

Influence of Administrator Characteristics and Management Behaviors on the Administrative Effectiveness of Local Government Organizations

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Abstract

The influence of administrator characteristics and management behaviors on the administrative effectiveness of local government organizations was investigated in Lampang Province, Thailand. A quantitative methodology was used to study a sample of officers ($N=416$) who worked under local government organizations. A questionnaire with a reliability of .97 was used as the tool for collecting information. Data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics and structural equation modeling for testing hypotheses. It was concluded that the proposed model explained the data adequately. The impact of the variables in the proposed model was as follows: 1) administrators' characteristics had a direct, positive influence on their management behaviors, with a path coefficient of .90; 2) administrators' characteristics had a direct, positive influence on their administrative effectiveness, with a path coefficient of .77, and an indirect, positive influence on their administrative effectiveness via their management behaviors, with a path coefficient of .22; and 3) administrators' management behaviors had a direct, positive influence on their administrative effectiveness, with a path coefficient of .24.

Keywords: *Administrator characteristics, administrator management behaviors, administrative effectiveness, local government organizations*

Introduction

The crucial factor that drives an organization to achieve its goals is to have excellent and useful executives, because they are responsible for determining the policies, planning, and ensuring that operations run smoothly so as to achieve organizational goals. Therefore, executives must show vision and leadership, be creative, manage goal-reaching strategies through wise planning, and focus on the development of colleagues. A critical characteristic of the executive in the new era must be to keep abreast of social change. Besides, they must have excellent personal characteristics that demonstrate ethical behavior, good judgment and responsibility, problem-solving ability, well-developed human relationships so as to be tolerant enough to listen to the opinions of others, skilled in communication, and always alert. Besides, corporate executives need to develop and strengthen their leadership teams so as to manage and develop the organization towards success and to achieve its goals (Bangmo, 2015; Clawson, 2019; Rajachalerm, 1997).

Local government is a form of management designed to provide services to the people throughout all communities of the country and reduce delays in operations, and it allows people to participate in self-government, so as to respond to community needs. It will make operations convenient, fast, and in line with the wishes of that community. Such decentralization of power gives an opportunity for people in the community to become leaders in managing various positions of local government organizations. They aid the community in finding solutions to issues that arise or support the community to create development opportunities to improve living conditions (Thamason & Dokthaisong, 2015). Since the world in the 21st century is in an era of dynamic change, local administrators play a pivotal role in the implementation of local goals, both in terms of political and management system development. Administrators need to change their working habits to suit the situation. The critical roles of local administrators in the 21st century include active leadership, symbolic social roles, professional manager roles, democratic model roles, governance roles, and others according to the situation (Pannasil, Kenaphoom, & Kosolkittiampon, 2015) However, in a study of administration and operation of local government organization administrators in the past

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decade, there is still a problem in policy formulation, action plan making, arrangement of developmental plans and projects, assessment and report making, monitoring and controlling, procurement management, and finance and budgets management (Boonkob, 2015). Besides, based on the study of Pramuljukko and Chongsomchai (2016), some problems are caused by external agencies due to the lack of understanding of the roles of other agencies towards local government organizations, which results in conflicts between the organization and these agencies. The power of local government organization administrators depends on many factors, such as the administrator's personality, legal provisions, direct roles available to elected officials, and the roles and powers of the council of the local government organization.

Research previously completed in Lampang province found that the transformational leadership of administrators is significant in creating motivation, exerting ideological influences, stimulating individuals intellectually, and promoting expressions of individuality. These factors were positively related to and had a positive effect on the efficiency and effectiveness of operations both in the organization's development, the effectiveness of the organization development plan, the service quality, and the efficiency of civil service (Kaewnaree, 2014).

This study aimed to influence the characteristics and management behaviors of administrators in Lampang Province so as to improve their administrative effectiveness. The findings will be able to be used as a guide in the development of administrative effectiveness of local government organization administrators.

