

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and significance of the research problem

Nowadays, our society contains many opportunities for people to fulfill themselves with interesting jobs and diverting recreation, but it also contains many opportunities for people to encounter stressful situations (Carlson, 1990, p. 468). These situations affect to each person perceived differences about susceptibility to stress, namely a person is very adaptable to stress, change or opportunity has very little stress ; on the contrary, person who is not very adaptable to stressor change or opportunity will have a lot of stress (Suwat Mahusnirunkun, Vanida Pimpaisanchai, and Pimmas Tapunya, 2000, p.7). Consequently, these changes affect most people, especially during the adaptive process to those situations mentioned above. Moreover, these situations are factors which will cause stress.

Apart from many opportunities in modern society, the most common conditions that produces stress are excessive workloads, dissatisfaction with one's employer, competition in the workplace, or conflicts producer by trying to work (Atkinson, Atkinson, Smith, Bem, and Nolen-Hockseman, 1993, p.578 ; Carlson Neil R., 1990, p. 467-468 ; Manyat Rujiwit, 2005, pp. 10-11). The situations neither flight nor fight is possible, therefore the body sustains a chronic stress reaction, which leads to impaired health.

Stress can cause physiological and psychological health problems such as headaches, arrhythmia, insomnia, fatigue, fear, irritation, unhappiness and agitation, decreased memory, and depression. Chronic stress also leads to some diseases or induces severe conditions of coronary heart disease, hypertension, cancers, diabetes, intestinal ulcer and asthma (Pravat Vasi, 2000, p.45). Moreover, stress can cause general and work behavioral problems such as use of medication, alcohol, cigarettes, appetite, and absenteeism, to step down (to resign) job, poor communication, more accident, poor meditation (Hallhirat, 1991, pp. 36-38).

Mental health problems occur widely in several groups of people. Teaching is one of the occupations with high stress. Teachers are more likely to have mental health problems (Needle, et al., 1980, pp. 96-99 ; Wanpen Vaverakup, et al., 2004, p.57) In addition, research found that elementary teachers have severe stress at work (Patimakorn Chanphrakhone, 2004, p.64). A survey by the National Association of Head Teachers in May 2000 found that 40 % of respondents reported having visited their doctors with stress-related problem in the previous years. Twenty percents admitted that they drank too much and 15 % believed they were alcoholics. Twenty-five percents suffered from serious stress related health problems including hypertension, insomnia, depression and gastrointestinal disorders. (Jarvis, 2002, p.1) Furthermore, "The Department of Mental Health" reported that stress was more likely to be a cause of the high incident of suicide.

A review of news from newspapers found that in each month of 1977 thirty seven persons committed suicide. In 1988 and 1999 the incidence increased to 55 and 62 persons respectively ([The Department of the Mental Health, 1999, p.12](#)). In addition to related literatures reviewed, it was found that nowadays, the teachers have more burdens than in the past due to several factors such as educational reform and educational quality control. In addition, a study by Ponnipa Limprapayom (2002, pp. 71-79), found that, overall, most teachers in private schools received more of inequality compared to teachers in public schools.

Moreover, in reviewing 27 related research papers on stress management, it was found that there was 11.11 prevalence and 62.96 percents were factors influencing stress among teachers. Stress is not only limited to teachers but also affects the students, families, organizations and society. Therefore, teachers should have appropriate stress prevention skills as a health promotion behavior.

Recently research found that the pattern of sickness or illness and disease at present are different to those in the past. Major causes of illnesses in the past were communicable diseases the number are reducing. In contrast, at present major causes of illnesses are non - communicable diseases which are increasing continuously. (Suree Kanganawong and Jariyawat Kompayug, 2002, p.1) That is a reflection about

the change of self-care for health, from unpreventable to preventable which is an important concept of self-care for health at present.

Aside from a study about stress management divided into 2 types the first focus on how to eliminate emotional stress and another one, on the management of the causes of stress. However, there were no studies done about stress prevention of elementary teachers in private schools, especially, the one that emphasize on the model development of active measures as a way of reducing and preventing stress among elementary teachers in private schools.

Apart from reviewing related general documents and relevant research, it was also found that related organizations, such as the Department of the Mental Health and Ministry of Education should be responsible for the health of teachers. It is found that both the Mental Health Department, and the Ministry of Education have not developed clear model for stress prevention for primary school teachers. Therefore, upon facing adapted problems, teachers may develop mental health problems. It is a growing health problem.

