DEVELOPMENT OF A LEADERSHIP MODEL FOR ISLAMIC SCHOOL LEADERS IN THAILAND

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Abstract: This study focuses on establishing an effective leadership model for Islamic schools in Thailand as Islamic students in general place lower on National standardized testing than others. As a school leader plays the key role of the school success and the improvement of the students' achievement, a proper leadership model for Islamic schools should be developed to enhance their quality and students' achievement. Therefore, there is a need to generate a leadership model for leader in Islamic schools. Effective leadership in Islamic school involves the cooperation of Islamic values and principles in leadership practices and behaviors. Also, educational leadership theories and research in Western perspectives is essential in order to gain and retain the good standards. Theories and concepts from Western and Islamic perspectives should be taking into the consideration

An overarching question for this study is "What elements will comprise an effective leadership model for Islamic school leaders in Thailand?" The objectives of research are: 1. To examine the specific dimensions of effective educational leadership in Islamic perspective 2. To examine the specific dimensions of effective educational leadership in Western theories and research. 3. To ascertain the specific dimensions of leadership found to be the most prominent in the most effective Islamic schools in Thailand. 4. To determine the specific dimensions of leadership found to be the most practice by Islamic school leaders in Thailand. 5. To develop and validate a leadership model for Islamic school leaders in Thailand.

In this research, Leadership practice inventory questionnaires were distributed to all 297 Islamic school directors in Thailand and 209 completed questionnaires were used in the analysis of data by using Statistic Package. When the collected data interpretation and data analysis were achieved, the researcher used these findings and the elements from documentary research as the grounds for developing a leadership model for Islamic schools in Thailand. The proposed model are developed and confirmed by a committee of experts using the connoisseurship model.

Keywords: A Leadership Model, Islamic School, Islamic School Leaders

Background of the Study

Islamic Schools in Thailand has been raised in number since the day that Thai government promoted the establishment of Islamic Private Schools to replace Pondok schools with the purpose of enhancing their efficiency and quality (Uma, Vanitsuppavong and Churngchow, 2009). As a result, the school curriculum has been changed from offering solely religious education to integrating non – Quran subjects such as science and math, as well as the teaching of foreign languages such as Arabic language and English language into the curriculum which is under the supervision of the Ministry of Education (Imam Reza, 2011).

Although, Islamic schools have been supported financially from the government, the schools still do not function well. Additionally, it has been found that the school leadership practices have not yet been developed which caused the problems in school administration and lead to failure of student achievement. A research by Rajapat Yala University (2003) states that the student achievements of the Islamic schools are unsatisfactory due to their poor management system, curriculum and instruction. More importantly, the school leaders have been found that they lacked of leadership skills.

According to Wae-u-seng, Vanitsuppavong, Narongraksakhet, Yisunsong, Baka (2009), the change from catering Pondok curriculum, which is open and unrestricted, to utilizing a modern education with standards and benchmarks produced a hard time for those school leaders. This is a major reason that caused some Islamic Private Schools to fail from being accredited by the office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment. It appears that the problems above have resulted in low academic achievement of Islamic school students as the National Standardized Testing of academic year 2010 shows that students from Islamic schools in the South have been placed in the lowest ranks (Ramkaew, 2010). Moreover, it has been found that a number of students from Islamic Schools who entered the universities often leave before graduating because of their weakness in foundation subjects (Boonphikam, 2008).

It is clear that educational leadership is considered the vital factor for moving schools towards excellence as Saleh (2005, p. 16) states that "A positive and healthy leadership in any educational organization is crucial in creating a successful educational system…" The relationship between a good educational leader and a successful school has been pointed out in by many scholars. They all agreed and concluded in the same way that the effectiveness and efficiency of the leadership

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contributes to the school's success. Therefore, the role of an effective school leader is essential to the accomplishment of the school (Gunter, 2001; Macbeath, 1998; Parkay and Hall, 1992; Ubben and Hughes, 1997).

