



## ASEAN Journal of Education

Journal homepage: <https://so01.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/AJE>



### School Administrators and the Disruptive Innovations

Thitaporn Tharnpanya\*, Sirinthorn Sinjindawong & Waraporn Thaima

*School of Liberal Arts, Sripatum University, Bangkok, 10900 Thailand*

#### Article info

##### Article history:

Received: 14 October 2021

Revised: 17 December 2021

Accepted: 28 December 2021

##### Keywords:

Disruption, Disruptive innovations,  
Digital transformation, School  
administrators

#### Abstract

This paper presents the challenges and understanding of educational management during disruption faced by school administrators. Disruptions occur consistently and how the school faces the challenges of disruptions depends on the school administrators. The school administrators need to manage the challenges in different ways in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the time of hyper-change. Therefore, school administrators should prepare the technology into the disruptive leadership. The involvement of digital transformation and the future of education are the components that lead the school administrator to overcome the disruption and achieve recovery. Therefore, the school administrators should be more aware about the effects of the disruption that could create changes in the school's management and the need to balance the whole wellness of the school community.

#### Introduction

Our world experience disruptions and there are numerous types of disruptions that affect education, cultures and schools. There are many types of disruptions such as political, environmental, health changes and rapid use in social media. These are serious issues that need to be addressed as one factor could lead to another. Education leaders must recognize what is happening and constantly begin to change the environment and use these disruptions to their advantages. Technology is advancing, transforming social life continuously. Today's educators' leaders struggle with 21<sup>st</sup> century disruptions that were incomprehensible to their predecessor in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. With the new challenges of social media, globalization, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ), equality issues, transparency and generational differences have been considered as the new disruptions that have made school administrators' jobs more complex

in the era of 21<sup>st</sup> century. If the schools are to move forward with the accelerations of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the school administrators must deploy new coping methods and strategies. The school administrators must move to the state of future awareness and deal with the information and demands. This paper will examine the disruptive innovation and leadership styles for contributing to the school settings. This analysis will occur through three key points of focus: school disruptions, new challenges for school administrators, digital transformation and future of education.

#### What is disruption?

A disruption is a sudden break or interruption. Disruptive education means the intent to break with the established model to improve the existing one. Carter & White (2018) defines the word disruption as any invention or societal shift that gradually changes how school

\* Corresponding Author  
e-mail: [gadethitaporn@bcisb.org](mailto:gadethitaporn@bcisb.org)

operates. Disruptive event is an incident based on a disruption that suddenly changes how schools operate. Disruptive innovation is the system that the school can personalize their education systems. When the school administrators in the 20<sup>th</sup> century managed disruptive issue, they could usually just cope with it and move on without reflecting on the issues. However, this could cause a deep harm to school cultures with the complexities of today's disruption. Individuals require school administrators to constantly adjust their operating procedure and continually work with their staff to transform their mindsets and school culture. School administrators are required to be proactive more so than they have been in the past. With the transition from 20<sup>th</sup> century to 21<sup>st</sup> century, school administrators need to prepare the schools for a disruptive event in terms of implementing the adaptive mindsets in staff and to use the framework of coping, adjusting and transitioning or the CAT framework (Carter & White, 2018). First, school administrators need to recognize the disruptive event and cope with it immediately. When a crisis occurs, the goal is to peacefully resolve it as quickly as possible, usually within hours or days of its initiation. Secondly, adjusting the school policies and operating school procedures in the days and weeks after the incident to prevent its reoccurrence or to handle it and other disruptions more efficiently. Third, continue to transform their philosophies and school cultures through study and reflection in the months after the incident so that their thought processes and adaptive strategies will be extended in the future.

### School disruptions

School administrators have their own paths to transform or identify their disruptions and disruptive events. There are education reforms, school safety, teaching Gen Z, promotion of diversity, transparency, global readiness, technology and other factors that could contribute to disruption in school settings. This is a challenge for the school administrators in an age of disruption (Carter & White, 2018). Brett (2019) stated societies have changed in the past decades with the function of technology in organizations. He introduced the three components of the digital leadership of the future which explained that digital leaders of the future will build organizations that are digital natives. They will integrate and leverage these key technology trends and develop a deep understanding of people. The ability to adapt and innovate new things are what make education special. The crisis has given the opportunity for the