Literature Review

Characteristics of Administrators

The characteristics of administrators refer to the behaviors, expressions, and abilities in psychology or society used as a basis for work or management (Clawson, 2019). According to the trait theory, an individual's character, personality, or individual physical characteristics are expressed in a particular style in each situation. Previous studies are consistent in identifying the characteristics that affect the success of the management performance of executives. These characteristics are as follows: leadership and focus on success, moral adherence, emotional and social maturity, interpersonal relations and flexibility, as well as skills and competencies that are related to work (Schermerhorn, Hunt, & Osborn, 2003; Stogdill, 1974; Yukl, 1998). These features were assigned as variables to be observed in this study, namely: 1) leadership and vision, 2) morality and ethics, 3) personality and social maturity, 4) human relations, and 5) knowledge and skills in management (Boonleang, Naipinit, & Phromsaka-na-sakonnakhon, 2012; Charoensuk, Eakphet, Thamsasajakarn, 2015; OCSC, 2002; Thamason & Dokthaisong, 2015; Tonson, 2001; Waraphin, Chaiyakan, Bunjerdrift, & Homying, 2014).

1. Leadership and Vision—administrator's abilities to influence or motivate colleagues to change their work to achieve success by the vision, mission, objectives, goals, plans, projects, and activities that are defined. The most effective leader is one who focuses on both work and people, using concepts held by feature-oriented leadership, behavioral leadership, situational leadership, and modern leadership, and applying good governance principles so as to be good and effective leaders in the globalization era.

2. Morality and Ethics—administrator's expressions in adherence to morality and ethics in administration, adherence to religious teachings, showing honesty and justice, ability in human relations, demonstrating high responsibility and tolerance, and listening to the opinions of others.

3. Personality and Social Maturity—administrator's behaviors and expressions in respect to the appropriate physical expressions for their position, age, and situation; effective communication in spoken language; emotional stability; confidence in facing various obstacles; having a democratic mind; respect for the rights of individuals and listening to the opinions of others; recognition of the role of praise and persuasion to motivate people to work for the advancement of agencies, society, or the nation; ability to be an example for subordinates; and creativity.

4. Human Relations—administrators have the ability to make their subordinates work to their full potential, are able to interact with others, in personal and work-related settings (formal and informally), in order to create love, faith, and a cooperative spirit in working to achieve goals.

5. Knowledge and Skills in Management—relates to an administrator's abilities to change knowledge and understanding into actions, the ability to use intelligence in creative and systematic thinking, the analytical capacity to improve an organization and change working methods to keep up with the world in modern times, skills in applying new concepts and methods to be used in management, and wisdom and knowledge in the profession of management.

Management Behaviors of Administrators

The administrator's management behaviors are important factors to consider in the success of an organization. The exercise of such behaviors is needed to promote commitment and acceptance in order to meet the psychological and social needs of the staff and organization, hence leading to effective work behaviors and the achievement of organizational goals (Schermerhorn, Hunt & Osborn, 2003). Five factors were considered and assigned to observed variables, namely: 1) motivation, 2) decision making, 3) conflict management, 4) communication, and 5) teamwork (Barnard, 1966; Chandarasorn, 2013; Drucker, 1999; Passer & Smith, 2011; Phongwarin, 2017).

1. Motivation—refers to an administrator's abilities to stimulate behavior in a person and to express it as needed, or be capable of using incentives to persuade employees in the organization to act cooperatively and be willing to work consistently, which will affect the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization, enabling it to succeed.

2. Decision-making—relates to the administrator's actions that lead to choosing or agreeing on a course of action. Decisions are the main activities of leaders of all organizations. The consequences of the administrator's decision will be changes to policies, plans, and operational details. Administrators who make quality decisions efficiently will inevitably be effective in management. Good administrators must have the skills and ability to make the right decisions.

3. Conflict Management—refers to an administrator's behaviors that demonstrate skills and ability in resolving conflicts are as follows: 1) avoidance, 2) compromise, 3) competitiveness, 4) accommodation, and 5) collaboration. Administrators must play an essential role in managing conflicts and resolving problems with an understanding of human nature. They need to be open-minded and be able to resolve problems with participation so that the organizational staff can produce work results effectively, which results in organizational management creativity.

4. Communication—relates to an administrator's communication behaviors leading to the personnel in the organization being able to recognize and understand the same thing. Administrators who demonstrate good communication behaviors in an organization can create understanding, and this may lead to the development of a specific helpful culture and stability for the organization, because all personnel understand and have access to information, and they work together efficiently and effectively.

5. Teamwork—involves an administrator's behavior, which means acting as a team manager who can coordinate activities, solve work-related problems and conflicts both on and off the team, stimulate work, organize work systems, and create guidelines for team members to work well. The role of a team leader is a coordinator in everything in the workplace, which also translates into benefits for the team.

