary school administrators in the Northeast revealed that it comprises 4 components: 1) Focus on adapting work methods 2) Perspective on evaluating work impact 3) Awareness and consideration for others 4) Seeing the goals and needs of others These findings are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.**

Results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the Outward Mindset among Primary School Administrators in the Northeast.

Component	Factor Loading			Coefficient Of Determination ( $R^2$ )
	$\beta$	S.E.	t	
1. Focusing adjust efforts on work	0.881	0.056	4.778	0.527
2. Be aware of caring for others	0.975	0.016	4.244	0.119
3. Perspective measure impacts on work	0.915	0.051	3.123	0.025
4. See the goals and needs of others	0.922	0.042	3.686	0.078

From Table 2, considering the results of the confirmatory factor analysis of the main components, the factor loadings ranged from 0.881 to 0.975, and all values were statistically significant at the .05 level. The factor loadings, ranked from highest to lowest, are as follows: Awareness and consideration for others, Seeing the goals and needs of others, Perspective on evaluating work impact, and Focus on adapting work methods, with factor loadings of 0.975, 0.922, 0.915, and 0.881, respectively. This indicates that the "Awareness and consideration for others" component has the highest factor loading, making it the most significant in explaining the Outward Mindset of primary school administrators. Conversely, the "Focus on adapting work methods" component has the lowest factor loading, making it the least significant in explaining the Outward Mindset of primary school administrators. The Outward Mindset component model for primary school administrators in the Northeast is consistent with the empirical data, as detailed in the data analysis (Table 3).

**Table 3.**

Results of the Goodness-of-Fit Examination of the Outward Mindset Component Model for Primary School Administrators in the Northeast with Empirical Data.

Fit Index	Criteria	Analysis Results	Results of the consideration
$\chi^2$ - Test	$p > 0.05$	$\chi^2 = 25.534$ $df = 18$ $P - \text{Value} = 0.1109$	Pass
$\chi^2/df$	$< 2.00$	1.419	Well-harmonized
RMSEA	$< 0.07$	0.035	Well-harmonized
SRMR	$< 0.08$	0.071	Well-harmonized
CFI	$\geq 0.95$	0.997	Well-harmonized
TLI	$\geq 0.95$	0.990	Well-harmonized

Based on Table 3, the Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) value is 25.534, with degrees of freedom (df) of 18. The p-value is 0.1109. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is 0.035, the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) is 0.071, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) is 0.997, and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) is 0.990. Since these values are close to 1, it indicates that the measurement model for the Outward Mindset behavior of primary school administrators in the Northeast, developed by the researcher, is consistent with the empirical data.

### 3. Results of the Construction and Evaluation of the Outward Mindset Development Model for Primary School Administrators in the Northeastern Region

3.1 The researcher synthesized qualitative data from case studies of schools with best practices and educational administrators exhibiting an Outward Mindset. This included information on success targets, development methods, and mechanisms for driving the successful development of an Outward Mindset among primary school administrators in the Northeastern region. This synthesis informed the initial draft of the model. The draft model was then evaluated and reviewed by experts during a connoisseurship seminar. Based on the seminar's discussions concerning the development of an Outward Mindset for primary school administrators in the Northeastern region, it was concluded that the Outward Mindset development model for primary school administrators in the Northeastern region comprises: 1) Model Name 2) Principles and Concepts 3) Objectives 4) 12 Success Targets 5) 22 Development Methods 6) 27 Mechanisms for Driving Success.

3.2 Results of the Evaluation of the Outward Mindset Development Model for Primary School Administrators in the Northeastern Region Regarding Its Consistency, Appropriateness, Feasibility, and Utility. The evaluation results regarding the consistency, appropriateness, feasibility, and utility of the Outward Mindset development model for primary school administrators in the Northeastern region revealed that the overall model demonstrated the highest level of consistency, the highest level of appropriateness, the highest level of feasibility, and the highest level of utility. The summarized results for each aspect are presented below:

1) Consistency Evaluation Results: The overall consistency was rated at the highest level. When considering individual components, "Perspective on Evaluating Work Impact" and "Perceiving Others' Goals and Needs" showed the highest consistency for implementation. These were followed by "Awareness of Caring for Others" and "Focus on Adapting Working Methods," respectively.

2) Appropriateness Evaluation Results: The overall appropriateness was rated at the highest level. When examining individual components, "Perspective on Evaluating Work Impact" and "Perceiving Others' Goals and Needs" were found to be the most appropriate for implementation. These were followed by "Focus on Adapting Working Methods" and "Awareness of Caring for Others," respectively.

3) Feasibility Evaluation Results: The overall feasibility was rated at the highest level. When reviewing individual components, "Perspective on Evaluating Work Impact" and "Perceiving Others' Goals and Needs" were deemed the most feasible for implementation. These were followed by "Focus on Adapting Working Methods" and "Awareness of Caring for Others," respectively.