industrial model of education to rethink and reimagine. The roles and responsibilities of educators, leaders and learners must be reemerged. It is not just about the assessment that changed, educators must think about the crisis of mental illness and emotional problems which include depression and anxiety. The disruptive of innovation is the equity access to high-quality education. The personalized in education system and the center stage of education reform (Arnett, 2014). Computer-base dtechnologies aremaking personalized learning areality. The process of disruptive innovation allows the school and school administrators to go outside the traditional system. Computers and the Internet becomes more personalized learning accessible and affordable to the masses. These disruptive technologies are supplementing and scaling the impact of great mentors and instructors so that their expertise can be available to every student. Personalized learning is the goal, online learning is the technology that makes the goal possible and disruptive innovation is the economic process that allows the technology to fulfill. The Toffler's' wave theory to education mentioned about the five waves of American school history for researchers to comprehend what is happening now (Carter & White, 2018).

Wave 1 – Stability age

Wave 2 – Nuclear age

Wave 3 – Accountability

Wave 4 – Disruption age

Wave 5 – Hyper-change age

Carter & White (2018) stated that a fourth wave was just ending and a fifth wave is rising and accelerated in a level unimaginable to their predecessors. Therefore, educators or school administrators must be aware and understand the environment that shifted and influences education to move forward and use disruptions to their advantage. These disruptions are essential to both school management and learning management for the school administrators to maintain the quality and the efficiency.

### New challenges for the school administrators

The rapid changes in technology bring the school administrators to accept the disruptions and to use them to the school's advantages to maximize education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The education system tries to increase the regiments of tests, labels and accountability. However, educators know that it requires extreme flexibility and not only the mass assessment but a different mindset that can shift thinking for the year 2040 to 2050 and beyond

(Carter & White, 2018).

One of the challenging situations is the COVID-19 pandemic disruption. The school administrators face the challenges and the top priority is to provide effective instruction in hybrid and online learning. The hybrid learning approach is a blended learning which combines the online educational materials with traditional in-person classroom methods (Finegan, 2021). It is the combination of asynchronous and synchronous learning. It requires the physical presence of both teacher and learner while providing the learner some control over time and pace. As most countries adopted educational continuity through online resources. The pedagogical resources and knowledge are among the various communication tools platforms to bring schools and learning processes close to homes and students in lockdown. Despite these efforts, the components of concern school administrators should be aware of are quality instruction, access for students, effective communication, social and emotional issues for students, teachers, staff and administrators. There are some limitations, such as how the household access to digital devices is unequal from country to country.

Drysdale, Gurr, & Goode (2017) concurred that disruptive innovation requires disruptive leadership. A new way of solving problems and focusing on new approaches which are different from the past. Disruptive leadership is about fostering a culture of creative innovation that provides the framework and motivation to generate new ideas and execute solutions. The school administrators should have multiplicity of levels; empowerment, engagement and the ability to conceive, innovate, communicate and collaborate for the organization to be successful. There are approaches in which a school has an innovative culture form and the school administrator is exercising disruptive leadership. The school administrator established a clear and agreed vision and direction to empower and train a new leadership team. It is important in recruitment and in the existing staff to adopt a distributed leadership model. The school administrators need to focus on teaching, learning and developing an explicit model of teaching; implementing and coaching the staff to support the program and ensuring school safety through new discipline and attendance policies.

There are some key factors for a disruptive education model to help schools overcome the challenges. The first key factor is customizing learning, a vital tailor-made training to ensure that every student makes the most of their potentials. Second key factor,

committing to early training is the objective to guarantee the access of students to the current world. Third key factor, integrating artificial intelligence in order to use data analysis and management process to improve education. Fourth key factor, reinforcing digital skills, digital training is vital for entering both the current and future job market. Fifth key factor, encouraging critical thoughts, education professionals must be trained on how to consume information and analyze the data.

### Digital transformation and future of education

The challenges facing education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is disruptive innovation. The disruptive innovation is bringing more equity to high quality education. It is the mechanism for bringing about a personalized education system. Sainger (2018) demonstrated that the digital transformation is fundamentally about change which requires leadership because leadership is all about changes rather than stability. With the rapid development and integration possibilities of new emerging digital technologies like big data, cloud computing, social media, artificial intelligence and augmented reality. Revolution industry 4.0, digitalization became more disruptive and started to be called the “Digital Transformation”. An innovation visionary is a required characteristics for leadership in the era of digital transformation. The digital leader should have an inspiring digital vision and the ability to manage both the digital transformation process and the new digital organization. There are four key points for leaders about technology disruptions.