Administrative Effectiveness of Administrators

The effectiveness of administrators is their ability to lead the organization to achieve its goals and objectives. Research has focused on applying the equilibrium performance measurement concept (Balanced Scorecard: BSC) that is based on the concepts of Kaplan and Norton (1996). The researcher utilized the ideas of Suvarnabhumi, Srisai, Viphatakarus, and Bunwiset (2011) to measure administrative effectiveness. The BSC is a system or process for measuring or evaluating administration that depends on defining key performance indicators (KPIs). It consists of considering

four perspectives, namely: 1) financial, 2) service recipients, 3) internal process, and 4) learning and development.

1. Financial—a perspective of achieving the goals of increasing revenue, production efficiency with low cost and low production loss, and finding low-cost funding. In this research, it was taken to mean accomplishing the financial management goals of the local government organizations (measured against annual budget expenditures), the success of self-collected revenue storage, and the results of expenditures for budgets and income based on the project and on achieving the target

2. Service Recipients—a perspective of customers or clients, such as customer satisfaction, image, marketing process, and customer relationship management. In this study, it meant achieving the management goals of service recipients in local government organizations. It consisted of the success of projects/activities that were integrated or implemented in the provision of public services, the success of a project/activity that was an initiative to benefit the local administrative organization and the people, and the satisfaction of people, government officials, government agencies, and private agencies that come to receive services or contact the organization.

3. Internal Process—a perspective of the work process within the organization, such as the creation of innovations, the existence of an efficient organizational structure, coordination within the organization, and efficient production management. In this study, it meant achieving the goals of the internal administration of local administrative organizations. It consisted of the process of internal/external analysis of factors, as well as connections with the vision and mission of the organization, existence of policies for the creation and development of a knowledge management system or creation of a learning organization, analysis of product performance and work processes, and conducting projects to reduce work steps or improve work or maintain service standards.

4. Learning and Development—a perspective of the learning and development of the organization, such as the development of the knowledge and competence of employees, employee satisfaction, and development of the conventional system in the workplace. In this study, it meant achieving learning and development administration goals of local government organizations. It consisted of developing and improving infrastructure to support human resources, establishing a training plan for each position and implementing the actual plan to cover all personnel in every budget year, use of information systems and information technology systems to assist in internal control, and internal auditing. Included was the existence of a multilateral network development (public sector, agencies/organizations) framework for the continuous and tangible development of local development projects.

Research Methodology

The research used a quantitative methodology. The population was 6,668 officers of 103 local government organizations (LGOS) in Lampang Province, Thailand. The sample size was determined based on Stevens' (1986) criteria, which indicates the sample size for linear structural relationship analysis. This should be at least twenty units per one observed variable. Fourteen observed variables were involved. The 375 samples chosen exceeded the recommended minimum (>280). The samples were selected from 103 LGOS by a quota sampling method, with samples in each place determined by population proportion and selected by chance.

The instrument used in the research was a research-developed questionnaire, the content validity of which was examined by five experts. The index of item-objective congruence (IOC) for all questions in the questionnaire was greater than .60. Then, the questionnaire was tested with thirty, non-sample officers to determine its reliability using Cronbach's alpha coefficient method (Cronbach, 1951). The reliability of the questionnaire was .95, and the reliability of the questionnaire used to measure the variables of administrator characteristics, management behaviors, and administrative effectiveness were .95, .93, and .95, respectively.

From the review of relevant literature, three latent variables and three hypotheses were identified as follows (Figure 1):

1. Characteristics of Administrators (COA) is a latent variable that consists of five observed variables, namely, 1) leadership and vision (LEA), 2) morality and ethics (MAE), 3) personality and social maturity (PAM), 4) human relations (HMR), and 5) knowledge and skills in management (KSM).

2. Management Behaviors of Administrators (MOA) is a latent variable that consists of five observed variables, namely, 1) motivation (MOT), 2) decision-making (DEC), 3) conflict management (CON), 4) communication (COM), and 5) teamwork (TEA).

3. Administrative Effectiveness of Administrators (AOA) is a latent variable that consists of four observed variables, namely, 1) financial (FIN), 2) service recipients (SER), 3) internal process (INP), and 4) learning and development (LAD).

H1: The characteristics of administrators (COA) influenced the management behaviors of administrators (MOA).

