

USING ROLE-PLAYING METHODS IN DEVELOPING THE SCHOOL MANAGERS’ PROBLEM-SOLVING CAPACITIES

VU THI THU HUYEN*, PHUNG QUANG THANG**, vtthuyen@iemh.edu.vn

* Institute of Education Management in Ho Chi Minh City

** Le Hong Phong High School for the Gifted Ho Chi Minh City.

INFORMATION	ABSTRACT
<p><i>Received: 26/07/2025</i> <i>Revised: 12/08/2025</i> <i>Accepted for publication: 18/8/2025</i> <i>Code: TCKH-S03T08-2025-B17</i> <i>ISSN: 2354 - 0788</i></p> <p>Keywords: <i>Role-playing method, training, problem-solving capacities, school managers, general education.</i></p>	<p><i>Using role-playing methods in developing the school managers’ problem-solving capacities is meaningful in order to develop the school managers’ capacities. Developing capacities is one of crucial procedures to build qualified school managers. This article presents the findings of using role-playing methods in developing the school managers’ problem-solving capacities. The study used document analysis for analysing, synthesising and generalising relevant information. Some documents have been analysed, namely Resolution No.29-NQ/TW (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2013); Law on Teachers (National Assembly, 2025); and Law on Education (National Assembly, 2019). The study also applied experimental method and designed a survey method that involved 34 teachers and mangers from general school in Ho Chi Minh City. The findings show that using role-playing methods in developing the school managers’ problem-solving capacities is practical, realistic and goal-oriented. Based on these findings, school managers may consult and selectively apply to their own conditions and abilities in the context of educational innovation.</i></p>

1. Introduction

Development of managerial problem-solving competence of school managers according to the requirements of educational innovation and improving the capacities of school managers are considered one of the important tasks. In the Law of Education (2019), the role and responsibility of educational managers are clearly stated: “Educational managers play an important role in organizing, managing and operating educational activities. Educational managers are responsible for studying, practicing, improving their qualities, professional qualifications, management capacity and implementing standards and regulations

according to the provisions of law (National Assembly, 2019). The Law of Teachers (2025) states: “Teachers are the core force of the education sector, have an important position in society, are respected, protected and honored. Teachers play a decisive role in ensuring the quality of education; play an important role in building human resources, building a learning society, a digital society and building an advanced culture with strong national identity” (National Assembly, 2025).

Resolution of the 8th Central Conference, Session XI (Resolution 29-NQ/TW) on fundamental and comprehensive innovation in

education and training affirms: Developing teachers and school managers to meet the requirements of educational innovation is a basic task and solution. In which, building plans and fostering education staff associated with the needs of socio-economic development, ensuring security, national defense and international integration has practical significance for the process of educational innovation (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2013).

During management activities, sometimes difficult and complicated situations arise that require managers to resolve promptly. In the same situation, at different times, managers need to resolve it reasonably. Because managers play a leading role in guiding the staff to overcome the fluctuating stages, adapt to new requirements. Each step in the context of innovation poses new challenges and requirements for the development of management capacity and especially the managerial problem-solving skills.

The article focuses on the application of role-playing methods in developing the school managers' problem-solving capacities, thereby making practical contributions to the process of training and developing the education managers of general education institutions. The application of role-playing methods in developing the school managers' skills opens up directions and conditions for managers to employ in practice to develop their management capacities.

2. A brief overview of the Research methodology and survey approach

- Aim of the survey: Data collection, investigate the opinions and evaluations of school managers and teachers regarding the current status, needs and effectiveness of using role-playing methods in training managerial problem-solving capacities for school managers.

- Research methods: (1) Using document analysis for searching, analyzing, synthesizing and generalizing relevant information related to the theoretical foundation of the article; (2) A

questionnaire survey was used in the study. The questionnaire was designed using a five-point Likert scale, with equal interval values = $(\text{Maximum} - \text{Minimum})/n = (5-1)/5 = 0.8$, including: 1 = (1,00-1,80): Never/not very good; 2 = (1,81-2,60): Rarely/not good; 3 = (2,61-3,40): Occasionally/Fair; 4 = (3,41-4,20): Often/Good; 5 = (4,21-5,00): Very often/very good; (3) Using mathematical statistics methods (Software SPSS) to process the collected data: descriptive statistics, average score (Avg), standard deviation (SD), frequency, percentage; (4) Using interview methods with managers and teachers to exchange and clarify relevant information from the survey data collected. Respondents who participated in answering the survey included 34 people (9 school managers and 25 core teachers) at general education schools (the data were collected at Tan Thanh high school, Bac Tan Uyen commune, Ho Chi Minh city, school year 2024-2025).

