

**DEVELOPING A MODEL FOR CERTIFYING EXTERNAL
ASSESSORS IN EDUCATIONAL QUALITY
ASSESSMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION**

Sumalee Sriputtarin*

Abstract

An external assessment is an assessment of educational quality and standards of an educational institution. The external assessors must have been certified by The Office of Educational Standards Certification and Quality Assessment. However, the certifying process has not yet had a variety of models. This study aimed to develop a model for certifying external assessors in educational quality assessment of basic education and to assess that model.

The study procedure used the process of research and development by collecting data from related literature and by asking for opinions of 23 experts, obtained using the purposive sampling technique. The delphi technique was applied to analyze for 3 rounds. Congruent opinions of the group of experts were used to construct a model for certifying external assessors in quality assessment of basic education. The model from this study was then assessed by 5 qualified persons. The statistics used in the study were percentage, mean, standard deviation, interquartile ranges and median.

The results of the study revealed that the developed model, called ASCQ Model, consisted of these 4 stages : application (A), selection (S), certification (C), and quality control (Q). All the 4 stages comprised 5 major components, 11 minor components, 39 sub – components

and 50 indicators. At the application stage, applicants for being selected to be external assessors had to have qualifications according to the major component 1 with general qualification of external assessors comprising these 8 indicators : 30 and more years of age, holding a bachelor's degree and higher in education/teacher education, Thai nationality, good health without any obstacles to assessment, having never been disciplinarily punished or never been imprisoned by the final sentence to be imprisonment except the punishment for the guilty made due to carelessness or minor punishment; in case of being government official, applicants had to be permitted by their superior or the attached agency to be able to conduct external quality assessment; having acceptable experiences in teaching – learning performance, educational administration or supervision at the assessment level for no less than 5 years, and having never been withdrawn of the license in teaching profession or educational administrator or external assessment.

At the selection stage, an appropriate method of selection had to be used in order to obtain external assessors with suitable qualification as needed. The selection stage consisted of the major component 2. Specific qualification of external assessors comprised these 3 minor components; knowledge, skills,

*Graduate Student, Ed.D., Educational Administration and Development, Faculty of Education, Maharakam University, Maharakam, Thailand.

and characteristics, all with 39 indicators; for the major component 3, the method of selecting external assessors had 6 sub – components: selections by training, comparing educational qualifications, comparing experiences in assessment, considering from competency of assessors, and integrated selection. The certification stage consisted of the major component 4. The certification of external assessors had 5 minor components : criteria for certifying external assessors, levels of certifying of external assessors, lengths of time of certifying assessors, and attached assessment agencies of external assessors, and termination of external assessors, all with 16 sub-components and 3 indicators. The quality control state could cover the application stage, selection stage, and certification stage for certification of external assessors with the highest efficiency comprising the major component 5, external assessor quality control comprising 3 minor components : agencies which examined the quality of external assessors, external assessor development, and lengths of time for assessing external assessor quality, all with 17 sub-components.

For the results of assessing the ASCQ Model by 5 qualified persons, it was found as a whole to have quality at a high level ($\bar{X} = 3.74$). When each aspect was considered, the quality was found to be at a high level in every aspect ($\bar{X} = 3.60-4.00$).

In conclusion, the ASCQ Model obtained from this study was a concept that organizations involving in certification of external assessors could apply to certifying external assessors in educational quality assessment of basic education, which was appropriate and possible in the context of Thailand.

Keywords: external assessors, educational quality assessment, basic education

Introduction

National Education act 1999, which has been in effect since 20 August 1999, Chapter 6 on Educational Standards and Quality Assessment. There shall be a system of educational quality assessment to ensure improvement of educational quality and standards at all levels. Such a system shall be comprised of both internal and external quality assessment. Section 49 An Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA) shall be established as a public organization, responsible for development of criteria and methods of external assessment, conducting assessment of educational achievements in order to assess the quality of institutions, bearing in mind the objectives and principles and guidelines for each level of education as stipulated in this Act. All educational institutions shall receive external quality assessment at least once every five years since the last exercise and the results of the assessment shall be submitted to the relevant agencies and made available to the general public. (Office of the National Education Commission. 2003)