H2: The characteristics of administrators (COA) influenced the administrative effectiveness of administrators (AOA).

H3: The management behaviors of the administrators (MOA) influenced the administrative effectiveness of administrators (AOA).

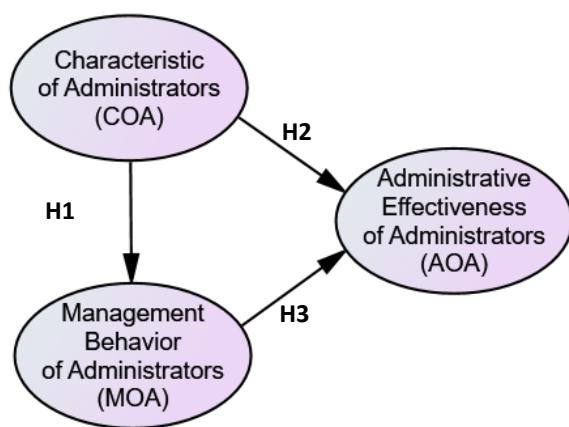


Figure 1. The Conceptual Research Model

The data were analyzed by frequency, percentage, Pearson's product-moment correlation using IBM SPSS 23, and AMOS 23 software was used for structural equation modeling analysis (SEM) to determine the consistency of the proposed model with the empirical data. The consistency criteria included (1) chi-square probability level ($p > .05$), (2) relative chi-square ($\chi^2/df < 2$), (3) goodness of fit index ($GFI > .90$), and (4) root mean square error of approximation ($RMSEA < .08$) (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Byrne, 2001; Kline, 2005; Schumacker & Lomax, 2004).

Research Results

The general data analysis showed that most of the respondents were female (54.1%), aged between 31-40 years (41.3%), who graduated with a bachelor's degree (76.2%), their job positions were operating officers (48.6%), and their work experience was 6-10 years (42.8%).

The characteristics of administrators and the management behaviors of administrators were correlated with the administrative effectiveness of administrators at a statistically significant level of .01. The correlation coefficients were as follows: characteristics of administrators ($r = .979$) and management behaviors of administrators ($r = .924$), as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Relationship Analysis between the Characteristics of Administrators (COA), Management Behaviors of Administrators (MOA), and Administrative Effectiveness of Administrators (AOA)

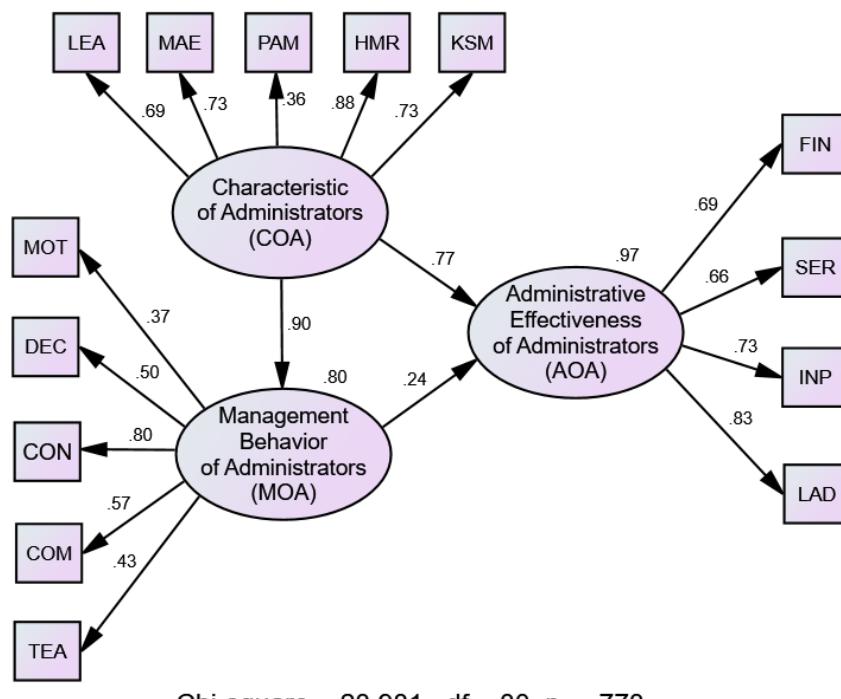
| Variables | M | SD | MOA | AOA |
|--|------|------|--------|--------|
| COA = Characteristics of Administrators | 3.57 | 0.43 | .897** | .979** |
| MOA = Management Behaviors of Administrators | 3.18 | 0.48 | - | .924** |
| AOA = Administrative Effectiveness of Administrators | 3.18 | 0.51 | - | - |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Structural equation analysis conducted to examine the hypothesis model's fit with the empirical data showed that the proposed model was consistent with the empirical data after the model was adjusted with chi-square (χ^2) = 23.981, degrees of freedom (df) = 30, probability value (p) = .773, relative chi-square (χ^2/df) = 0.799, goodness of fit index (GFI) = .990, and the root mean square error of approximation ($RMSEA$) = .000, as shown below in Table 2 and Figure 2.

