

RESEARCH

HIKMAH Training Model: Fostering Creative Leadership for School Administrators of Islamic Private Schools in Southern Province of Thailand***Niloh Wae-u-seng*, Abdulhakam Hengpiya**, Samsoo Sa-U******

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Abstract

A newly creative leadership development HIKMAH training model was purposely designed and conducted to transform school administrators into an authentic creative leader in the innovation education. In this study, creative leadership is referred to the ability of school administrators to fuel vision, generate novel ideas, know what they want to do, have global and integrative perspective and combine collegiality to achieve the determined goals. Thus, this study aimed at examining the implications of HIKMAH training model for fostering creative leadership of school administrators as well as investigating their perceptions towards the model that was experimented on 30 purposively selected administrators of Islamic private schools affiliated with *Assalam* association in Southern Provinces of Thailand. Creative leadership behaviors of school administrators emerged during training were observed from given activities i.e., post-it events, drawing mind map, and school project proposal presentation. Perceptions towards HIKMAH training model for developing creative leadership was examined from questionnaires. The result of the study indicated that, throughout the training process, the school administrators displayed their creative leadership behaviors, thus assuring the effectiveness of the HIKMAH training model. Rather, positive perceptions towards the conducted training was empirically reaffirmed. The study then gives some implications for further practices in developing creative leadership attributes for school administrators.

Keywords: HIKMAH training model, creative leadership, school administrators, Islamic private schools, southern Thailand

Introduction

The development of any country in a competitive and variable environment of today world is very much dependent on the quality of human resources. West (1994) asserts that “people are the only sustainable source of competitive advantage within a complex environment” (p.15). Specifically, with the impacts of globalization, like any other countries, Thailand is faced with challenges to provide and maintain the human resource needs to stay relevant and competitive on the global front if it is to survive and remain as stable country. In response to the need of developing human resource relevant to the changing environments and global interdependency, Ministry of Education is committed to provide quality education in ensuring that the country preserves its relevance and secures its role in the world by enacting the 1999 National Education Act (NEA), which serves as the master legislation for educational reform as stipulated in the 1997 Constitution. According to Atagi (2002), Thailand is in the midst of a major education reform and its primary goal is to improve the quality of education in response to Thailand’s development challenges, the social costs of development and the poor academic achievement of Thai youth.

However, educational reform success is greatly reliant on creative leadership of leaders. In his literature review, Jarvis (2015), conclude that creative leadership is the key to effective school reform. In school context, school administrators are leaders who play a leading role in planning and directing educational reform implementation. Effective implementation of school reform to improve quality education requires school administrators to develop ideas about products, services, practices, or procedures that are novel and potentially valuable to an organization. According to Tonkin (2016), the central task of the creative school leader is to create an environment that is open to questioning and innovation. A number of previous studies have considered the influence of innovative and creative leadership on successful schools (Klimek, et al., 2008; Kaiser & Halbert, 2009; Tonkin, 2016). Thus, creative leadership attributes are necessary for school administrators for them to be well-prepared to take on the greater responsibilities for educational change of the 21st century and better cope with the future school demands and challenges of globalization.

Working toward achieving quality education through school reform effort, school administrators play an important role in the reform of learning system, setting up administrative strategy as well as formulating policy or planning that are consistent with the present educational change. By being a person who has to play a major role to bring school to success, a school administrator must be a creative leader who is an administrator of vision. Specifically, he or she must be a person who is capable to create vision, generate original ideas, know what he or she want to do, have a global thinking, create collegial environment and produce innovative outcomes. In addition, a school administrator is required to equip with the related sciences and skills so as to enable him or her to manage schools creatively and successfully. Without the mentioned necessary

attributes and creative leadership, it is difficult for schools to move ahead to effectively respond to change and uncertainty, even if they are rich with resources.