Regarding the stress problem of teachers and lack of any stress prevention model which has a clear systematic process. The researcher as a health care manager, with experience in providing health care service to schools, as well as being responsible for the health of the population in schools not only limited to student but also includes the schools' teaching personnel. especially, elementary teachers in private schools. These teachers have many responsibilities both in teaching and non - teaching activities. Therefore, this research is to identify the model development of active measures to prevent stress among elementary teachers in private schools.

Pathumthani Education Service Area 2, Pathumthani Province was chosen to be the setting in this study because a review of psychological health problem in Pathumthani Province of Department of Mental Health found that 71.17/ 100,000 population mobility rate from mental health problem that suffered from stress related health problem in 2006 (The Department of the Mental Health, 2006, p.4) Although, the report of less frequency about mental health problems, it is important fundamental factor that led to vary mental health problems. Apart from, no information about stress test of elementary school teachers in Pathumthani province. Therefore, Thammasat University

and Pathumthani Education Service Area 2 should make co-operative projects for correcting and preventing stress of elementary school teachers in private schools. Other reasons, this area is suburban that have two geography features, both general metropolitan and general rural area. Moreover, lifestyle of elementary teachers in private schools resemble both general metropolitan and general rural area too.

Besides, this model development approach was applied to the concepts of participation, especially applied participatory action research, action research and a model of the learning process. Another concept is the analytical process of problem solving which composed of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, using group process in each phase of the research activity which were both informal and formal group meetings.

Therefore, the model development of active measures to prevent stress is essential in training teachers to reduce and prevent stress.

1.2 Research questions

1.2.1 What is the stress situation of elementary school teachers in private schools ?

1.2.2 How could the active measures model prevent and reduce the stress of elementary school teachers in private schools.?

1.3 Objectives of the study

1.3.1 General objective

The general objective of this study is to develop a model of active measures to prevent the stress among elementary school teachers in private schools.

1.3.2 Specific objective

The specific objectives of the study are:

1.3.2.1 To determine the stress situation of elementary school teachers in private schools.

1.3.2.2 To develop a model for reducing and preventing the stress of school elementary teachers.

1.4 Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this study are:

1.4.1 This model is able to reduce the severity of stress among the teachers.

1.4.2 The model development process is able to protect stress among non-stressed teachers.

1.5 Scope of research

The sample of this study were elementary **school** teachers who were responsible for teaching in three different **school** sizes (large, middle, and small sized schools) Patumthani Educational Service Area 2. The outcome of stress from the first phase of this study which was stress test at all levels (mild, moderate, high, and severe) The data collection both in the first and second phases of the study were from May, 2005 to March, 2006.

1.6 Expected benefits

1.6.1. This model was believed to be a new model that could help to develop the thinking process of elementary **school** teachers.

1.6.2 Using the group process, it was assumed that this process of a new model technique would be widely used among the elementary **school** teachers in private schools

1.6.3. The elementary **school** teachers and administrators in private schools would know how to apply the new model process to solve other problems.

1.6.4. The learning process and group formation of stakeholders, composed of elementary **school** teachers and administrators involved with the reduction and prevention stress of elementary **school** teachers and administrators which finally will be able to reduce and prevent stress.

1.7 Operational definition

1.7.1 A model development of active measures to prevent **the** stress refers to the model development involving process of active measures to reduce and prevent stress that are systematic and participatory by elementary **school** teachers in solving

problems that cause to the stress. This model will comprise of activities such as internal external adaptable preparation including analytical solving problem process. These activities were conducted by the elementary school teachers to reduce and prevent stress in their schools.

1.7.2 The processes of reducing and preventing stress refers to systemic steps composed of :

1.7.2.1 The preparation process for reducing and preventing stress refers to the internal and external preparative processes of elementary school teachers in private schools. as follows :

1) Internal preparation are activities, such as emotional development skills, attitude adaptation from negative attitudes to positive attitudes. These process emphasize on problems solving and skill development.

2) External preparation are activities such as the co-searching or finding ways of stress management and co-operative in priority setting.

1.7.2.2 Conducting or implementation processes, these steps used the analytical solving processes step by step to implement, monitor, and evaluate, to effect appropriate change, causing in reduction of stress and problems related.