There are 3 kinds the assessment companies of external assessors of basic education assessment companies : legal entities, groups of persons, and higher educational institutions. The Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment has 2 methods of selecting external assessors: training and comparing educational qualifications. (Guah Grasaresom. 2004) However in the foreign context, certification of assessors has operation in a variety of techniques such as using written and oral tests, specification of educational requirements, certification of assessment training programs, continuing education requirements, internship requirement, review of assessment grant and proposal, review of assessment reports,

meta-assessments of assessment projects and combinations of these methods (Saunders and Bickman, 1995). Worthen (1999) offers at least four possible approaches exist: certification based on formal training, certification based on assessment experience, certification based on performance, and certification based on competency.

ONESQA has several techniques of assessing external assessors, beginning from providing licenses for external assessors, having controlling measures by assigning 3 years of being an external assessor. If any external assessor violated the ethic code of ONESQA, he/she will be warned first. At the next stage he/she will be withdrawn from the license who will not be able to be a licensed external assessor any longer. Moreover, for controlling quality of external assessors, ONESQA (2003) has supported the assessment companies to have systems of follow-ups of assessment companies themselves in order to have standards according to the intention of having to have systems of developing the assessment companies of assessment themselves.

This model was developed to present the essences used as guidelines for certifying external assessors. The agencies/organizations involved would be able to apply the model to selection/screening external quality assessors who could do their duties in educational institution assessment efficiently, validly, and reliably. This would reflect efficiency, effectiveness, and reliability of the quality assessment systems of the country.

Objective

The purposes of this study were to develop a certification model for external assessors in educational quality assessment of basic education and to assess the quality for certified the model.

Methodology

This research operated according to the following stages:

1. Studied documents and literature related to educational quality assessment, characteristics/competency of external assessors, certification of external assessors including document related to research methodologies, content analysis until the research conceptual framework was obtained.

2. Constructed 4 research instruments: 3 questionnaires for a group of experts by applying the delphi technique, and 1 assessment form on quality of the model for certifying external assessors in quality assessment of basic education.

3. Collected the data from the group of experts in their opinions involving certification of external assessors in quality assessment of basic education by applying the delphi technique in 3 rounds.

4. Calculated for consensus of the experts from the data obtained from the delphi technique by comparing responses of each expert with the responses of the group. Calculated for median and interquartile range.

For the criterion used by the researcher in considering consensus of the group of experts from their responses to the open-ended 5- rating scale questionnaire in rounds 2 and 3, if the interquartile range exceeds 1.50 and the median is no less than 3.50, it shows that the values mentioned receive consensus (experts' opinions are in congruence with one another).

5. Constructed a model using the data obtained from the questionnaire by applying the delphi technique as opined congruently the experts and within the established requirements to be criteria for constructing the model to certify external assessors in quality assessment of basic education.

6. Improved and corrected the model according to the comments and recommendations of qualified persons in order to obtain a more complete model.

Results

1. In developing the model by collecting opinions of 23 experts through applying the delphi techniques in 3 rounds, improving and assessing the quality of the model according to recommendations of 5 qualified persons, it was found that the model appropriate for the context of Thailand was ASCQ Model. This model consisted of these 4 main stages: application (A) stage, selection (S) stage, certification (C) stage, and quality control (Q) stage for external assessors. All these 4 stages consisted of 5 major components, 11 minor components, 39 sub-components, and 50 indicators.

Application (A) stage consisted of general characteristics of external assessors major component had the following 8 indicators: (1) aged 30 and more years, (2) holding a bachelor's degree and higher, majoring in education/teacher education, (3) Thai nationality, (4) good health without obstacles to assessment, (5) having never been disciplinarily punished or never been imprisoned by the final sentence to be imprisonment, except the punishment for the guilty made due to carelessness or light punishment, (6) in case of being a government official, he/she must have received permission from the superior or the attached agency to conduct external quality assessment, (7) having acceptable administration or educational supervision at the assessment level for at last 5 years; and (8) having never been withdrawn of the license in the teaching profession, or administrator, or external assessor.