- Research hypothesis: Role-playing method has not been used frequently in training school managers' capacities. If practicing role-playing methods in training school managers, it will develop their management problem-solving capacities.

- Research questions: (1) What is the current situation of using role-playing methods to develop school managers' problem-solving capacities? (2) How are the management problem-solving capacities of school managers developed when practicing role-playing methods?

- Experimental methods:

Step 1: Survey and find out the opinions of school managers and core teachers (implemented on February 25th, 2024)

Step 2: Organize training activities (implemented on February 25th, 2024 and March 3rd, 2024).

Step 3: Analyzing collected information

- Experimental place: Tan Thanh high school, Bac Tan Uyen commune, Ho Chi Minh city.

3. Study findings

3.1. *Overview of role-playing methods in developing managerial problem-solving capacities*

Capacity is an integration of skills that enables one to recognize a situation and respond to it appropriately and naturally (Xavier, 1996, p.91).

Pham (2009) argues that competency development is the expansion of freedom and human choice opportunities. Competency development not only aims to help people develop selective abilities but also means expanding people's choices. Meanwhile Sen (1999) explains that human development is the process of expanding human choices and capabilities, in other words, human development is the development of human capabilities.

The process of competency development encompasses various components. In the research on leadership and management skill development, Lanik (2019) proposed 22 core skills that leaders can practice to enhance their managerial competencies. He also shared strategies for organizing and training processes to develop problem-solving capacity effectively (Lanik, 2019). Similarly, Maxwell (2010) asserted that competence is the foundation of existence. Effectiveness is the foundation of success. Therefore, cultivating both competence and passion for work among all members of an organization is a fundamental skill of a leader.

According to Care et al. (2016), problem-solving capacity is one of the core 21st-century skills, in which collaborative problem-solving capacity plays a particularly important role within educational environments. Martin & Kai (2014) noted that problem-solving capacity is a highly situational phenomenon, depending on the type of organization, leadership, industry and the social foundation of the institution. The context of the 21st century poses significant challenges to problem-solving capacities in an increasingly industrialized world. Research on

role-playing methods show that this is one of the active methods to promote the autonomy, independence and creativity of learners. Through role-playing activities, learners can experience to form knowledge, skills and values of life. (Svinicki & Dixon, 1987).

According to another researcher, role-playing is a teaching method in which learners perform simulated action situations on a real-life topic, often in a game-like manner, in which life situations, problems or conflicts are presented. Role-playing aims to develop the capacity to act through the learner's experience and through feedback from observers (Xavier, 1996, p.142).

Meyer (1987) stated that role-playing is a complex instructional method aimed at fostering the understanding of social realities. Accordingly, action-oriented teaching is a comprehensive form of instruction that activates learners, in which the products of learning activities agreed upon between teachers and students serve as guiding elements for organizing the teaching process, so that both intellectual and physical activities of learners are integrated in a balanced relationship (Meyer, 1987, Diep, 2022).

Thus, using role-playing methods in training management problem-solving capacity means that applying active teaching methods in training and developing school managers' capacities and qualities. Through using role-playing methods in training managerial problem-solving capacities, managers have the opportunity to experience, practice, foster and enrich their capacities and qualities which are needed to proactively solve management situations correctly, promptly and scientifically.