As a school leader is the key to success in improving student achievement and creating quality of the school, it is necessary to develop the leadership model which is appropriate to the context of Islamic school leaders in order to achieve school excellence. In order to get broader view which helps develop an appropriate educational leadership model in Islamic schools, examining only current educational leadership theories from a Western perspective might be insufficient. Therefore, leadership from an Islamic perspective needs to be discussed and employed.

Research Questions

1. What are the specific dimensions of effective educational leadership in Islamic perspective identified in the literature?

2. What are the specific dimensions of effective educational leadership in Western perspective identified in the literature?

3. What are the specific dimensions of leadership found to be most prominent in the most effective Islamic schools in Thailand?

4. What are the specific dimensions of leadership found to be the most practice by Islamic school leaders in Thailand?

5. What elements will comprise an effective leadership model for Islamic school leaders in Thailand?

Research Objectives

1. To examine the specific dimensions of effective educational leadership in Islamic perspective

2. To examine the specific dimensions of effective educational leadership in Western theories and research.

3. To ascertain the specific dimensions of leadership found to be the most prominent in the most effective Islamic schools in Thailand.

4. To determine the specific dimensions of leadership found to be the most practice by Islamic school leaders in Thailand.

5. To develop a leadership model for Islamic school leaders in Thailand.

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is divided into two parts. First, the researcher is interested in examining the leadership practices of Islamic school leaders in Thailand and proposing a model of effective leadership in order to improve quality of Islamic Schools in Thailand. Leadership practices refer to ten dimensions of leadership which are (1) Observing Islamic Value System, (2) Building a Positive Culture, (3) Managing and leading, (4) Relating with students, (5) Relating with Community, (6) Challenging the Process, (7) Inspiring a Shared Vision, (8) Enabling Others to Act, (9) Modeling the Way, (10) Encouraging the Heart.

Second, this study focuses on Islamic schools in Thailand, which are accredited by the Ministry Of Education of Thailand as Islamic Private Schools. These schools are located mostly in the southern part of Thailand. There are some schools in other parts of Thailand (Bangkok, Petchaburi, and Nonthaburi). The total number of Islamic Schools in Thailand is 294 schools.
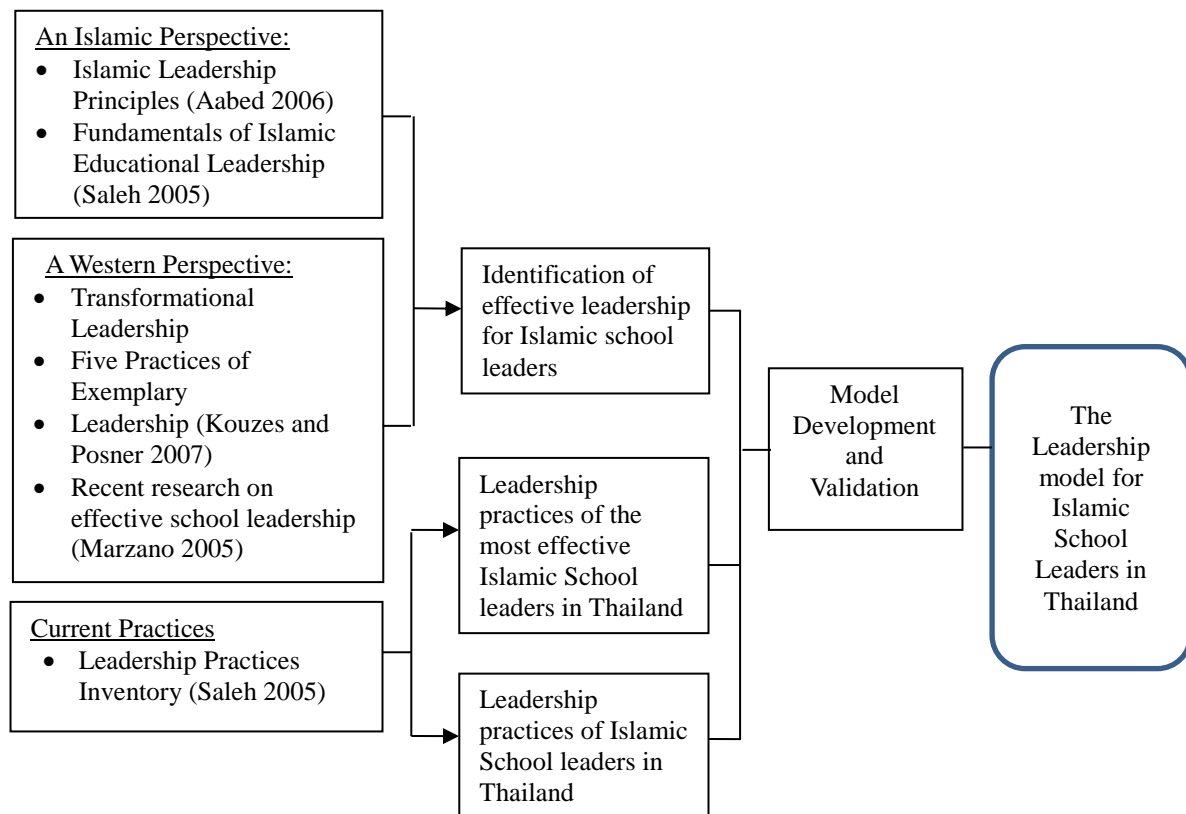
Significance of the Study

