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Development of Leadership Soft Skills Among Educational Administrators

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Abstract

Leadership soft skills are very beneficial for administering organization effectively and efficiently. The aim of this study is to measure the development of leadership soft skills among educational administrators using the guidelines. The school administrators need to complement hard and soft skills while working with organizational staff and community. A total of 477 school administrators and teachers are involved in this study. In addition, there are 15 school administrators and teachers who have participated in a focus group discussion. This study utilized mixed mode method, comprised of quantitative and qualitative design. Quantitative method using questionnaire and qualitative method using interview protocol to obtain data. The statistical data analysis that employed in this study including percentage, mean value, and standard deviation meanwhile content analysis is used to analyse qualitative data. The results of this study indicated that the level of leadership soft skills among educational administrators is high. This finding is further supported by qualitative findings revealed that educational administrators have to improve their communication skills, using technology to monitor and evaluate teachers' teaching strategies, promote team work spirit and healthy interpersonal relationship. In conclusion, educational administrators' leadership soft skills should be highly adapted in their administration in order to ensure the positive change of the teachers' attitudes and behaviours.

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1. Introduction

The current educational management is highly emphasized on the quality, knowledge, competency, learning skills, readiness for learning, good life skills, flexibility while dealing with problems, and competency in using information technology of the students (Prasert, 2011). The learning process in schools should provide ample opportunities for students' directive learning to achieve their learning goal through their experiences. Consequently, educational administrators have to consider the individual differences due to every student has his or her own aptitude or intelligence. Therefore, teachers have to design various learning activities so that their students will enjoy learning, have good learning habits, and participate in social activity (Trilling and Fadel, 2009). Consequently, educational management should be congruent with social needs.

Wijan (2012) stated that the human's major skills for living in the 21st Century are learning and innovation skills, problem solving skills, communication and cooperation, creative thinking, critical thinking, information technology and communication skills in order to access information quickly, occupational skill, life skill, social skill, cross cultural skill, leadership and responsibility skill. Wijan further emphasized that it is the educational administrators' duty to develop these soft skills among their staff so that they are highly performed. According to Katz (1974), educational administrators have to utilize and integrate these important skills including technical skill, conceptual skill and human skill if educational administrators want to manage school organization effectively and efficiently.

Educational administrators are the key personnel to improve their organization for the transformation of ASEAN community. Educational administrators in current situation have to develop their soft skills while managing human resource and developing staff so that they committed themselves professionally for the transformation. The power of soft skills cannot be neglected by educational administrators because they are the motivator in encouraging collaboration as a shared learning process and continuous development in order to achieve their school goal.

2. Problem Statements

Soft skills can be defined as skills that related to human skills focusing on the competency in working with other individuals. This was supported by Wilaipan's (2013) statement regarding soft skills for instance thinking skill, interpersonal skill, and motivation skill are those basic factors for human to perform better in their workplace. As a result, educational administrators need to complement both hard and soft skills in order to accomplish organizational goal. In other word, educational administrators not only use their knowledge, modern science, and management skills into many school management process but also participating, focusing on communication skills to develop organizational awareness and continuous improvement. Specifically, educational administrators are urged to emphasize on progressive management so that they have to ensure that their school staff are ready to face changing and transformation by cooperating with all their school staff. Therefore, to what extent these educational administrators possess sufficient soft skills are still questionable.

The office of Secondary Educational Service Area 25 is a work unit that responsible to monitor educational management for a total of 84 secondary schools at Khon Kaen province. The vision of this unit is to be quality organization focusing on educational development up to universal standard by 2018 academic year. This vision have to comply with appropriate strategies practiced by Educational Service Area to ensure that not only teacher and staff development in the whole system is well developed, efficient development in educational management but also is highly participated by every sector through cooperation, promotion and support provided (The Office of Secondary Educational Service Area 25, 2012). However, report of work performance in 2012 academic year indicated that teachers were not participating actively due to lacked of communication throughout the organization and insufficient usage of information technology media. In addition, educational administrators found to be unable to implement strategies according to the policy in their school management efficiently was a major impact on quality of schools, teachers, staff as well as students, reported by the Office of Secondary Educational Service Area 25 (2012).

3. Literature Reviews

Soft skills are vital in promoting organizational effectiveness and efficiency. This statement has been supported by the past researchers, namely Wijan (2012), Tang (2012), and Wallapha (2012). Wijan (2012) stated that leaders

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