The issues different from

qualifications of external assessors at present are educational qualifications. The model required a bachelor's degree and higher, majoring in education/ teacher education but at present only a bachelor's degree and higher is required without specifying a major; and at present the external assessors are required to be able to perform their full-time work (Songsak Phusee-orn. 2004). However from the results of this study, this issue is not identified because if external assessors are government officials they will not be able to perform their full time tasks in assessing educational institutions.

Selection (S) stage consisted of 2 major components; competency approach and selection external assessors. Competency approach major component consisted of 3 minor components; knowledge, skill, characteristics and containing 42 indicators.

Knowledge competency consisted of 10 indicators: (1) having knowledge concerning policy, purposes, principles, guidelines for organizing education, and education movements, (2) having knowledge concerning concepts and theories of educational administration, and organization of formal, non-formal, and informal education systems; (3) having knowledge concerning basic education curriculum, and organization of learning processes, (4) having knowledge concerning concepts of quality, (5) having knowledge concerning standards and quality assessment, (6) having knowledge concerning educational measurement, (7) having knowledge of psychology, (8) having knowledge of research (9) having knowledge of the context of the educational institution to assess, and (10) having knowledge of making strategic plans for solving problems occurring within the educational institution in order to use them to write how to solve problems in the standard assessed to be at an "improve" level.

When comparing knowledge competencies of ONESQA external assessors, there are congruent issues: having knowledge and understanding of purposes, principles, guidelines for managing education, organization of the learning process systems of quality and standards assessment for external assessment of the formal basic education, and having knowledge of assessment (Guah Grasaresom. 2004). The issues added from this study are: knowledge of psychological, knowledge of research, knowledge of contextual conditions of the assessed educational institutions, knowledge of making strategic plans for solving different problems occurring at educational institutions to be used for writing in solving problems in the standard assessed at an improvement level. The increased issues may be from outcomes of work performance in assessing educational institutions by external assessors, which can reflect from educational institutions that the knowledge required by ONESQA is not adequate to enable external assessors to assess education institutions to have quality. Thus knowledge of the indicators mentioned above should be added.

Skill competency consisted of 13 indicators: (1) having skills in analyzing self-assessment report (SAR) for planning to assess educational institutions, (2) having skills in verbal communication, (3) having skills in management, (4) having skills in observation, (5) having skills in seeking information and collecting data, (6) having skills in team working, (7) having skills in good coordination in the team of external assessors and having good coordination with the assessed educational institutions, (8) having skills in using computer, (9) having skills in assessment, (10) having skills in writing, (11) having skills in translating, interpreting, and modifying words, (12) having skills in decision-making and

logical inferring, and (13) having skills in giving recommendations which could be used in developing the educational institutions.

When considering the issue of skills of foreign external assessors, it has been found that the Education Review Office (ERO) requires external assessors to have skills in analytical thinking, writing, verbal communicating, personnel skills, and management skills, whereas the Office for Standard Education (Ofsted) requires external assessors to have skills in report writing from evidence collected from assessment (Thongyoo Kaewsaiha and others. 2005). And when comparing with the skills of external assessors at present of ONESQA, it has been found that there are similar issues: skills in assessment (The American Evaluation Association 2006), skills in giving recommendations, skills in report writing, skills in verbal communication, skills in analytical thinking, and skills in decision-making correctly and appropriately (ONESQA. 2003). The skills added form the model are: management skills, skills in observing, skills in seeking information and collecting data, skills in teamwork, skills in good coordination, skills in using computer, and skills in translating, interpreting, and modifying words.

Characteristic competency consisted of 4 minor component; code ethic of external assessors, amicable assessment, personality, other good characteristics and containing 16 indicators. Ethic code of external assessors in these characteristics: (1) having validity which could accurately reflect real conditions of the educational institutions, neutrality and transparency, (2) having reasons, using evidence to support, (3) having an ideal in developing education, (4) being punctual, check and balance (5) being honest, faithful, not for the sake of remuneration, (6) having industriousness in external quality assessment,

(7) strictly keeping secrets involving information of the assessed educational institutions. Amicable assessment consisted of (8) being sensitive to perceive different situations, (9) being a good advisor and a good counselor, (10) having positive attitudes toward external quality assessment, (11) using positive assessment of educational institution quality. Personality consisted of (12) having polite and modest personality, (13) showing the respect for, honor to acceptance and understanding of other people, (14) having reliability and other good characteristics. Other good characteristics consisted of (15) having steady emotions, and (16) having flexibility.