The researcher intends to develop a model of effective leadership for Islamic school leaders in Thailand not only for more effectiveness of school administration but also for higher quality of school leadership. The model of this research can be the shining light of Islamic school leader improvement which considerably has an impact on the overall Islamic Educational system as well as contribute to the society and the country.

Research Procedures

The process of conducting this research consists of three phases as follows:

Phase	**Objective**
1. Documentary Research	1. To examine the specific dimensions of effective educational leadership in Islamic perspective 2. To examine the specific dimensions of effective educational leadership in Western theories and research.
2. Collecting and Analyzing Data	3. To ascertain the specific dimensions of leadership found to be the most prominent in the most effective Islamic schools in Thailand. 4. To determine the specific dimensions of leadership found to be the most practice by Islamic school leaders in Thailand.
3. Developing the Model	5. To develop a leadership model for Islamic school leaders in Thailand.

The Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework – The Leadership Model for Islamic School Leaders in Thailand

Results of the Study

The outcomes of the inquiry are presented in Table 1 and 2 as follows:

Table 1: The list of effective leadership for Islamic school leaders from documentary research

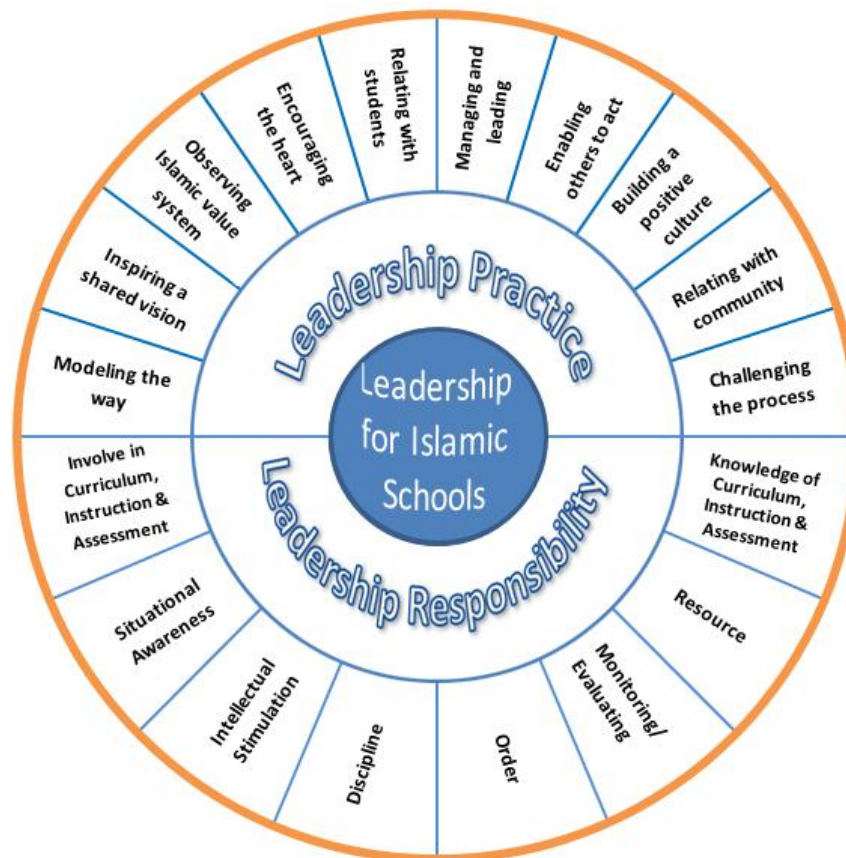| Ten Leadership Practices	Eight Responsibilities
1. Observing Islamic Value System	1. Discipline
2. Building a Positive Culture	2. Monitor/Evaluating
3. Managing and Leading	3. Intellectual Stimulation
4. Relating with Students	4. Involve in Curriculum and Instruction, and Assessment
5. Relating with Community	5. Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
6. Challenging the Process	
7. Inspiring Shared Vision	6. Situational Awareness
8. Enabling Others to Act	7. Resource
9. Modeling the Way	8. Order
10. Encouraging the Heart	

Table 2: A comparison between leadership practices of Islamic school directors of the most effective schools leaders and the schools in general

Item	Average Mean	
	The most effective schools N=10	Schools in general N=209
Modeling the way	4.66	4.06
Inspiring a shared vision	4.61	N/A