3.2. *The current situation of using role-playing methods in training the managerial problem-solving capacity of school managers*

Table 1. Using role-playing methods in training managerial problem-solving capacity

No.	Using role-playing methods in training managerial problem-solving capacity	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Never	0	0
2	Rarely	17	50.0
3	Sometimes	13	38.2
4	Often	4	11.8
5	Very often	0	0

Studying the current situation of using role-playing methods in training managerial problem-solving capacities, the survey results in table 1 show that the implementation of role-playing methods in training managerial problem-solving capacities for school managers is evaluated at level of rarely (50%), sometimes (38.2%), often (11.8%), with no opinions at very often and never level. Thus, the implementation of role-playing methods in training school managers' capacities is generally limited. This result clearly shows that the

majority of managers have not practiced the role-playing methods in training managerial problem-solving capacities. Based on this reality, the study conducted a training course in which the participants implemented role-playing methods. Focusing on (1) Training contents: Developing managerial problem-solving capacities; (2) Training methods: Practicing role-playing methods; (3) Comparing and evaluating the collected results before and after training. The results are shown in table 2.

Table 2. Evaluation of the application of role-laying method in developing managerial problem-solving capacities

No.	Criteria	Before training		After training	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1	Identify specific and clear goals when using role-playing methods in training managerial problem-solving capacities	3.23	0.698	4.11	0.477
2	Choose a suitable managerial problem to practice role-playing process	3.11	0.728	4.05	0.547
3	Assign appropriate roles	3.32	0.684	4.29	0.462
4	Arrange, schedule, means, conditions and environment to practice role-playing method	3.08	0.668	4.14	0.500
5	Discussions and share experiences in practicing role-playing methods	3.17	0.716	4.20	0.538
6	Timely guidance and support during the role-playing methods process	3.61	0.696	4.23	0.495
7	Evaluate results and lessons learned after practicing role-playing method	3.41	0.891	4.26	0.447

To facilitate reasonable and scientific evaluation and analysis of data, the information collected from the survey is conventionally based on the average value on a 5-point Likert

scale with a distance value = (Maximum - Minimum)/n = (5-1)/5 = 0.8, so the meaning of the criteria used to explain the average value is as follows (according to the content of the

questions in the survey): 1.00 - 1.80 = not very good; 1.81 - 2.60 = not good; 2.61 - 3.40 = fair; 3.41 - 4.20 = good; 4.21 - 5.00 = very good.

Comments: Looking at table 2, it shows that:

Compared to the time before participating in the training, the assessing opinions have changed significantly (average score from 4.05 to 4.29 corresponding to good and very good levels), higher than the time before the training (average score from 3.08 to 3.61 corresponding to fair and good level). Although the increase is not really remarkable, it partly confirms that using the role-playing methods in training school managers is appropriate and effective.

There are some highest increasing criteria, such as: (1) Assign appropriate roles, the scores increase from 3.32 to 4.29; (2) Evaluate results and lessons learned after practicing the role-playing methods (3.41 to 4.26); (3) Timely guidance and support during the role-playing methods process (3.61 to 4.23). Thus, it can be seen that the implementation of the proposed

solutions has contributed to creating positive changes, especially promoting creative activities, self-evaluating and experience after practicing role-playing methods in training school managers.

By discussing with some school managers and teachers, there are collected information: “Practicing the role-playing methods in training managerial problem-solving capacities is really quite interesting and effective but it is only suitable for small groups of about 15 - 30 people. In addition, practicing the role-playing methods requires time, resources and supportive guidance (Manager 1). Furthermore, practicing role-playing methods gives chances for school managers to discover their potential abilities and experiences for themselves (Manager 2, Teacher 1)

To learn more about the results of role-playing methods in developing managerial problem-solving capacities, the research analyzed some criteria with the achieved results as below:

Table 3. Assessing the development level of managerial problem-solving capacity by applying role-playing methods

No.	Criteria	Before training		After training	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1	Clear awareness, responsible participate in problem-solving process	3.12	0.660	4.08	0.451
2	Active participate in problem-solving process	3.55	0.660	4.17	0.520
3	Flexible and creative in managerial problem-solving process	3.47	0.825	4.11	0.327
4	Develop the abilities to forecast and classify the managerial problems	3.50	0.707	4.05	0.422
5	Develop the abilities to analyze managerial problems and determine appropriate goals of managerial problem-solving	3.41	0.743	4.05	0.422
6	Develop the abilities to find, collect information, and propose plans/methods of managerial problem-solving	3.00	0.778	4.05	0.422
7	Develop the abilities to discuss and control the managerial problem-solving process	3.29	0.759	4.17	0.386
8	Develop the capacity to choose appropriate solutions and action plans for managerial problem-solving	3.76	0.740	4.20	0.478
9	Develop the capacity to evaluate the managerial problem-solving results	3.14	0.892	4.23	0.430
10	Develop the capacity to attract and encourage stakeholders to participate in managerial problem-solving process	3.52	0.748	4.08	0.451

