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**What Underpins Success in  
A Health Promoting School  
in Northeastern Thailand?**

**A thesis presented in fulfilment of  
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## **ABSTRACT**

A Health Promoting School (HPS) approach is now widely accepted internationally, with a focus on children's health, the school curriculum, and whole school environment. In Thailand, the health and well-being of children is a fundamental value. HPS programmes have been implemented in schools as a strategy to focus on young people's health. A number of barriers to successful HPS have been identified. While there is international evidence to show the steps and the key factors in creating successful HPS, little is known about successful HPS in the Thai context, in particular, in Northeastern Thailand which has been classified the poorest region.

Ethnographic methods were used to examine what understanding of the meaning of HPS is necessary for a successful school, and how all those involved acted from the adoption of the HPS programmes by the local school until it achieved HPS status. A rural school which was successful in a HPS programme was selected, in Mahasarakham province, Northeastern Thailand. The data were obtained through participant observation, ethnographic interviews, and ethnographic records, and data analysis took place simultaneously with data collection. In this study, Lofland's strategy for the analysis of the structure of human interaction was used. A variety of techniques for improving and documenting the credibility of the study such as prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation were used.

This research revealed that the informants' views reflected diverse understandings of the meaning of HPS. Those views were based on their experiences of HPS which differed according to the degree of participation, different levels of knowledge about HPS, and in the roles they played in the implementation of HPS in the school. Thai culture and school ethos influenced the success of HPS. Community participation was also crucial in supporting the school's achievement. Key factors that underpinned success are identified. Implications of the findings for the HPS programme, health professionals, the school and community are discussed.



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