Observing Islamic value system	4.54	4.21
Encouraging the heart	4.52	3.92
Relating with students	4.42	4.01
Managing and leading	4.38	4.07
Enabling others to act	4.33	3.88
Building a positive culture	4.21	3.88
Relating with community	4.14	3.89
Challenging the process	4.09	3.84

In summary, Table 2 shows leadership practices of the directors of the Islamic schools in general compare with those of the most effective school leaders. It is found that the leaders of the most effective Islamic school practices all ten of leadership dimensions fairly often or very frequently at average means of 4.09 - 4.66. On the other hand, Islamic school leaders in general exercise leadership practices fairly often in all dimensions at average means of 3.84 - 4.21. Apparently, the data also shows that the top ten school leaders exercise leadership practices at higher rate than those of school leaders in general in all ten dimensions. Therefore, it can be concluded that all ten leadership dimensions have been practiced among the group of Islamic school directors of the most effective schools which means all ten dimensions are a key factor to their student academic achievements.

Conclusion

As the results of the study, a leadership model for Islamic school leaders in Thailand that is applicable for all leaders from Islamic schools would be as figure below:

leadership practice aspect (which are Modeling the way, Inspiring a shared vision, Observing Islamic value system, Encouraging the heart, Relating with students, Managing and leading, Enabling others to act, Building a positive culture, Relating with community, Challenging the process) while also working on fulfilling the eight leadership responsibilities (which are Discipline, Monitoring/valuating, Intellectual Stimulation, Involve in Curriculum and Instruction, and Assessment, Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, Situational Awareness, Resource, and Order).

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Figure 2: The Leadership Model for Islamic School Leaders in Thailand

Figure 2 shows the leadership model for Islamic school leaders in Thailand which demonstrated as a diagram. The model shows that building effective leader for Islamic schools in Thailand comprises two vital aspects. The leaders need to practice all ten dimensions in

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