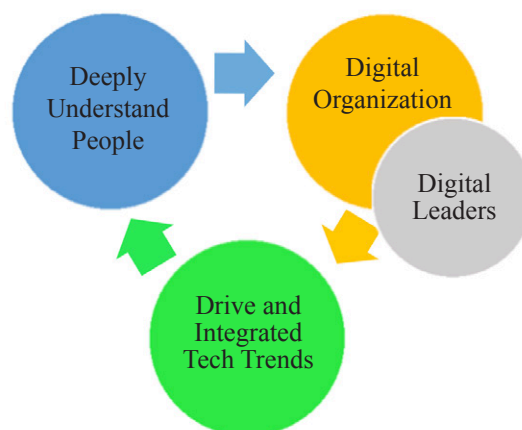


Figure 1 The three components of the digital leadership of the future (Brett, 2019)

The digital leaders of future will (1) build digital native organization (2) integrate and leverage these key technology trends and (3) develop a deep understanding of people.

### Education: From disruption to recovery

School administrators should think about the implication of the essential skills for living, working and learning in the modern world and the mental processes that we can help students learn, practice, develop and apply so they can, in due course, become unconscious habits of mind. Education experts consistently identify the following eight essential skills they believe must become an increasing focus of teaching and learning if we hope to keep school relevant in the modern, changing the world. (1) Intrapersonal skills (2) Interpersonal skills (3) Problem-solving skills (4) Collaboration skills (5) Information analysis skills (6) Information communication skills (7) Creativity skills (8) Global citizenship skills (Jukes & Schaaf, 2019).

School administrators should prepare learning that will be just in time. Learning will happen anytime, anyplace, in both virtual and physical spaces. Learning will be lifelong, more personalized, learner-centered, nonlinear, whole-minded, real-world and discovery-based. Learning will be focused on processing multimedia information. Learning will be collaborative. Learning will be assisted by thinking machines, smart agents and big data. Learning and evaluation will be holistic. As school administrators, it is essential to think about how to teach the content outline in the curricula and academic standards while simultaneously help students cultivate the essential skills of modern learners. Finally, the disruption is part of the factor that stimulates one result to the next. The recovery will be on how we evaluate the situation and do the reflection to create the most advantages. Education recovery needs to be prioritized to avoid generation catastrophe (Guttman, 2021).

### Conclusion

As disruption and an increase in the competitive world, there are growing demands in the outcomes of school administrators. The challenges for school

administrators are the curriculum used to be static and predictable from year to year. In present, teachers must be prepared to shift daily or perhaps hourly as global opportunities arise. It is not about teaching locally; it is about a global vision and preparing the diversity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. School curricula used to be about the “3Rs” of reading, writing and arithmetic; however, technology has allowed today’s curriculum to be more about global skills. School administrators should prepare the model of transforming the students into global readiness, personalizing the program offering. The blended learning will create the change in school assessment system in the hyper-change era. The work is in the establishment of a unique brand, culture and a set of outcomes.

### References

- Arnett, T. (2014). *Why disruptive innovation matters to education*. Retrieved September 27, 2021, from <https://www.christenseninstitute.org/blog/why-disruptive-innovation-matters-to-education/>
- Brett, J. (2019). *Evolving digital leadership: How to be a digital leader in tomorrow's disruptive world*. Australia: Apress.
- Carter, L. D., & White, M. (2018). *Leading schools in disruptive Times: How to survive hyper-change*. California: SAGE Publication Ltd.
- Drysdale, L., Gurr, D., & Goode, H. (2017). *Disruptive leadership in schools in challenging circumstances*. Retrieved September 27, 2021, from <https://eera-ecer.de/ecer-programmes/conference/22/contribution/41585/>
- Finegan, J. (2021). *5 keys to success in hybrid learning: Continuing to plan for remote learning is a good way to support students during transitions between distance and hybrid learning*. Retrieved September 29, 2021, from <https://www.edutopia.org/article/5-keys-success-hybrid-learning>
- Guttman, S. (2021). *One year into COVID: Prioritizing education recovery to avoid a generational catastrophe*. Retrieved September 27, 2021, from <https://en.unesco.org/news/one-year-covid-prioritizing-education-recovery-avoid-generational-catastrophe>
- Jukes, I., & Schaaf, L. R. (2019). *A brief history of the future of education: Learning in the age of disruption*. California: CORWIN, SAGE Publishing Company.
- Sainger, G. (2018). Leadership in digital age: A study on the role of leader in this era of digital transformation. *International Journal on Leadership*, 6(1), 1-6.