Table 2. Consistency Analysis of Proposed Model Compared to the Criteria

| Evaluating the Data-Model Fit | Criteria | Statistical Results |
|---|-----------|---------------------|
| 1) Chi-square probability level: p | $p > .05$ | .773 |
| 2) Relative chi-square: χ^2/df | < 2 | .799 |
| 3) Goodness of fit Index: GFI | > .90 | .990 |
| 4) Root mean square error of approximation: $RMSEA$ | < .08 | .000 |



Chi-square = 23.981 , df = 30, p = .773 ,
 CMIN/DF = .799 , GFI = .990 , AGFI = .965 , RMSEA = .000

Figure 2. Significance Fit of the Proposed Model to the Empirical Data

Figure 2 shows that the characteristics of administrators (COA), and the management behaviors of administrators (MOA) had a direct influence on the administrative effectiveness of administrators (AOA) of local government organizations in Lampang Province. Path coefficients of .77 and .24, respectively, were obtained. The standardized factor loadings of fourteen observed variables that were components of the latent variables were as follows:

1. The characteristics of administrators (COA) was composed of five observed variables that were LEA, MAE, PAM, HMR, and KSM. They showed standardized loadings of .69, .73, .36, .88, and .73, respectively.

2. The management behaviors of administrators (MOA) was composed of five observed variables that were MOT, DEC, CON, COM, and TEA. They showed standardized loadings of .37, .50, .80, .57, and .43, respectively.

3. The administrative effectiveness of administrators (AOA) was composed of four observed variables that were FIN, SER, INP, and LAD. They showed standardized loadings of .69, .66, .73, and .83, respectively.

The standardized factor loadings of fourteen observed variables were statistically significant at the .01 level, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Standardized Factor Loadings of Fourteen Observed Variables

| Variables | Standardized Loadings | SE | t-value |
|---|-----------------------|-------|---------|
| Characteristics of Administrators (COA) | | | |
| (1) Leadership and vision (LEA) | .695** | | scaling |
| (2) Morality and ethics (MAE) | .733** | 0.070 | 14.787 |
| (3) Personality and social maturity (PAM) | .359** | 0.063 | 6.104 |
| (4) Human relations (HMR) | .876** | 0.087 | 13.029 |
| (5) Knowledge and skills in management (KSM) | .732** | 0.085 | 10.611 |
| Management Behaviors of Administrators (MOA) | | | |
| (1) Motivation (MOT) | .371** | 0.070 | 6.110 |
| (2) Decision-making (DEC) | .498** | 0.081 | 8.074 |
| (3) Conflict management (CON) | .799** | | scaling |
| (4) Communication (COM) | .568** | 0.064 | 10.206 |
| (5) Teamwork (TEA) | .432** | 0.062 | 7.182 |
| Administrative Effectiveness of Administrators (AOA) | | | |
| (1) Financial (FIN) | .686** | | scaling |
| (2) Service recipients (SER) | .660** | 0.074 | 12.226 |
| (3) Internal process (INP) | .735** | 0.062 | 11.726 |
| (4) Learning and development (LAD) | .835** | 0.086 | 12.399 |

** $p < .01$

Data in Figure 2 indicates that the influence exerted by latent variables in the proposed model could be summarized as follows:

1. COA had a direct influence on MOA, with a path coefficient of .90, and could predict 80% of MOA (Squared Multiple Correlations: $R^2 = .80$)

2. COA had a direct influence on AOA, with a path coefficient of .77 and had an indirect influence on AOA through MOA with a path coefficient of .22 (.90 x .24). Therefore, the total coefficient influence was .99 (.77 + .22).