In the context of the management of Islamic private schools to successfully achieve their goals in the competitive environment of the 21st century, the design of educational administration practice which is concerned with the formulation, execution and appraisal of school reform is crucial. This move can be realistic, if school principals are fully equipped with the ability to develop and communicate a school-wide vision and the talents to generate novel and useful idea concerning administrative practice used at schools and the skills to solve problem encountered in an innovative or creative way. But the present state of Islamic private schools seemed to be not on the side of the above creative leadership, reflected by the lack of efficiency in educational administration of the schools and its negative effect on education quality. According to United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, n.d.), school achievement in language, math and analytical thinking of upper-secondary students in the border provinces of Thailand falls as much as 15 per cent below the national average, this can be somehow implied that the schools lack of efficiency in curriculum implementation. Correspondingly, the ministry of education is concerned, specifically, about the quality of education in Islamic private schools and their ability to prepare students for the 21st century skills (UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office, 2014). In fact, lack of professionalism in school administration caused by several reasons, namely centralization of school administration, insufficient knowledge in educational administration and lack of supervision from the central education body (Yala Rajabhat University, 2006).

Based on the above mentioned significance of creative leadership and the problem of the quality of education in southern provinces of Thailand, effort toward developing professionalism and creative or innovative leadership among school administrators is necessary. This is because school administrators represent as the first layer of school change agents, who play a key role in planning, organizing, directing and supervising school administration. And their creative leadership and achievement in school administration has a far reaching consequence on school success. This study, therefor, is taking an initial stage for creating creative leadership of school administrators in southern border provinces. And the researchers believe that our effort not only underlines the preferred future creative leadership but works to create it by conducting in-service training and workshop using HIKMAH training model.

In Southern border provinces of Thailand, Islamic private schools have been very popular and widely accepted by parents/community. A large number of students enrolled in the schools at several different grad levels each year. Their popularity and high student enrollment are owed in large part to the introduction of a well-balanced integration of academic and religious education. These schools generally have long history of development and transformation. Working toward progress and development, the schools have been taking part in several personnel development

programs in form of in-service training, workshops, research and development, and seminars that have been organized by either government or private education body. However, much of training programs conducted were not much integrated with Islamic concept or model. Hence, the contextual relevance and practicability of training program previously conducted remained to be questionable. The researchers see there is a research problem which has not been answered appropriately in a given field of study. Therefore, this study introduces a new Islamic-based training model for developing creative leadership of school administrators of Islamic private schools in southern provinces of Thailand. This model of training is called “HIKMAH training model”.

Creative Leadership

For an organization to survive or maintain prosperity in the competitive and turbulent environments of today word, creativity becomes increasingly important (Mathisen et al., 2012). The move toward becoming a creative organization, a school needs a creative leader who can spearhead the campaign for creativity. This is because the presences of creative leadership could increase the subordinates' interests in engaging in creativity and the creative leader is also more likely to recognize the subordinates' imaginative performances, which in turn reinforces the modeling process (Pana et.al., 2015). Thus, a school has to undergo a process of creativity in order to face the ongoing challenge of the 21st century education. According to Jarvis (2015), foundation of creativity was divergent thinking, the process of gathering information and patterns from a variety of sources and connecting them in novel or unusual ways to solve problems. creativity was the production of original ideas, solutions, or products valuable to the present situation (Amabile et al., 1996, as cited in Jarvis, 2015).

A review of the literature on creativity reveals that there is little consensus concerning the definition of its concept. Mathisen et al (2012: 368), for example, conceptualize it as “the development of ideas about products, services, practices, or procedures that are novel and potentially valuable to a department”. Runco (2008: 93) further explained that “originality was not sufficient for creativity. Creative things of all sorts, be they ideas, solutions, products, inventions, whatever, are both original and effective”. Creativity was referenced in the literature as “more than just idea generation or divergent thinking, because it manifested as contributions to particular domains recognized and accepted by other members of the same field” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, as quoted in Jarvis, 2015: 19). in reference to individual creativity, Zhou (2003: 413) defined the term creativity as “employee’ s generation of novel and useful ideas concerning procedures and processes at work”. According to Harding (2010: 51), creativity is “about more than imagining or making something that has not previously existed”. Creativity can be viewed as “the generation of novelty and potentially useful ideas for organizational products, services, practices, or procedures (as quoted in Jian and Yang, 2015: 1217).