In characteristics, ONESQA determines the ethic code for external assessors that all the external assessors must visit and assess educational institutions straight for warmly, must have validity, be neutral, and must report what have been found authentically, must be reasonable and have evidence to support, must keep secrets of the information received while assessing, and must not ask for what does not involve assessment (Guah Grasaesom. 2004). The issues similar to this research are: having validity, being neutral reporting what have been found authentically, being reasonable and using evidence to support, and keeping secrets of information received while assessing. The issues added from the model are: transparency, being responsible and checkable, having an ideal in education development, being punctual, being honest and faithful without for the sake of remuneration, having industriousness in external quality assessment, performing the assigned work thoroughly and completely (King and others. 2001). These characteristics are mostly morality and ethics. This may because the behaviors of the external assessors really occur while performing assessment at the

educational institutions. The assessee opined that the external assessors had limited or none of the characteristics in this aspect. Thus they want these external assessors to have additional characteristics mentioned from the ethic code determined by ONESQA.

Selection external assessors comprised of 6 sub-components; training, comparing graduation degree, assessment experiences, performance in assessment, competency approach, and integrated methods.

The methods in congruence with selecting external assessors of ONESQA are: selection through training and selection by comparing educational qualifications. This may be because at the present situation, training is the techniques which be easily operated and training outcomes occur rapidly. Only the trainees who can pass assessment will receive certification. On the other hand, selection by comparing educational qualifications, because in the context of Thailand selection through training, the number of external assessors is not adequate for the needs, the selection of those who have knowledge and ability in terms of standard and quality assessment and in terms of educational assessment from their education at a master's degree and higher and they have passed work practices in terms of assessment, is another way to select external assessors. Nevertheless, selection by testing skills and competency in different aspects is in accordance with the research by Worthen (1999) and in congruence with selection of external assessors designed by ERO.

Certification (C) stage this stage operates after selecting external assessors with specific qualifications as needed. From then there will be certification for external assessors in quality assessment of basic education, consisting of certification major component, 4 minor components, 15 sub-components, and 3 indicators of external

assessors' certification.

For requirements for certification of external assessors minor component, certification of external assessors must comprise qualification of all these 3 indicators: (1) having general qualifications of all the indicators, (2) having passed the selection by the methods assigned by ONESQA, and (3) having special qualifications of all the indicators in terms of knowledge, skills, and characteristics by receiving no less than 80 percent the total scores.

For the levels of certification of external assessors minor component, besides external assessment to certify external assessors, there should be development of profession of the external assessors by assigning levels of certifying external assessors which could generate self-development all the time. There should be 3 levels of (1) a specialization level, (2) a special specialization level, and (3) an expert level. However from the study it has been found that levels of external assessors should be specified in 3 levels in order for these external assessors to develop themselves and to have security in their profession as external assessors. As for the period of time of certification for external assessors, ONESQA certification external assessors for 3 years.

For the periods of time for certification of external assessors minor component, the specialization level is certified for 2 years, the special specialization level is certified for 4 years, and the expert level is certified for 6 years. As for the period of time of certification for external assessors, ONESQA certification external assessors for 3 years

The assessment companies of the external assessors minor component consisted of (1) legal entities which included companies, limited, companies, public limited, firms, partnership limited, common firms, juristic

person, associations, foundations, or other public beneficence units registered as juristic person, (2) groups of persons registered and certified by ONESQA, (3) higher educational institutions that offer graduate studies in educational research, educational measurement and assessment, educational statistics, educational administration, or educational quality assessment; and (4) agencies involving educational quality assessment at the Department level.