4) Utility Evaluation Results: The overall utility was rated at the highest level. When analyzing individual components, "Perspective on Evaluating Work Impact" and "Perceiving Others' Goals and Needs" showed the highest utility for implementation. These were followed by "Focus on Adapting Working Methods" and "Awareness of Caring for Others," respectively.

## 5. Discussion

This research synthesized and validated the components and indicators of the Outward Mindset in primary school administrators in Northeastern Thailand. The synthesis process involved theoretical and empirical literature from both Thai and international contexts, supported by expert interviews. Four key components emerged: (1) adapting work methods, (2) evaluating work impact, (3) caring for others, and (4) recognizing others' goals and needs, with a total of 12 indicators.

In today's digital era, characterized by rapid technological advancements and systemic shifts, educational leaders must adopt an Outward Mindset to effectively respond to complex challenges [20]. This mindset encourages leaders to shift from a self-focused perspective to an awareness of others' needs, promoting cooperation and innovation in schools.

The Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) results showed that the model had a good fit with empirical data ( $\chi^2/df = 1.419$ , RMSEA = 0.035, CFI = 0.997, TLI = 0.990), indicating strong construct validity. Each component significantly reflected the latent structure of the Outward Mindset, affirming the conceptual framework.

Among the components, "caring for others" had the highest standardized factor loading. This highlights that empathy, emotional understanding, and attention to team dynamics are foundational for effective teamwork and organizational trust [7, 13]. The second-highest was "recognizing others' goals and needs," which contributes to clearer communication, mutual respect, and better alignment of individual and organizational goals [12, 21].

The "evaluation of work impact" component reinforces the need for reflective practices in leadership—monitoring how one's actions affect others and adjusting accordingly [10, 21]. "Adapting work methods" reflects the proactive attitude leaders need in times of rapid change, enabling them to redesign processes that enhance efficiency and inclusiveness [7, 22].

These findings are consistent with the growth mindset theory of Dweck [23] which emphasizes a dual awareness of personal growth and contribution to others. The Outward Mindset, as described by Renner [22] is essential for cultivating engagement and resilience within organizations. In the Thai context, Tharingsri [20] suggests that educational institutions that adopt outward-oriented practices are better equipped to innovate and respond to disruption.

In conclusion, the Outward Mindset is not merely a leadership style, but a critical capacity for educational leaders in the 21st century. It enables school administrators to build empathetic, responsive, and innovative learning communities that thrive amid change.



## 6. Empirical Findings

1. The Outward Mindset of primary school administrators in the Northeast comprises 4 main components: 1) Focus on adapting work methods, consisting of 4 indicators: a. Having empathy for others b. Ability to compromise and seek innovation c. Supporting goals, inspiring others, and d. taking responsibility for one's own actions 2) Awareness and consideration for others, consisting of 4 indicators: a. Understanding others b. Prioritizing others c. Helping others to perform their work d. Accepting feedback from others. 3) Perspective on evaluating work impact, consisting of 2 indicators: a. Recognizing the impact of one's own actions on others b. Analyzing and reviewing one's own actions that affect others 4) Seeing the goals and needs of others, consisting of 2 indicators: a. Actively listening to others with understanding and accepting their opinions b. Respecting others' participation.

2. Outward Mindset Component and Indicator Model for Primary School Administrators in the Northeast. The goodness-of-fit indices for the Outward Mindset measurement model of primary school administrators in the Northeast meet the established criteria. Specifically, the Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) value is 25.534, with degrees of freedom (df) of 18, and a p-value of 0.1109. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) is 0.997, the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) is 0.990, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is 0.035, and the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) is 0.071. These results indicate that the measurement model demonstrates good fit with the empirical data.

3. The study revealed that the proposed development model of the Outward Mindset for primary school administrators in Northeastern Thailand demonstrated the highest level of empirical validity. Specifically, the evaluation of model congruence was rated at the highest level (Willer, 1986), indicating the structural consistency of the model with the underlying theoretical and empirical frameworks.

In terms of model appropriateness, the results were also at the highest level, confirming that the Outward Mindset components—adapting work methods, evaluating impact, caring for others, and recognizing others' goals—were contextually relevant and practical for school leadership. The feasibility of implementation was similarly rated at the highest level, suggesting that the model could be realistically applied in school settings under current educational conditions.

Additionally, the perceived usefulness of the model received the highest score (Warner, 2016), highlighting its potential to promote sustainable leadership transformation. By fostering empathy, collaboration, and shared goals, the model aligns with 21st-century educational demands where digital disruption and rapid change are constants [1, 22].

These empirical validations reinforce the theoretical foundation and practical relevance of the model in enhancing educational leadership through an Outward Mindset.

## Transparency:

The authors confirm that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

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