Comments: Looking at table 3 comparing the development level of managerial problem-solving capacity, it shows that:

The achieved results after implementing the role-playing methods have created certain changes, specifically the results measured before training, the criteria shown in table 3 were evaluated by the majority of opinions with the average scores from 3.00 to 3.76 (corresponding to the levels of fair and good), while the results measured after training, the average scores increased from 4.05 to 4.23 (corresponding to the levels of good and very good). In which, some criteria have high average scores such as: "Develop the capacity to

evaluate the managerial problem-solving results" (average score 4.23, standard deviation 0.430); "Develop the capacity to choose appropriate solutions and action plans for managerial problem-solving" (average score 4.20, standard deviation 0.478); "Develop the abilities to discuss and control the managerial problem-solving process" (average score 4.17, standard deviation 0.386). The rather low standard deviation shows that there is not much difference in the opinions of the respondents. Using t-test to consider the difference between the opinions of managers and teachers (95% confidence level, significance level Sig. < 0.05) the results are shown in the following table 4.

Table 4. Differences in implementation of using role-playing method in training managerial problem-solving capacities

No.	Criteria		Before training		After training	
			Mean	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean	Sig. (2-tailed)
1	Identify specific and clear goals when using role-playing methods in training managerial problem-solving capacities	GV	3.16	0.30	4.12	0.96
		CBQL	3.44		4.11	
2	Choose a suitable managerial problem to practice role-playing process	GV	3.04	0.30	4.08	0.71
		CBQL	3.33		4.00	
3	Assign appropriate roles	GV	3.36	0.61	4.24	0.26
		CBQL	3.22		4.44	
4	Arrange, schedule, means, conditions and environment to practice role-playing methods	GV	3.12	0.65	4.16	0.80
		CBQL	3.00		4.11	
5	Discussions and share experiences in practicing role-playing method	GV	3.24	0.39	4.20	0.91
		CBQL	3.00		4.22	
6	Timely guidance and support during the role-playing methods process	GV	3.64	0.76	4.32	0.09
		CBQL	3.55		4.00	
7	Evaluate results and lessons learned after practicing role-playing methods	GV	3.40	0.90	4.24	0.60
		CBQL	3.44		4.33	

Conducting Independent-Samples T-test analysis on SPSS to investigate the average differences between the managers and teachers' group, the analysis results showed that the Sig F test > 0.05, meaning that there were no differences in variance between group of managers and

teachers, then searching the T-test results in the equal variances assumed (Sig. (2-tailed)) row, presented in table 4. The statistical data analysis results in table 4 showed the Sig. (2-tailed) values of the t-test range from 0.09 to 0.91 > 0.05, which means that there were no significant

differences between the survey subjects with different job positions. Based on these statistics, it can be concluded that there were no differences in the opinions of managers and teachers on the using role-playing methods in

training managerial problem-solving capacities. In other words, both teachers and managers have a high consensus in their opinions on the use of role-playing methods in training managerial problem-solving capacities.

Table 5. Differences in the level of capacity development by using role-playing methods in training managerial problem-solving capacities

