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Factors affecting the scholastic achievement of Prince of Songkla University students from private schools with Islam instruction in the three southern border provinces

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research was to study the factors affecting the scholastic achievement of Prince of Songkla University (PSU) students who came from private schools with Islam instruction in the three southern border provinces as well as an approach for quality development for the students of the above-mentioned schools toward a higher level of university scholastic achievement. The sample consisted of 918 students who had completed upper secondary education from the private schools with Islam instruction and six administrators of the schools as stated who rendered data by interview. From the discriminant analysis, only one discriminant variate best capable of discriminating university scholastic achievement was labeled as “reinforcement teaching”, which bore a high level of correlation to remedial-teaching and O-Net scores variables. From interviews with school administrators, the schools needed the government to render more support in the matter of scholarships and to provide for academic development in the form of academic coaching or participation in academic workshops under the care of teachers with area expertise. The research suggested: the government should subsidize all secular fields as well as the field of religion, and the Ministry of Education should render additional academic support by the provision of expert teachers for extra teaching in the form of reinforcement teaching or academic coaching, particularly for small schools.

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Introduction

Education is an important tool for the development of the population of a country toward the goal of complete quality and efficiency, as a tool to contribute to the creation of human

resource for a country toward complete development in body, mind, and intellect. That is to say, in the development of knowledge and understanding of various academic spheres, amenable to the development of self and one's country are the development of citizens' mental and intellectual exercise, the

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placement of citizens' behaviors on a correct and desirable path, and the cultivation of right attitudes and values. The creation of a standard of merit and ethics in the life of a learner and in education is a process for humans to develop their life quality so as to live in society peacefully and to be able to nurture appropriately the development of their country, in keeping with changes in all its areas (Tappasert, 1999, p. 12).

At a university with educational foundations, its instructors are charged with the duty of teaching and cultivating things good and beautiful in their students, namely, the quality of being human and educated, of being learners, and persons of culture (Nakata, 2003, p. 77).

Here the university is an important source of power. Those having a university education will have the power of knowledge and ability and be ready to respond to the needs and development of their country. The important tasks of a university are to provide instruction of quality, to produce graduates of a high caliber, and to create bodies of knowledge as well as to foster an esthetic culture.

To carry out the tasks of the university is crucial to national development (Meesuk, 2001, p. 67). Furthermore, achievement in the conduct of education through the important tasks of the university rests upon the production of quality graduates. The scholastic achievement of a student is a person's attribute and ability born of instruction. It is a change in behavior and experience as a result of learning, training, and teaching (Katawanij, 2006, p. 38). Moreover, scholastic achievement is an indicator of a learner's quality based on the assessment of each learner's learning ability (Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development, 1994, p. 47).

The private schools with Islam instruction are schools under the Act of Private Schools of B.E.2525 (1982). They were developed from "Pawnoh" of B.E.2504-2514 (1961–1971), and may be classified into two types, namely:

1. Private schools with Islam instruction under Article 15 (2) of the Act of Private Schools of (1982), providing in part, Islam instruction in accordance with the syllabus of the Ministry of Education and in part, academic instruction by the syllabus of the Ministry of Education, both programs running side by side. But in terms of the readiness of personnel and system of learning organization, the requirements of the Ministry of Education have not been met sufficiently for these schools to be recognized under Article 15 (1) of the Act of Private Schools of B.E.2525 (1982).
2. Private schools with Islam instruction under Article 15 (1) of the Act of Private Schools of B.E.2525 (1982) teaching both Islamic studies and academic subjects by the syllabus of the Ministry of Education. These schools are of two types. Type 2a consists of private schools with Islam instruction administered by associations or foundations that are legal persons whose per capita expenditures are financed by the government. For these schools, the government withdraws civil-servant teachers of academic subjects, as financial support is provided for the hiring of this specific type of teacher. Should the schools find it necessary to employ civil-servant teachers supplied by the government, they must refund to the government a sum of money equivalent to such a civil-servant teacher's basic

educational qualification. Type 2b consists of private schools with Islam instruction licensed to individuals whose per capita expenditures are funded by the government like any academic-program private schools. The government provides civil-servant teachers in part to teach academic subjects alongside teachers hired by the schools. It is worth noting that the terms "Pondok school" or "Tadika school" are not used, as such terms may be misleading. For example, "Pondok" may be intended to mean "private school with Islam instruction" but is perceived to be "Pondok" or "Pondok educational institution," with a possibility of misinterpretation. In the case of a Tadika school, this is generally perceived to be a school by the Act of Private School of a standard comparable to that of schools in general. But in its true sense, Tadika is only a place of religious learning operated by a religious organization (Masjid).

As the government at present has increasingly turned its attention to education for the public, with education being an important tool for true national development, the components of learning must correspondingly take into consideration various factors affecting scholastic achievement to serve as data for problem solution and improvement of students' learning. Prince of Songkla University can be said to be the first institution of higher education in southern Thailand. It has offered instruction since the 1967 academic year. Today it is made up of five campuses in Hatyai, Pattani, Suratthani, Phuket, and Trang, with a total of 28 faculties, two community colleges, and one founding project (project of founding a faculty of medical technology). Its current undergraduate enrollment is 20,343. Nevertheless, when the scholastic achievement of present-day students is taken into account, it has been found that a sizable number of students have not been as successful academically as they should be. For example, in the 2007 academic year, a lot of undergraduates at the Pattani campus failed academically, as 618 or about four per cent of the total student body dropped out, of which a large number had graduated from the private schools with Islam instruction in the southern border provinces.

For this reason, the researchers as members of the Faculty of Education were interested in studying the factors that contributed to the scholastic achievement at Prince of Songkla University of the students who had graduated from the private schools in the southern border provinces and to employ the findings of the research as a guideline for the educational development of these private schools for efficient quality development of students toward the goal of potential sufficiency for scholastic achievement in higher education.

Research objectives

1. To study the attributes of teachers and administrators and the characteristics of the private schools with Islam instruction in the southern border provinces whose upper secondary graduates had continued their studies at Prince of Songkla University.
2. To study the factors affecting the scholastic achievement at Prince of Songkla University of students who had been

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