3. MOA had a direct influence on AOA with a path coefficient of .24.

Also, Figure 2 data showed that the predictive coefficient (Squared Multiple Correlations: R^2) of administrative effectiveness of administrators (AOA) was .97. Therefore, it was concluded that the characteristics of administrators (COA) and the management behaviors of administrators (MOA) could together predict 97% of the administrative effectiveness of administrators (AOA), with a statistically significant level of .01.

Table 4 showed that the hypothesis testing results were as follows:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): The characteristics of administrators (COA) influenced the management behaviors of administrators (MOA), with a path coefficient of .897 at a statistically significant level of .01, which supported Hypothesis 1.

Table 4. Hypothesis Testing Results

| Hypotheses | β | SE | t-value | Summarized |
|---------------|---------|-------|---------|------------|
| H1: COA → MOA | .897** | 0.069 | 11.703 | Supported |
| H2: COA → AOA | .766** | 0.081 | 8.862 | Supported |
| H3: MOA → AOA | .237** | 0.095 | 2.606 | Supported |

** $p < .01$

Hypothesis 2 (H2): The characteristics of administrators (COA) influenced the administrative effectiveness of administrators (AOA), with a path coefficient of .766 at a statistically significant level of .01, which supported Hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): The management behaviors of the administrators (MOA) influenced the administrative effectiveness of administrators (AOA), with a path coefficient of .237 at a statistically significant level of .01, which supported Hypothesis 3.

Discussion

The proposed model was consistent with the empirical data, which indicated that the administrators' characteristics and their management behavior influenced their administrative effectiveness, both directly and indirectly. This follows as leaders or administrators have a considerable role in transforming organizational missions into success. Therefore, any organization that wants to be successful would welcome leaders or administrators who had excellent characteristics and management behaviors, because their characteristics and management behaviors exert a marked influence on the work procedures and achievements of the organization. Characteristics and management behaviors are essential factors for administrators to develop. This is especially the case as the administrators of local organizations are political civil servants who must be managed with the cooperation of every local sector and be accepted by departmental personnel and the local people. In line with the study of Boonleaiing, Naipinit, and Phromsaka-na-sakonnakhon (2012), who investigated the leadership characteristics and efficiency of local administration organizations in the lower northern region of Thailand, it was found that the desirable characteristics of local government leaders were vision, education and knowledge, a pleasant personality, high morality, attention to work, responsibility, and participation. In line with the study of Thamason and Dokthaisong (2015), who studied the political leadership of mayors in the administration of sub-district municipalities in the upper northern region, it was found that the political leadership of mayors was important. The most significant aspects were a broad vision, foresight, and giving people the opportunity to participate in management. Also, this corresponds to the findings of many other researchers. It was found that the characteristics and management behaviors of a good leader or executive were to: 1) have a vision, 2) have a good personality, 3) be committed to their work and be patient, 4) demonstrate morality and virtue, 5) be involved in participatory management, 6) have good human relations, 7) be an innovator and change leader, 8) have communication abilities, 9) support and assist subordinates, 10) be able to motivate, and 11) know about and use information technology (Bangmo, 2016; Chandarasorn, 2013; Clawson, 2019; Passer & Smith, 2011; Phongwarin, 2017; Waraphin et al., 2014). Therefore, in the attainment of achievement, or effectiveness of the organization, whether government or business, leaders or executives are considered significant components who affect the realization of the organization's goals. Good leaders or executives must always continue to develop themselves, because this makes them desirable, and they can function to drive the organization systematically and be able to improve the administrative quality of an organization. Therefore, the administrators of local government organizations must develop themselves in order to have all aspects of the characteristics and management behaviors that are consistent with the findings reported in this article.

Conclusion and Suggestions

The results show that the characteristics and management behaviors of administrators of local government organizations influenced their administrative effectiveness. The characteristics and management behaviors of successful administrators are expressed to related personnel in a way that helps subordinates to willingly comply with their orders. This will result in satisfactory performance being shown among the personnel, and will facilitate the achievement of the objectives and goals set. Therefore, if the aim is to improve the administrative effectiveness or achievements of local government organizations, the central government and related agencies should have policies and operations in place to develop administrators at all levels, both political and permanent civil servants, so as to ensure that the characteristics and management behaviors expressed are conducive to the development of effective entities and the overall success of the organization.

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