1.7.3 A model of the learning process refers to a directly expressed in action process because the concept of it initially emerged out of the assumption. Moreover, this model can be used to help practitioners reflect and examine their work practices.(David A. Kolb,1991, pp. 50-60)

This study, refers to the application the concept of a model of learning process in first stage (pre-model development) about the preparation of internal factors of each group. It is composed of emotional skill development, attitude adaptation from negative attitudes to positive attitudes, and problem solving skill development. The external factors of each group composes of the search for ways of stress management and the priority setting of the problems. The second stage (a model development) is about the preparation of the problem analytical process which is the cycle composes of stages of planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and acting (appropriate change)

throughout informal and formal group meetings for each sized school consisting of large, middle, and small sized schools.

The purpose of this concept is a model application for building up the experience about topics or streams between the internal researchers (elementary teachers) and an external researcher (the student, faculty of medicine, Thammasat university) using informal meeting together.

1.7.4 Informal group meeting refers to the direct action of elementary school teachers participants from each sized school, conducted group meetings according to the topic of the formal group meeting. The objective of the informal group meeting in the preparation for formal group meeting. These activities comprise of five steps i.e.: 1) Pre-document self study 2) A survey of problems and a guide of solving problems from the pre-document self-study 3) An informal group meeting 4) Resurvey the problems and to guide the solving problems after completion of the informal meeting and 5) To agree upon the date of the formal meeting

1.7.5 The formal group meeting refers to a meeting the internal and external researchers, participation techniques. The formal group meeting has four steps consisted of 1) concrete experience 2) observation and reflection 3) formation of abstract concepts and generalizations and 4) testing implications of concepts in new situations.

1.7.6 Stress refer to the job stress of elementary school teachers that effect to the reaction of body, the perceivable of mind and behaviors to the inner and outer stimulants.

1.7.7 Stress levels refer to an interaction between the quantity of stress and outcome of the work of elementary school teachers is able to divides into two main levels as follows:

1.7.7.1 **Appropriate stress levels** refer to the normal stress is able to divides into the stress levels as follows:

1) **Mild stress** is a little stress and occurs in daily activities from work. This level of stress is no threat to the work of elementary schools teachers. This stress they are able to automatically adapt.

2) **Moderate stress** occurs in daily activities from work of elementary school teachers. This stress has a link to stimuli or important event in life of them. Consequently, they responds to this stress through anxiety and fear. This stress is normal, in addition, it makes for increasing emotions at work of them.

1.7.7.2 **Inappropriate stress level** refer to the abnormal stress is able to divides into two the stress levels as follows:

1) **High stress** is stress that elementary school teachers can not adapt in short period from work. It sends a signal to elementary school teachers who are having a high level of stress, if they do not care or cure this stress, they may develop chronic stress.

2) **Severe stress** occurs continuously. Consequently, it has a negative affect to them such as failure to adapt, bored on exhaustion, no-self regulation, and there are many diseases. At this level of symptoms one must go to see a doctor or psychologist to alleviate these symptoms one must go to see a doctor or psychologist to alleviate these symptoms of elementary school teachers.

1.7.8 **To reduce stress** refers to one of the indications of the participative evaluation about the model development of active measures to reduce stress among elementary **school** teachers in private schools who have a high or severe level of stress **by using stress test, Suanprung Test, 60 for Thai people**

1.7.9 **To prevent school stress** or no stress refers to another indication of the participative evaluation about the model development of active measures to prevent stress among elementary **school** teachers in private schools who have a mild or **moderate** level of stress.

1.7.10 **Elementary teachers** refer to those persons who teach at the primary level in private schools under the jurisdiction of the second Patumthani Officer of that Educational Service Area.

1.8 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework of this study were divided into two main variables as followed:

1. Independent variables were factors of stress and a model development of active measures to prevent stress of elementary teachers in private schools.

Each variables had details as followed

1.1 Factors of stress divided into two factors as followed:

1.1.1 Direct factors of stress composed of job, family, self dissatisfaction, society, environment, and finance.

1.1.2 Indirect factors of stress composed of stress of **academic schools or administrator schools.**

Researcher collects data about these factors of stress from elementary teachers in private schools were selected samples in phase 1 of this study.