Termination of external assessors minor component: (1) ceased (2) expiry certificate, (3) a lack of qualification and having a forbidden characteristic as identified in the Regulations of the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment on certification, extent of duty performance, and directing external assessors for Basic Education 2002, (4) the certificate being cancelled by ONESQA, and 5) in any other cases identified in the contract.

Quality control (Q) stage, the operation covers all the stage of application, selection external assessors, and certification for external assessors in order to certify external assessors to have highest efficiency consisted of quality control major component, 3 minor component, and 17 sub-components.

Agencies / organizations which assess quality of external assessors minor component should examine and follow up the performance of external assessors. These involved agencies / organizations include: (1) ONESQA, (2) ONESQA network centers, (3) assessment companies of external assessors, (4) educational institutions that receive external assessment, (5) experts outside the organization, (6) independent organizations assigned by ONESQA and being stakeholders concerning external quality assessment, and (7) agencies attached to the educational institutions that receive external assessment.

External assessor development minor component is an important factor to operate for keeping quality and making quality more appropriate. There are 6 techniques of developing external assessors: (1) holding a seminar/meeting with external assessors every year, (2) training for creating knowledge and understanding of assessment, training in new techniques for using in assessment, (3) providing courses of training at basic intermediate, and advanced levels, (4) promoting external assessors to conduct research, providing funds for conducting research, (5) promoting external assessors to do their quality academic works and promoting official posts levels of external assessors, and (6) selecting external assessors who have outstanding works, praising/awarding, giving funds for study visits both in the country and abroad.

For the periods of time for assessing the quality of external assessors minor component, their quality assessment may be operated in several techniques depending on the period of time or opportunity appropriate for assessment: (1) checking and assessing outcomes of assessment every time there is external assessment of an educational institution, (2) assessing every 3 years, (3) assessing when there is a complaint indicating a lack of quality, and (4) assessing when the certification of external assessors expires.

ONESQA determines to have assessment once in 3 years in order to renew certification for external assessors while ERO has quality assessment of external assessors every year (Thongyoo Kaewsaiha and others. 2005) It can be seen that the group of experts do not agree with assessing external assessors to renew certification only. Instead, there should be assessment of quality external assessors periodically and regularly.

2. For the results of assessing the certification model for external assessors

in quality assessment of basic education, it was found that the results of assessment as a whole were at a high level ($X = 3.74$). When each aspect was considered, the results were at a high level in every item ($X = 3.60-4.00$) in terms of appropriateness of rationale, appropriateness of goals, appropriateness of purposes, appropriateness of definitions, and appropriateness of the developed model. The model had contents that covered all the issues of certification for external assessors. In quality assessment of basic education there were appropriateness of all the 4 stages of presentation in the model; appropriateness of the components, minor components, sub-components, and indicators being presented in the model; possibility to put the model into practice; and benefits of the model for certifying external assessors in quality assessment of basic education.