No.	Criteria	Before training		After training		
		Mean	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean	Sig. (2-tailed)	
1	Clear awareness, responsible participate in problem-solving process	GV	3.40	0.55	4.08	0.86
		CBQL	3.55		4.11	
2	Active participate in problem-solving process	GV	3.60	0.55	4.20	0.66
		CBQL	3.44		4.11	
3	Flexible and creative in managerial problem-solving process	GV	3.44	0.7	4.04	0.01
		CBQL	3.55		4.33	
4	Develop the abilities to forecast and classify the managerial problems	Teacher	3.52	0.78	3.96	0.02
		Manager	3.44		4.33	
5	Develop the abilities to analyze managerial problems and determine appropriate goals of managerial problem-solving	Teacher	3.40	0.88	4.04	0.67
		Manager	3.44		4.11	
6	Develop the abilities to find, collect information, and propose plans/methods of managerial problem-solving	Teacher	2.84	0.04	4.00	0.18
		Manager	3.44		4.22	
7	Develop the abilities to discuss and control the managerial problem-solving process	Teacher	3.20	0.23	4.12	0.15
		Manager	3.55		4.33	
8	Develop the capacity to choose appropriate solutions and action plans for managerial problem-solving	Teacher	3.76	0.95	4.12	0.08
		Manager	3.77		4.44	
9	Develop the capacity to evaluate the managerial problem-solving results	Teacher	3.12	0.77	4.16	0.08
		Manager	3.22		4.44	
10	Develop the capacity to attract and encourage stakeholders to participate in managerial problem-solving process	Teacher	3.44	0.25	4.12	0.50
		Manager	3.77		4.00	

After performing the Independent-Samples T-test analysis (SPSS) to test the average difference in the level of developing school managers' capacities due to using role-playing methods between two groups (managers and teachers), the analysis results showed that the Sig. F test > 0.05, it means that there were no differences about the opinions of school managers and teachers, so the t-test results were read in the Equal variances assumed (Sig. (2-tailed)) row, presented in table 5. The statistics

showed that the Sig. (2-tailed) values of the T-test of variables 3, 4 and 6 were 0.01, 0.02 and 0.04, respectively, all less than 0.05, meaning that there were different opinions between managers and teachers. Looking at the average scores of the managers and teachers group, we found that the group of teachers rated lower than the group of managers on the following criteria: "Flexible and creative in managerial problem-solving process"; "Develop the abilities to forecast and classify the managerial problems"; "Develop the

abilities to find, collect information and propose plans/methods of managerial problem-solving". It means that, with these variables, the group of teachers evaluated at good level while the group of managers evaluated at a very good level. Through observations, these findings can be explained as follows: When participating in the reality of managerial problem-solving process, the managers group had the opportunity to experience applying knowledge and experience to solve managerial problems specifically, they were given conditions and environment to practice, so the assessing level of the managers was different when compared to the group of teachers. For other variables, the statistics show that there are no differences in the opinions of managers and teachers on the results achieved by using the role-playing methods in the development of managerial problem-solving capacities. Meanwhile, both teachers and managers have a high consensus in their opinions on the results achieved by using the role-playing methods in developing managerial problem-solving capacities of school managers.

4. Discussion

This study initially investigated the effectiveness levels of using role-playing in developing management problem-solving capacities. The study findings showed that using role-playing in developing the school managers' problem-solving capacities has brought about some positive changes. However, the results still remain some limitations that may affect the scientific and practical significance of the study. Further studies can use the initial findings from this study as a starting point for future discoveries. Some suggestions from the study findings need to be clarified in further studies, for example, a more specific and explicit

theoretical foundation is needed, the research sample needs to be determined clearly to ensure scientific validity with a larger sample size. Further studies also need to use in-depth, qualitative interviews to find out the level of influence of extraneous variables that may impact the research results.

5. Conclusion

The implementation of role-playing methods in developing the school managers' problem-solving capacities is one of the important ways to develop their professional capacities, especially helping them identify problems and solve situations more effectively, thereby performing efficiently their assigned tasks. The research findings confirm the feasibility and scientific significance of using the role-playing methods in developing managerial problem-solving capacities, which can create changes when applied in fostering and developing the capacities of school managers in the current context. In addition, the research results have built a criteria system to assess the level of development of school managers' problem-solving capacities by using the role-playing method. Thereby the school managers can apply in their purposes of fostering and developing management capacity appropriately. The research results contribute to affirming the effectiveness of using the role-playing methods in developing the school managers' problem-solving capacities. Therefore, the problem-solving capacities of school managers has changed and improved positively (higher mean scores). Furthermore, the implementation of role-playing methods in developing school managers' capacities creates positive and valuable achievements in developing the capacity of school managers in order to meet the requirements of educational innovation.

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