As noted above, even creativity has been conceptualized in several different ways, but common to all is that creativity binds its definition to the word of “novelty of ideas which is useful for organization”. Indeed, interest in generating novel ideas or creativity and analyzing its effect on organizational creativity can be considered in the process and outcome level. Due to the HIKMAH training model was conducted for a short period of time, the present study explores the general question: what the creative leadership behaviors present during the process of application of HIKMAH training model? To answer this question, brief explanation of concept and characteristics of creative is appropriate to help better understand the variable of interest.

Built upon the work of Sohmen (2015), creative leadership come into being when a leader fuels vision, spawns novel ideas, crafts diverse methods, and produces innovative output. Puccio et al. (2011: 11) defined creative leadership as “purposely using imagination to create a new goal and guide a group towards that goal”. Creative leadership is identified by the following four characteristics, namely, 1) knowledge 2) intellectual abilities 3) personality and 4) passion for the task and flow (Rangsan Prasertsri, 2008 as cited in Wimol Jankaew, 2012). Peterson et al. (2015) drew practical framework for developing creative leadership by proposing five creative leadership approaches, namely, 1) lead for success, 2) think about it from different angles, 3) know what we want to do, 4) make it work and 5) get there together. Phongsri-wat (2005) described creative leadership in referring to the following attributes, namely, service mentality, global perspective, integration and flexibility. Pathiphan (2012) proposed three leadership attributes, namely imagination, flexibility and vision, that were necessary for fostering creativity for leadership. In this study, creative leadership is viewed as a style of leadership in which a school administrator bound by creative behaviors reflected in his or her ability to create vision, generate novel or original ideas, know what he or she want to do, have global and integrative perspective and combine collegiality to achieve goals.

HIKMAH Training Model

Rapid and significant changes in all aspects of life over the past decades has created challenges in areas of education. Several aspect of educational paradigms have been changed, for example, interaction based mainly individual level has been transformed into collaboration, teacher-centered has been shifted to learner-centered, assessment focused has been altered to process and outcome focus, fragmented curriculum has been reformed to integrated and interdisciplinary one, stand and deliver instructional information transfer has been altered to project and problem-based learning and constructivist learning to learn, and top-down has been transformed to bottom-up administration styles. These transformations have made a direct challenge to school administrators in which they have to develop their administrative professionalism in terms of skills, competencies, and attitude. They also have to adopt global

perspective and have passion for school work. Working toward developing such leadership characteristics, no methods have been better than conducting leadership training. This is because conducting leadership training and development program would get the trainees/school administrators directly involved physically and mentally in the training and, thus, it can have a great impact on their competencies development as guided by the goals of the training program.

A reviewed literature on training programs revealed that there are a number of different types of training we can use to engage participants. These types of training can be viewed in terms of its pattern, such as, orientation, in-house, public, mentorship and external training. Training programs are divided based on time period, namely, pre-training, during-training and post-training activities. Training program are also divided according to the areas of focus that can be offered within an organization, such as, technical or technology training, quality training, skill training, soft skills training, professional training and legal training, team training, managerial training, and safety training. Types of training are also referred to specific training model that have been conducted in an organization, for example, Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation (ADDIE) model of training (the Center for Educational Technology at Florida State University for the U.S. Army, 1970), the six sigma training model (Bill Smith, 1986), Return On Investment (ROI) of training model (Jack Phillips, 1991), Creative Problem Solving (CPS) training model (Ashley and Reiter-Palmon, 2009), and the Developmental, Individual Difference, Relationship-Based Model of Intervention (DIR) training model (Greenspan and Wieder, 1996).

To encounter the ongoing challenge of the 21st century education as mentioned above, schools have made an emphasis on the learning and improving quality of individuals. This move was witnessed that the schools in the present day set a priority action on developing human resources. The people development programs have been widely introduced in the schools such as in-service training, workshops, classroom action research and innovation, seminars etc. In this regard, the researchers considered that training program is one of the most crucial tool for human resource development intervention. Positive transfer of training model is defined as the degree to which trainee/school administrators effectively apply the knowledge, leadership skills and attitudes gained in the training context to their profession/job. Thus, this study proposed a new training model, called HIKMAH training model. This model is based on the widely known educational administration practice which is concerned with the formulation, execution and appraisal of educational policies. However, this training model which is Islamic-based value has its own distinguished design and practice for each stage of educational administration practice. The formulation stage was guided by *Hisbah* (H), *Inspiration* (I) and knowledge management (KM) activity; and the execution and appraisal stage was directed by *Amanah* (A) and *Hikmah* (H) activities, respectively.