1.2 A model development of active measures to prevent stress of elementary teachers in private schools divided into three main steps as follows:

1.2.1 Internal adaptable preparation

1.2.1.1 Emotional skill development

1.2.1.2 Attitude's adaptation : positive thinking

1.2.1.3 Problem solving skill development

1.2.2 External adaptable preparation

1.2.2.1 Searching new methods for reducing and preventing stress together

1.2.2.2 Priority setting of problems together

1.2.3 Analytical problem solving process

1.2.3.1 Planning

1.2.3.2 Implementation

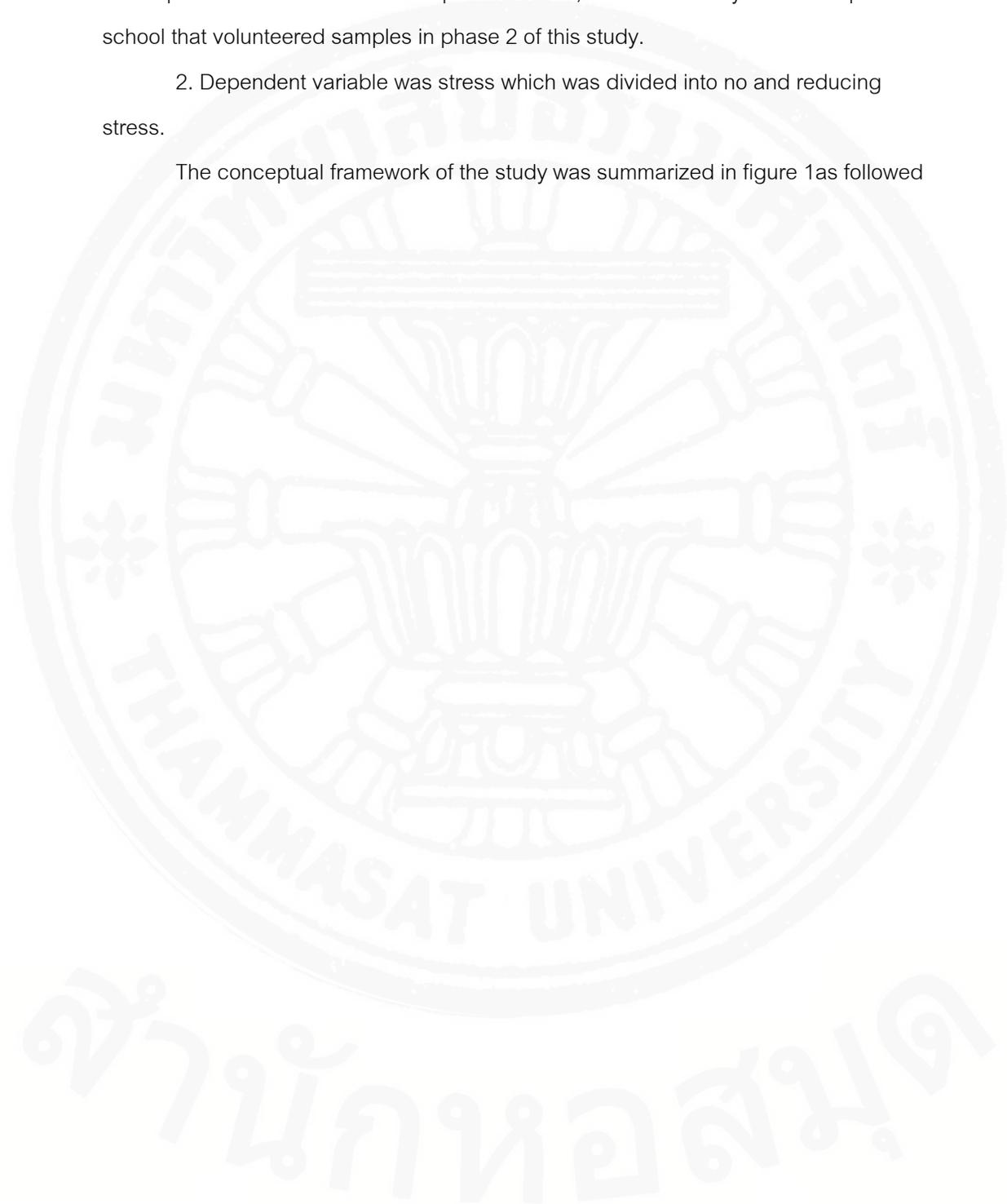
1.2.3.3 Monitoring

1.2.3.4 Evaluation

Researcher collects data about these steps of intervention, a model development of active measures in private school, from elementary teacher in private school that volunteered samples in phase 2 of this study.