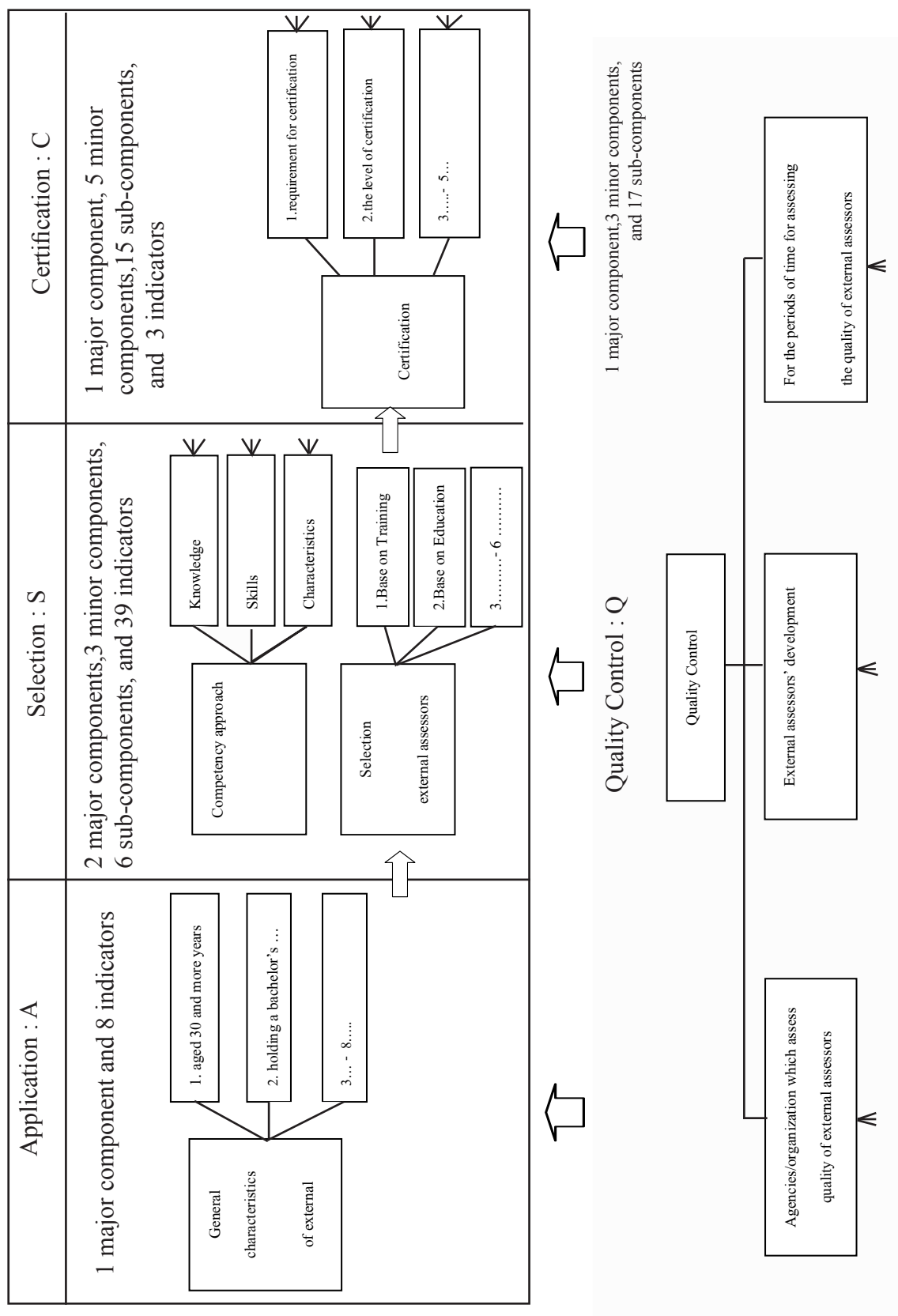


Figure 1 ASCQ Model

Recommendation

1. The agency involving certifying external assessors of quality assessment at the basic education level of Thailand is The Office of National Education Standard and Quality Assessment (Public Organization) should use the researcher-developed models for experimenting or applying to certifying external assessors by regarding appropriateness and feasibility both as a whole and in each aspect of major components, minor components, sub-components, and different indicators. Some examples include : revision of determining minimum qualification of external assessment candidates, and improvement of programs for training external assessors to have knowledge, skills, and characteristics of the researcher-developed model.

2. The agencies involving certifying external assessors of quality assessment at the basic education level of Thailand are ONESQA and network center of ONESQA whose duties are to operate selection of external assessor should use all the 6 methods of selecting external assessors from the models to draft programs and to try out in selecting external assessors in order to investigate feasibility in applications and comparing strengths and weaknesses of each method of selecting external assessors.

3. The all ached agencies of the external assessors should assess quality of the external assessors under their agencies and should develop the external assessors to have knowledge, skills, and desirable characteristics by using various method appropriate to contextual conditions of such attached agencies. Some examples include holding a meeting /seminar, organization of training within the assessment agency, and study visits.

4. The external assessors should have self - development or having knowledge,

skills, and desirable characteristics according to the external assessor's specific qualifications by attending development program using some appropriate methods for themselves, having self – assessment and self - improvement/development to have good quality to generate trust and reliability. These things will cause assessors to have reliability in the reports on educational institution assessment of the external assessors.

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