HIKMAH training model for fostering creative leadership can be described as follows:

Hisbah (H) is about self-reflection and it is involved with reflecting what has been done in schools to foster student achievement in four areas, namely being a good Muslim, happy learning, being able to pursue further study and having entrepreneurial skills/securing employment.

Inspiration (I) is referred to inspirational talk delivered to expand participants' knowledge as well as to develop global and integrative perspective on the above four main areas of interest.

Knowledge Management (KM) is involved with field trip activities conducted to discover a new practice or model for fostering student achievement in the related four issues and, it is then followed by the process of creating, sharing, managing the information obtained from the field trip.

Amanah (A) is to uphold responsivity by which participants are assigned to design and produce provocative project about the future. This stage is meant to combine collegiality to achieve the determined goal that is to propose action plan to realize the four proposed areas of student accomplishment.

Hikah (H) means to reckon or to consider. In this study, it is defined as the evaluation of the projects presented by giving reflective comments. This stage of training is meant for communicating novel idea via projects presentations and receiving constructive feedback from experts and colleagues for further improvement.

The combination of abbreviation from the initial letters of activity can be pronounced as "HIKMAH". Practical framework based on HIKMAH for pedagogical transformation leading to creative leadership is presented in table 1.

Table 1: Practical framework of HIKMAH training model

The Model	Training Activities	Appreciative enquiry stage	Creative Leadership Approaches
H	Activities	<i>Dream:</i> imagine what might be	create vision
I	Activities	<i>Discovery:</i> appreciate the best of what is	know what he or she want to do
KM	Activities	<i>Design:</i> produce provocative project about the future	generate novel ideas and have global and integrative perspective
A	Activities	<i>Execution:</i> deliver action plan to realize the proposed issued; strategic communication	combine collegiality to achieve the determined goals

H	Activities	<i>Disseminate: feedback for improvement</i>	communicating novel ideas
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Objectives

The preset study aims to examine the implications and perceptions of HIKMAH training model of creative leadership for Islamic private schools' administrators in southern border provinces of Thailand

HIKMAH Training Procedures

The study applied the training approach to help develop creative leadership characteristics for schools' administrators in southern border provinces of Thailand. The process of training was designed and developed based on HIKMAH model through which training activities were organized using andragogy principles proposed by **Knowles** (Kearsley, 2010). The principles include explaining the reasons specific things are being taught, using task-oriented instruction, training friendly to all participants who have different levels/types of previous experiences and allowing learners to discover things and knowledge for themselves. Through this approach, facilitators would assist and offer guidance and help when mistakes are made.

The HIKMAH training was conducted with 30 administrators of Islamic private schools affiliated to al-Salam association. These participants were solicited to voluntarily participate in the training throughout 3 days session.

The **HIKMAH** model of training covers the process of formulation, execution, and appraisal. As for the formulation process, the participants were divided into groups and each group was required to do self-reflection or *Hisbah (H)*, through which four pivotal learning outcomes i.e., being good Muslim, happy classroom, ability to further higher education, and entrepreneurship skills were deliberately discussed to come up with the group consensus over the matters concerned. In addition, the post-it activity was organized by having the participants to write down their worriedness and expectation on different colors of post-it papers. In the evening session, activities involved with *Inspiration (I)* were prescribed through field trip to an Islamic demonstrative school in order to learn about its success in terms of the four aforementioned learning outcomes and listening to lecture delivered by a prodigious motivator on Finland's model of education, open approach of instructional management, and creative leadership styles.

In the second day, the participants were exposed to the following up step of training activity which is commonly known as **Knowledge Management (KM)**. Through this activity, the agreed upon learning outcomes and lessons learnt from the field trip were merged and compared with the existing conditions of participants' respective schools to formulate a working

framework leading to the successive step of training activity. Making comparison would help administrators to identify the gap between the reality and expectation. In the evening, the activity assigned dealt with responsibility or *Amanah (A)*. *Amanah* is a role incumbent through which school administrators were supposed to be committed to what had been formulated by the group consensus. In doing so, they were required to develop projects in light of the aforesaid underpinning learning outcomes.