2. Dependent variable was stress which was divided into no and reducing stress.

The conceptual framework of the study was summarized in figure 1 as followed



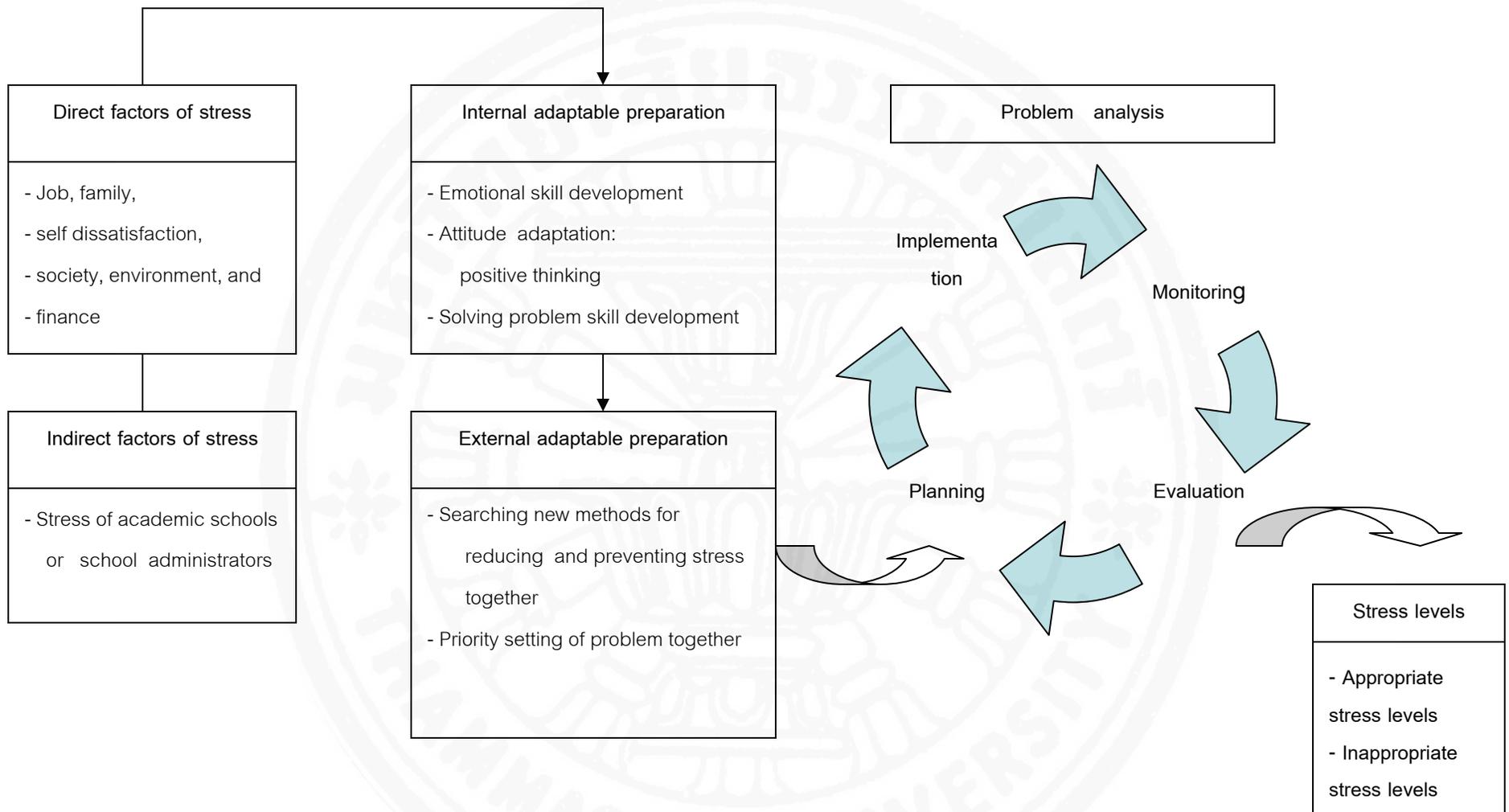


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of a model development of active measures to prevent stress of elementary teachers in private schools through participatory research, a model of the learning process, and the analytical problem solving process.