In the last day, each group was expected to make a presentation of their projects. The last step of the model involves an activity called *Hikmah (H)* which refers to constructive reflections and criticisms. All projects were presented and constructively reflected or suggested for further improvement. At the end of the session, an evaluation form – a questionnaire – was distributed to the participants to identify their perceived creative leadership attributes resulting from participating in HIKMAH training program.

A questionnaire was developed to take a measure over the participants' views of their perceived creative leadership resulting from training program participation. It was content analyzed using face validity through which its congruence between what defined and its indicators as well as language used were verified by experts. Mean scores were presented to help identify the level of participants' perceptions towards the HIKMAH training model based on 5 interval agreement scores on measured items as proposed by Boochom Srisa-ard (1992, p. 100) namely, 1.00–1.50 = very low, 1.51–2.50 = low, 2.51–3.50 = moderate, 3.51–4.50 = high and 4.51–5.00 = very high.

Results and Implications

The results of the current study were presented in light of the objective of the study. The first part was on the given training itself. It sought to find out what are implications for creative leadership resulting from participating in HIKMAH training model as shown in table 2. The second part dealt with the presentation of participants' views on the model in regard to creative leadership using questionnaires as depicted in table 3.

Table 2: implications for creative leadership resulting from participating in HIKMAH training model

The Model	Definitions	Activities	Output	Outcome (Observed attributes of CL)
H	<i>Hisbah</i> refers to self-assessment or self-reflection. It also related to imagination of what to be achieved.	- Participants were required to make an assessment of the present school conditions regarding to what extent did they achieve the following four desired learning outcomes: 1) being good Muslim, 2) happy classroom, 3) ability to further higher education, and 3) entrepreneurship skills - Participants were to write down their worriedness and expectation on different colors of post-it papers.	Information regarding the present conditions of schools in regard to their achievement towards the desired learning outcomes.	– Ability to do an analysis of schools' weakness and strengths in light of four learning outcomes. – Ability to project the attainable vision.
I	<i>Inspiration</i> deals with appreciation of the best of what is, resulting from intervention.	- Participants were assigned to visit the model schools – Islamic demonstrative school – in order to learn about its success in the mattered concerned. - Participants were to listen to a lecture given by an influential speaker which could help broader their horizon of	Successful lessons learnt and horizon of broaden	– Ability to use imagination to create a new goals – Ability to think creatively about what to do.

The Model	Definitions	Activities	Output	Outcome (Observed attributes of CL)
		knowledge and prospects regarding the current issues of school development.		
KM	<i>Knowledge management</i> refers to the process taken in generating ideas on which a decision over related mattered by means of information sharing was based.	1. Participants were solicited to make a synthesis of the results gained from previous <i>Hisbah</i> and Inspiration steps to come with ideas leading to construction of variety of project proposals based on andragogy principles.	The integrative ideas were gained in light of the four learning outcomes.	– Ability to generate novel ideas and have integrative perspective – Ability to produce provocative project about the future.
A	<i>Amanah</i> refers to role incumbent one has to take responsibility and accountability over the committed matters.	1. Participants were sought to work out in group in translating the proposed ideas gained from the previous step into a full project proposal.	Project proposals. For example, “My Favorite Jobs” (entrepreneurship skills), “Towards Islamic-based Education Excellence” (competitive advantage), “Simplifying Learning to Enhance Effectiveness (happy school), and “Model Development for	– Ability to combine collegiality to achieve the desired goals. – Ability to deliver flexible action plan to realize the proposed project. – Ability to guide a group towards the goal.

The Model	Definitions	Activities	Output	Outcome (Observed attributes of CL)
H	<i>Hikmah</i> refers to flexible and wise approach to constructively providing feedback for improvement at the expense of hatred and disgust.	– Each group were required to have their proposed projects presented within predetermined timeframe i.e., 15 minutes for presentation and 5 minutes for feedback. – One of group representative was selected to assume the role as a commentator to give feedback and reflections.	Constructing Good Muslim Identity (good Muslim) The comments and feedback gained from a group representative and overall comments by participants.	– ability to communicate novel ideas. – ability to abide by the novel Islamic concept of “<i>al-Din al-Nasihah</i>” (Religion is nasihah), providing sincere and true feedback with good intention and action for the best in one’s effort.

Table 3: School Administrators' Attitude Toward HIKMAH Training Model for Fostering Creative Leadership

No.	Items of School Administrators' Attitude	M	S.D.	Level of Agreement
1	Participation in workshop on development of creative leadership through HIKMAH training model helped me learn new models on developing students in four areas, namely being a good Muslim, happy learning, being able to pursue further study and having entrepreneurial skills / securing employment.	4.27	.52	High
2	Inspirational talk session made me active and committed in performing my task for continually improving my school.	4.10	.55	High
3	Knowledge Management (KM) activity conducted by organizing a field trip to Islamic Demonstration School, Prince of Songkla University, Pattani Campus helped me learn more about the process of teaching and learning and pattern of students' development activities, which can be integrated and applied in my school.	3.70	.70	High
4	<i>Hisbah</i> activity (self-reflection and analysis) encouraged me to analyze the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges of my school. The activity provided useful information that can be used to improve school quality and provide a better customer service satisfaction.	4.17	.65	High
5	I admire creative thinking in presenting student development model in four areas, namely being a good Muslim, happy learning, being able to pursue further study and having entrepreneurial	4.20	.55	High

skills / securing employment.

6	<i>Amanah</i> (Responsibility) activity made me learn more about the management of the four areas of student development program.	4.03	.62	High
7	Presenting a project for developing learners through Hikmah activities and getting comment from experts has helped me learn and improved my project writing skills.	4.17	.59	High
8	Organizing workshop on development of creative leadership through HIKMAH training model has resulted in the sharing of information between participants, which creates straightforward and trustworthy atmosphere.	4.27	.64	High
9	I feel entertained and enjoyed in participating in the training and I have good attitude toward workshop on development of creative leadership through HIKMAH training model.	4.30	.60	High
Overall level		4.13	.37	High

Concerning the implications for creative leadership resulting from participating in HIKMAH training model, it was discovered that there were some attributes of creative leadership discernable in school administrators such as imagination, vision, integrative perspective, flexibility, and communication. These attributes were concomitant with the previous studies that posited some distinctive attributes of creative leadership namely imagination, flexibility, vision, service mentality, global perspective, integration, knowledge, intellectual abilities, personality, and passion for the task and flow (Rangsan Prasertsri, 2008 as cited in Wimol Jankaew, 2012; Phongsri-wat, 2005; Pathiphan, 2012).

Indeed, the emergence of creative leadership attributes were due to the training approach used that was designed and developed based on the outcome based approach to which the expected creative leadership attributes were initially identified and training activities were then set

up to achieve them via the process of formulation including *Hisbah*, *Inspiration*, and *Knowledge Management*, execution comprising *Amanah* and appraisal covering *Hikmah*. Throughout this process, administrators were trained to think critically, to generate the potential ideas of school development, to translate the desired goals into real practices, to work in collegiality for success, and to give respect to others. Put it in another way, the creative leadership training comprised five approaches, namely, 1) making self-assessment for better success, 2) inspiring through productively learnt lessons, 3) sharing and exchanging ideas, 4) working in collegiality to achieve the determined goals, and 5) providing constructive feedback.

Rather, the positive results of administrators' attitude towards HIKMAH training model did reaffirm the effectiveness of the training program in fostering creative leadership. It can be implied that participants' being exposed to the given Islamic-based training approach became a driving force for leaders to lead for success.

It is worth mentioning that creative leadership does happen when administrators could articulate shared vision, offspring innovative ideas, create varied ways and means, guide a group towards desired goals, and produce creative and productive output.

Conclusion

The present study did reveal creative leadership attributes of school administrators namely self-assessment, inspiring, sharing, collegiality, and constructive feedback that emerged from HIKMAH training program participation. It indicated that the training provided was effective. In addition, the positive attitudes toward the training program did support this. Hence, it is imperative that the training program be promoted and make accessible to wider schools' leadership development program in order to keep abreast with the present development. However, the developed training model still needs to be experimented with different participants to reaffirm its applicability for the present context.

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